

Meditations on the Psalms

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Introductory

It has often been said that the Psalms do not give true Christian experience. If that means “true” in the sense of “complete” then we shall quite readily endorse the dictum. Until the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the heavenly line of blessing could not be opened up to human view, but collaterally with that there is the line of responsibility which undoubtedly takes character from the apprehension of the former in the power of the Spirit. Thus it is in the latter line that the teaching of the Psalms has valid application. Consequently it is of prime importance that Christians should study the prophetic bearing of the Psalms.

In the study of the Psalms it is necessary to distinguish between what is relative to the Spirit of Christ personally and to the same Spirit animating the remnant of His people. Moreover, the expression of their own exercises are freely interspersed with those prompted by the Spirit of Christ. Unlike the summaries which form prefaces to the chapters in other book of the Bible, the Psalm headings are inspired and thus demand equal attention with the subsequent subject matters.

The Psalms are divided into five books ending with the 41st, 72nd, 89th, 100th and 119th respectively. Psalms 120 to 150 form an appendix to the Psalms proper, although they are often classified as part of the fifth book.

In the first book, the prominent thought is the Lord as an object for the heart. The subject contemplates the people as still resident in Jerusalem. Thus the name of the Lord (i.e. Jehovah, the Covenant name) and covenant mercies receive abundant reference. The mass of the people are still considered as under probation, very much in the same way as the Apostles viewed conditions in the first six chapters of the Acts in the New Testament.

In the second book, the conditions are viewed with relation to the remnant cast out of Zion consequent on the Lord having been rejected. Therefore, the name “God” is prominent. The people are less considered as connected by covenant. The need of a deliverer receives emphasis. The writers no longer rely on covenant relationship, but on the unconditional mercy of God.

In the third book, the subject is largely the deliverance and restoration of Israel as a nation. There is only one Psalm in the book specifically attributed to David, eleven Psalms are of Asaph and one each by Heman and Ethan, while the authorship of three

others is not specially mentioned. Hence mercy is more expressed than righteousness. The outlook is wider than in those intimately connected with Jerusalem. The book ends fittingly with the 80th Psalm which speaks of the New Covenant proclaiming God's attitude to all men.

In the fourth book, the proclamation mainly celebrates the coming of the Lord and the establishment of His throne and His kingdom in display to the eye. The characteristic expression is "the Lord reigneth." That will bring Israel into blessing and the Gentile nations will come under perfect administration.

The 90th Psalm opening the book is entitled "A Prayer of Moses, the man of God." If that information had not been communicated in the heading, we would never have arrived at that conclusion. On the other hand, Psalm 91 speaks of the Lord in human circumstances, and the subject matter presents a marvellous contrast to that of the preceding Psalm. Only two Psalms in the book are stated to be of David, most of the others are without headings.

In the fifth book, emphasis is put on the Lord acting on behalf of man, promoting confidence in the heart of man as to the rectitude of His administration. Hence there is an explanation of the ways of God radiating from Himself resulting in a universe of unmixed blessing. There is also a paucity of specific headings to the Psalms of this book as occurs also in the fourth book. The subject matter is largely retrospective, indicating the end of God's ways with His earthly people. Righteousness is a characteristic expression. Thus on that line a climax is reached in Psalm 118, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." The faithful await the coming of that Man. In Psalm 119, we see the law written in man's heart involving the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, each having its due weight of importance. Each selection of eight verses gives adequate testimony to the perfection of the ways of God.

In the appendix the first fifteen Psalms are "Songs of degrees", i.e. a stair of fifteen steps. They give the exercises of the faithful remnant moving towards the summit of their aspirations in Zion, which is the place of God's rest. The people are viewed on their way to that goal through an enemy's land. But the goal is full of blessing and resultant praise in the subsequent part, in which six are Hallelujah psalms concluding with "everything that has breath praising the Lord." That is no mere poetic fancy, but a sober statement of the conclusion of the ways of God surely moulding everything to His will in spite of the machinations of the Devil and the rebellion of man. These thoughts show the transition of the idea of rest to that of reconciliation.

Of the Divine Titles mentioned in the Psalms, Elohim (plural) speaking of God in creatorial power (trinity acting in unity) is the usual expression (in Book 1 used 15 times, in Book 2 it occurs 164 times).

El, (singular) is less frequent, and expresses unity, power and action, the mighty origin of all.

Eloah, indicating the true God in contrast to the false, occurs still less frequently.

Jehovah, the self-existent "I am", is the name of relationship in blessing to Israel. That is the usual form translated "the Lord" and occasionally "Jehovah" (in Book 1 used 272 times, in Book 2 only 30 times).

Jah is often associated with the expression "praise ye" in the word Hallelujah. The title indicates the One who dwells in eternity, merging past, present and future in the "eternal now." The title is sublime and yet it is the simplest of the divine names, well fitted for infant lips to pronounce, "Yah." It occurs 43 times in the Psalms.

Shaddai, the Almighty in sustaining resource, occurs only twice, viz Psalms 68:14 and 91:1.

Adon, the Lord as possessor in power.

Adonahy (plural), the Lord in blessing.

Jehovah-Rohi, the Lord my Shepherd.

Jehovah Heleyon, the Lord most High, occurs 22 times in the Psalms.

Messiah, "anointed", occurs 10 times in the Psalms.

There are 11 Psalms for the Sons of Korah, 13 Maschil and 4 Lily Psalms. Of these we shall write a little in detail.

The Maschil Psalms

The word Maschil means to be intelligent through receiving instruction, which implies nearness, intimacy and company of a guide. There are thirteen psalms of the group, viz., Numbers 32, 42, 44, 45, 52, 53, 54, 55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142 (with 43 as a small corollary to 42).

There were those like Nicodemus who hailed the Lord as a teacher sent from God, but they could not make contact with Him on that line. Nicodemus had to learn that a radical change had to take place ere he could receive teaching. An excellent lawyer wanted instruction as to inheriting eternal life, but he wilted at the implication of the first lesson on the Law of which he was a professed master! It is thus fitting that the

first Maschil psalm, No. 32, should raise the necessity of forgiveness of sins. Well might the Psalmist break forth in ecstasy, "Oh! the happiness of the one whose transgression is forgiven" literally, the effect of his lawlessness is borne away. Man in misery keeping silent, sought to evade confession of sins to God. But as soon as he acknowledged his sin he found a full forgiveness. (A modern perversion is to confess sins to intimate associates. Instead of relieving the guilty conscience, the practice is apt to spread the disease in an interminable series of offences and confessions, in which the confessor will never know absolution. The ancient perversion in confessing sins to a priest had at least the merit of forgiveness pronounced by a man in authority.) Scripture is perfectly clear that God alone can give eternal absolution. "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9). The Psalmist tested the security of God's care, finding a hiding place in the Lord, who surrounded him with songs of deliverance. He was instructed in the way he should go and was guided by the eye of the Lord. That was ample provision for the future of his pathway.

In the next group, numbers 42-45, souls, though blessed on the basis of Psalm 32, are disquieted and feeling the oppression of the enemy are cast upon God in prayer; they have the experience in consequence of being buoyed up by the brightness of an imperishable prospect. That was prophetic of the experience of the remnant of Israel in a future day as well as that of the Christian in the present era who fills the breach sustaining remnant character in reproach. On the other hand, they thirst for the Living God, who becomes their exceeding joy, the object of their hearts and the subject of their praise. The ways of God in discipline lead them to appreciate the peerless qualities of the Man of His counsels, the fairer than the children of men, the King of God's appointment, who enthroned in Zion in the coming day of glory will associate the remnant, His earthly bride, in the highest place. Psalm 45 is God's answer in grace to the prayers of the saints in the preceding psalms. The end of the psalm speaks of the glory of the Queen, the King's daughter, because the Jewish bride as well as the heavenly bride owe their positions to the grace of God.

In the next quartet, Psalms 32-53, heavy troubles crowd in on the remnant associated with the Messiah. They are instructed as to the character of the evil around, viz, violence and deceit. Doeg, Ahithophel and the Ziphins were testimony in the life of the Psalmist. They present the elementary features of the anti-Christ. Today we have the same characteristic evinced by men vested with overwhelming authority and power. Deceitful accusations by the wicked are directed against the people of God. But these are frustrated by the divine constitution "like a green olive tree in the house of God" and it trusts in His mercy (Ps. 52:8). Thus the knowledge of Christ secured in the preceding quartet prepares souls for withstanding the machinations of anti-Christ in the second. Man's atheistic will leads him to say secretly "there is no God"! Contact with corruption makes the heart long for the exercise of God's power in righteous

judgment. The righteous have to contend with the virulence of enemies in Psalm 54, but it becomes more intimate in the concluding psalm of the sub-group. Organised opposition arises from within. The psalmist met that in Ahithophel. The Lord bore that in Judas, His intimate associate, and the remnant will meet it in the subtlety of Anti-Christ. The Christian is attacked not only from without but within the walls of profession. But the antidote is found in casting our burden on the Lord. He will never permit the righteous to be moved (Ps. 55:22).

The third quartet, Psalms 74, 78, 88, 89, in the third book, are not Psalms of David but of his three minstrels, Asaph, Heman and Ethan. They reach a higher level in considering God's thoughts and interests as paramount, and such consideration involves the soul in contact with the depths of sorrow. Zion was in "perpetual desolations," the enemies' evil deeds were seen even in the sanctuary of God. The dwelling place of the name of God was cast down to the ground and His name was blasphemed. In spite of these circumstances the poor and needy remnant (His turtle dove) are encouraged to praise His name (Ps. 74). The dishonourable history of Israel in the wilderness and subsequently in the land is reviewed in the light of the Lord's action on their behalf in Egypt, culminating with the smiting of the firstborn there and the overwhelming of their enemies in the Red Sea. Notwithstanding their sad lapse from the Lord that only formed a background for the display of His sovereign mercy. Prominent on that line was the evidence in His discarding Joseph's line and the tabernacle of Shiloh from the premier place and the choice of Judah, Mount Zion, and David His servant (Ps. 78). There was a further development of the purpose of God in His elective grace towards David in Psalm 88. The burden of overwhelming sorrow portrayed in the Psalm does not crush the zeal for his God. The same will yet be realised in the remnant, and it was displayed perfectly in the sufferings of Christ while He was here. He was reckoned with those going down to the pit, wrath lay hard upon Him, He was afflicted with the flood-tide of God's judgment at the cross. The magnificent psalm which concludes the quartet is the answer of God to the sorrow, perplexity and devotion of the preceding psalm. The psalmist sings of the mercies of the Lord, speaking five times of mercy and twice of loving-kindness in that Psalm (Chased is translated altogether 93 times as mercy, 23 times loving-kindness, 7 times goodness). The sense of that was the keynote of the psalms. Through His death the Lord secured not only for the remnant of Israel but for the saints of this era and indeed in the resplendent day to come for all men, the blessings of a Covenant which cannot be alienated through misdeeds. Hence they are justly described as the sure mercies of David. The God of Peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant. In consequence the Apostle prayed that God might make the Hebrew Christians perfect in every good work to do His will (Heb. 13:20).

Great as these blessings undoubtedly are in the Psalms they do not reveal God as

Father, nor do they confer upon us Sonship in the Spirit nor give the distinctive relationship of the church to Christ as heavenly bride of the Man rejected by earth yet accepted in heaven.

The isolated Psalm 142 in the appendix gives the end of the instruction in view in the Maschil psalms, when God becomes known as the portion of the soul. In Deuteronomy 32 we see that “the Lord’s portion is His people.” At the end of the process “He shall see the fruit of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied!”

The Sons of Korah

The first sub-group of Psalms under this heading comprises seven in number in the Second Book, viz. numbers 42-49 (reckoning Psalm 43 as an appendix of Psalm 42). There are four others in the Third Book, viz. Psalms 84, 85, 87 and 88, forming a second sub-group.

The “sons of Korah” were a remnant saved through the rich mercy of God from the judgment which fell justly on those related to them by family ties. From the historical record in Numbers 26 one would not glean that any of the rebels against the authority of Moses and Aaron had escaped the consequences.

As set forth in our introduction, the first book of Psalms gives the conditions obtaining in Israel when the Lord was in Jerusalem with a feeble remnant true to Him, while the leaders and the multitude were busy in the consummation of their general attitude of refusing Christ. In the second book the Lord and His associates are viewed prophetically as in complete rejection. At the outset of the Second Book the members of the faithful remnant are reminded of the power and desire of God to help them, in His attitude of unfailing mercy when judgment would fall on the rebellious oppressors.

In order that the remnant might be blessed, the significance of death had to be learned in association with Christ. “Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts: all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me” (Ps. 43:7). That is followed by God commanding His loving-kindness in the daytime, on the basis of the atoning sufferings (which they could not share) described in Psalm 22. He had gone into death and by that means had put the enemy who had the power of death out of business. He had delivered them from the clutches of the enemy. The central feature of the exercises described was the wholehearted desire for God. The day is surely coming when they will enjoy living under the sceptre of “great David’s greater Son” (Ps. 45). They will rejoice in the assurance of the unfailing refuge to be found in God (Ps. 46). The universal rule of the great King will be administered through them, subduing all nations under their feet (Ps. 4). In that day the Jew will not be a helpless suppliant trying to circumvent circumstances by his own cleverness. Today the Jew is

notorious for underhand cunning. Then he will rejoice in the transparency of walking in the light of God. Zion will be securely established as the centre of government for the whole earth (Ps. 48). Wisdom, wealth and honour are unavailing. They do not survive death, hence the true knowledge of God is a prime necessity. The redemption of the soul is precious because it continues for ever, while the actual matter in the body may undergo seven complete changes in the course of a lifetime! (Ps. 49).

Psalms 42-44 coincide with three Maschil psalms indicating that instruction is necessary for the proper appreciation of the encouragement supplied by God. The seven psalms in the first sub-group suggest perfect encouragement. In the process of application the exercised faithful are led from the depths of experience in persecution by tyrants to supremacy over every enemy, nations being crushed under their feet. No modern European dictator can succeed permanently in crushing God's earthly people, because no one can fight successfully against God!

In the second sub-group, the Psalms speak of universal blessing, the nations being brought into the joy which will mark His people. The stages leading up to the climax are of exquisite beauty. The soul exclaims, "How lovely are the tents of the Lord. That will be the experience of the remnant in a future day, similarly it also appertains in a higher degree through grace to the people of God now who have a heavenly calling. When the soul is imbued with such a sense of the grace of God, it is delivered from all affinity with the selfish pride of the Pharisee who despises those less favoured with Christian instruction. Moreover, it stirs up interest which extends to the utmost bounds of the work of God on the earth. At the same time being marked by the spirit of "the sons of Korah" will lead us to appreciate the administration of the House of God as set forth in Scripture. The knowledge of God will be worldwide, "He will speak peace unto His people. . . that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed, truth shall spring out of the earth" (Ps. 85:8-10). That is a very different picture from what is exhibited at present. Egypt and Babylon, rivals in the world's military might, Philistia and Tyre, the commercial giants, Ethiopia at the zenith of its wealth, fail alike to arrest more than passing attention. The gates of Zion, the seat of God's administration, will yet eclipse all the renown of other cities, in spite of having been under the plough (Ps. 87).

The last Psalm under the heading (No. 88) describes more intensely the spiritual distress of the remnant in repentance. At the same time there is a vivid background of the abundant grace of God. The words will be for the encouragement of the people of God in the fierce tribulation of the era to which specific reference is made as the day of Jacob's trouble. In measure the Christians of the present day have similar trials and derive comfort from the same source. The unrelieved distress expressed is unique, although hope is suggested in the initial words, "O Lord God of my salvation!" The remnant not merely confess their sins, but abhor themselves like Job did. The

repentant are separated distinctly from the unbelieving nation which will go on to judgment. Consequently the repentant remnant replaces the nation before God. In verses 10-12, six questions are propounded to the Lord as a challenge. They are answered in the transcendent terms of the following Psalm, expressing the New Covenant. Mercy or loving-kindness shall be built up for ever, Thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens, and so on. Some expositors have sought to adapt the language of the Psalm as describing the experience of the Lord while He was here. But the facts that He wept over Jerusalem and wept at the grave of Lazarus show that He entered into the griefs of the remnant in His own day in perfect sympathy, While the opened heavens and the salutation from the Glory proclaiming the infinite delight of God the Father in every step of His journey are sufficient evidence to show that the contention is invalid.

That Heman (meaning “faithful”), the author of Psalm 88, is in the central place when the service of song was appointed by King David is interesting. He was descended from Korah. Heman had fourteen sons and three daughters, thus they were descended also from Korah. All these were under their father’s tuition for music in the House of the Lord. How marvellous will be the stage arranged in the day of Glory by the One greater than Heman, the faithful and true witness, the Amen, the beginning of the creation of God. He who spoke the first word will also have the last word!

Gittith

The title occurs in the superscriptions of three Psalms, viz., No. 8, 81 and 84. It is generally considered to be the name of a musical instrument, possibly used by the Gittites or inhabitants of Gath. Be that as it may, there is undoubtedly an element which refers to thoughts analogous to “wine-pressing,” with which Scripture constantly associates the idea of judgment followed by gladness in the hearts of the people of God in consequence of the righteousness of God having been vindicated.

Psalm 8 looks forward to the worldwide rule of the Son of Man, when as the Psalm puts it the outburst of the redeemed creation from the beginning to the end will be “O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!” At present His Name is sadly maligned and pushed into obscurity. Nevertheless His glory is securely set above the heavens and hence is not affected by the explosions of man’s day. Meanwhile out of the mouths of babes He has ordained strength. That refers to the simplicity of faith which takes God at His word and in spite of the adverse circumstances around enables the individual to participate in the gladness of heaven. The Son of Man through death has laid the basis whereby all the purpose of God will be effected in perfect consonance with His glory.

Psalm 81 is primarily occupied with the celebration of the salvation of Israel from

Egypt, on the ground of judgment having been executed on the enemies. The body of the Psalm is mainly a survey of the ways of God in infinite grace and mercy, in spite of the obvious waywardness of His people. Yet notwithstanding the breakdown the words have a prophetic bearing as pointing forward to the faithfulness of God in testimony. That end has been consummated in the headship of Christ in relation to all things effected on the sure foundation of redemption, He feeds those redeemed by His precious blood with the finest of the wheat and satisfies them with honey out of the rock (Ps. 81:10).

In Psalm 84 the people of God are brought to the goal of happiness in God's dwelling place. Two extremes of human constitution described as the worthless sparrow and the restless swallow find their homes there, learning the resources of the House of God. Anna who had long been relegated to the supernumerary category of the world's usefulness as also the erstwhile restless Saul of Tarsus found their joy and subject of testimony in God's centre. The earnest desire of the soul of such tends towards where God is adored. The realisation of that will lead to the people of God being constantly praising Him. Well might the Psalmist conclude with the exclamation "Blessed or happy is the man who trusts the Lord!"

Aijeleth Shahar

To the chief musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, (the hind of the morning). A Psalm of David.

The above inscription of Psalm 22 suggests a new day introduced for God's eternal pleasure as full of blessing for His whole creation (Rom. 8:21-22). In the beautiful Oriental thought of a deer silhouetted on the horizon at dawn with the background of the sun rising in all its splendour, we have presented the glorious prospect portrayed unmistakably in the second part of the Psalm commencing with verse 22. That is the consequence of the momentous transaction in the first part of the Psalm in which two eternities meet in rapturous wonder. As the consequence of the question of human sin being completely solved by the One of Whom the Psalm speaks prophetically, God would engage His people, redeemed at such infinite cost, with the results in resurrection of what has brought eternal glory to His name. Every attribute of God was completely vindicated at the Cross!

The results are presented in the form of praise in the three concentric spheres of blessing, viz:—(1) "the Church," (2) "the Seed of Israel," (3) "all the ends of the world."

A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. That is the answer to the question in Isaiah 53, "Who shall declare His generation?" His life taken from the earth has resulted in superabundant fruit. They shall come and declare His

righteousness unto a people that shall be born what He has done (Ps. 22:30-31). In its application the statement includes the proclamation of the gospel in all the dispensations.

The character of the praise, founded on the work done, gives the blessed certainty of His having come out of death and judgment into the light. Although necessarily alone in the work, He brings others into association with Himself in the glory. They claim His first thought after glorifying God on the cross, and His rising again. He declared His Father's name unto them!

Perfect obedience was manifested: God's ways were not called in question. "Thou hast heard Me" of verse 21 manifested the same righteousness as "Thou hearest not" of verse 2. His inexpressible suffering, as forsaken of God, gave the result of unsurpassable grace and glory to man. Although the Psalm presents prominently the sufferings with relation to God, man's hand is also evident in "the strong bulls of Bashan" besetting him round, representing the Jewish leaders. "The dogs" represent the Gentiles and riff-raff of the populace in their unseemly conduct. "The lion" would indicate Satan's power acting indirectly through his agents as well as directly in spiritual attacks!

The Lily Psalms

In the divine inscriptions of the psalms, four are found bearing titles which may be so translated. They are described in the plural as Shoshannim, viz. Psalms 45, 69, 80, while Psalm 60 is entitled Shushan-Eduth which is the singular, meaning, "The lily of testimony." The term 'lilies' reminds us of the Song of Songs where it occurs seven times. "Feeding among the lilies" is there indicated as the pinnacle of spiritual happiness. Israel will yet blossom as the lily for the good pleasure of God (Hos. 14:5). That is a beautiful figure of souls loyal to Christ in all the qualities of the lily, e.g. perfect form, spotless purity and vivid whiteness, representing the true sons of the light (1 Thess. 5:5). In its subjective aspect the light is the teaching of the word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit. That is the true source of all formative work in the soul. Sonship is relative to the Day of Glory which is analogous to the coming of age celebration of the heir. Hence anyone with the consciousness of such a destiny will be marked by the peculiar dignity of that scene now, however little external circumstances may seem to support the view. Moreover the testimony will unite souls in the bond of loyalty to the Lord. That will have a startling effect on the bodies of the Christians too. They will be found presenting their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God (Rom. 12:1).

In the Song of Songs, the term "Lilies" indicates what the Lord thinks of His people. In the Psalms, the force is rather what His people think of Him! There is a beautiful

harmony between the two usages. In the 45th Psalm there is a joyous utterance of appreciation of His moral excellencies. While the aspect of “the Sons of Korah” may be expected to dwell upon the power and majesty by which He will deliver His people and establish His universal dominion. The Shoshannim or Lily aspect expresses the moral perfections of the One who is far fairer than the children of men, who loved righteousness and hated lawlessness and as a result is set over everything, anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. Christ eclipses the glory of all others. The transcendent expressions suggest the inward exercises of praise from souls instructed by God.

In Psalm 69 the Lord’s people meditate upon Him in the scene of suffering, reproach, sorrow and death and praise Him in His perfections exhibited there. In divine grace He condescended to identify Himself in loving sympathy with them in the scene of humiliation. He goes on to bear their sins and suffers the forsaking of God which is the prominent thought in Psalm 22. The first 21 verses of Psalm 69 dilate on the sufferings associated with the line of martyrs or witnesses to the righteousness of God in opposition to the lawlessness of the world. Primarily the words expressed the exercises of David, when the people spoke of stoning him (1 Sam. 30). The consideration of these expressions stimulates a sympathetic line of testimony in believers as witnesses to the ways of God, so that the meek and afflicted see and are glad and the conclusion of the Psalm shows the purpose of God in the blessing of His people.

In Psalm 80, we find reference to Israel marching through the wilderness. The progress of the Ark is the focus of interest for God. According to the purpose of God it is the Ark of Testimony in Exodus. In Numbers it is the Ark of the Covenant which is introduced. The usage is continued in Joshua, but later on when Israel had sadly vitiated the principles of the Covenant, the Ark was described as the Ark of God. The witness had broken down so that God could not associate them with Him in what the Ark set forth. He remained faithful in spite of their unfaithfulness. Psalm 80 is God’s way for the moral restoration of the remnant in a day of ruin. He had been the shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock in the wilderness, dwelling between the cherubim in the Ark, and going before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh in the march. The common thought is in people’s minds that God changes with the times, that is He will manifest himself in a different way in the twentieth century than in the first! But God is faithful, i.e. absolutely consistent with His eternal character. His face is always towards us in unchanging grace. Although in government He may have to deal very firmly with us, restoration is in view. Those intelligent in the mind of the Lord pray “let thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand” (Ps. 80:17). We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour at the right hand of God. When we see Him there we are confident of God’s victory. He will ultimately show forth His glory both in the Church and in Israel to the wondering universe.

The singular usage 'Shushan-Eduth' in Psalm 60 expresses the united purpose of the remnant in the maintenance of the testimony. Their faithfulness will incur the greater opposition of their enemies. But in spite of that they will display a banner in the cause of the truth and God will reward their faithfulness. He is not occupied with the doings of the great on the earth. He refers to Succoth and Shechem, because they are in His land. Gilead, Manasseh, Ephraim and Judah are His special portion, while he speaks in terms of the greatest contempt of Moab, Edom and Philistia in spite of their natural relationship and the intrusion of the last mentioned in the land of promise. Vain is the help of man. The people of God are assured of victory, not through human agency but by the intervention of God. True godliness looks beyond second causes, owning God's hand in everything. Israel will yet turn to God eschewing all efforts and the help of man. How encouraging is such testimony, stimulating the faith of the people of God in trial in every era.

Psalm 60 is also the last Golden Psalm, inscribed as "Michtam."

To the Chief Musician

This title appears in the superscriptions of fifty-five Psalms and is thus of more frequent occurrence than any other. Expositors say that the term, "in the original" indicates the thought of the one who is the origin of the music, i.e. its inspiration. That would not be true in the first instance relative to the individual who was the overseer of the music in the time when the Psalms were written, but in its prophetic significance when the term will apply to no other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Leader of the praises of His people in every era.

Psalm 22:22-27 undoubtedly refers to the Spirit of Christ inspiring the Psalmist and so throughout the Old Testament. Hebrews 2 is more specific in adapting the foregoing scripture to convey the intelligence that in the midst of the Church, Christ Himself is the leader of the praise which goes up in an unbroken stream to God the Father. That is descriptive of what has been going on throughout the Christian era.

But subsequent to the Church being translated to her proper home there will be a brief period when the language of the Psalms will apply with equal force to a revived earthly people who will be loyal to death and in the process will be led in praise to God by the same person, who is the Leader now.

Psalm 4, although primarily connected with the experience of David, applies with greater force ultimately to his Lord who was enlarged when in distress. His glory was turned to shame by the sons of men and gladness was put in His heart. ("For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame. . ." Heb. 12:2.)

Psalm 6 speaks of the many sorrows of Christ in the midst of His enemies. Psalm 12 shows the same experience developed in the persecution of “the poor and needy” remnant by the treacherous evil rulers of the day in which they live. In His devoted love He associated Himself with the poor of the flock while here. While since He has gone on high He is still watching their interests in deep perfect sympathy!