Psalms - Commentaries by George Vicesimus Wigram

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Perfected Forever*

Article from https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb

Psa. 40:5

TN this psalm we have the Spirit of Christ speaking in behalf of the mercy that will reach Israel hereafter. Immediately after that, He goes into the great work they will be brought to know-the work of One who took the place of fulfilling God's will when God had no pleasure in sacrifices; and having done that will, He will take the place of proclaiming the faithfulness of Jehovah.

We find the psalm largely quoted in Heb. 9 It brings out the argument of the apostle to the Hebrew Christians, who, after going on a little, got frightened at difficulties, and were tempted to let slip the substance, and take up the shadow. There is a great deal very important at every time for man here, particularly at the present day. There has been a great deal of Judaizing. I do not mean to charge the present generation only with it. The ten commandments have a place assigned to them as the sine qua non, the recognition of which was necessary for true religion while man was under law. To insist on their having that place now tends to bring men into fearful bondage, and to hinder them getting into the full liberty of the children of God.

In Heb. 9 and 10, we find brought out in connection with Hebrew Christians the whole question. And just let me from this bring out what the question was to the apostle's mind There were two points, from the nature of things strangely contrasted the one with the other-one, man's conscience, the other, the glory of God. And the question of the apostle was, whether they ever met together in these Hebrews to whom he wrote. He traces out how the law had not got in its power or aim to make a man perfect as concerns conscience. Let me put the question, What is conscience? Some would. say, If Adam had not conscience in nature, how was he to know that he ought not to touch the fruit? There is no force in that remark; for when God. had given all blessings to man-" all is yours if you do not touch the tree "-it was clearly right for the man to observe the commandment, and, even without understanding it, to keep it. Directly Eve ate of the fruit there was the balancing as to right and wrong, but tending to wrong. " That is right," " This is wrong," constant exercise in the mind, conscience accusing or excusing-one or other. Could. the law make that conscience perfect? It could. not, never did, with anybody. Now it is referred to in chap. 11. But turn to chap. 10: " The law... can never... make the comers thereunto perfect," in contrast with, " By one offering Christ has perfected. forever them that are sanctified;" i.e. those set apart by His blood.

I want to look at this in detail. The testimony of Scripture about truth, not only leads us to the blessed portion of the Church as the Bride of Christ, or into the portion of the children of God as sons and daughters, but it also leads us into all the different places where the Lord Himself has displayed. His glory; and, as in Romans the whole question is gone into of how God could take up a ruined creature and settle it in spite of its ruin. The grand point of the chapter is, how conscience ruined becomes so perfect that God Himself could not make it more perfect, more thoroughly fit for God, for man, for Christ, altogether clean and made good-so that we can serve the living and true God. This will lead into the question of priesthood. There were two priests-Aaron and Melchisedec. Christ is never said to be a Priest after Aaron, but after Melchisedec; but all that Aaron's priesthood pointed to as a sign-post in connection with sin, this the Lord did, but did in a way entirely in contrast with the law and the system of Aaron's priesthood.

In Lev. 23, you find the two great works-the Passover and the day of Atonement at the end of the year. Judaism began with the Passover and ended with the day of Atonement; Christianity begins with atonement and goes on to fellowship with God. The two things in Leviticus are atonement and that which carries sin clean away-the azazel, or scapegoat. A system had been set up, and the question was how that system, being a system that recalled sin to mind every step of the way, could be carried out among a sinful and a stiff-necked people. God had a resource so that He would not be defiled while dwelling among them-the blood was brought in and sprinkled on the mercy-seat. The blood was for God, it was not putting away guilt. Read verse 16, chapter xvi., " He shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness." They were stiff-necked and rebellious, but there was no pretense of removing their sins. It was done for God, it justified them, it pointed to the blood of another, and enabled God to pass by sin, not to cleanse from sin. The goat took away what? Directly the day was past, it was in the mind of the Mediator that sin would be again contracted, for the great day of atonement was to come round again at the end of the year. When I turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, as in Psa. 40, there is this remarkable thing. He is represented in Heb. 10, as setting up a new system. There had been the tabernacle and the sacrifices, and no conscience perfect, and the two sides the Scripture presents are the counterpart of Lev. 16 He goes in and sets up something that never existed before; He never did this but this once; and He provides not for the removal of guilt only, but for those who had been dead in trespasses and sins. He provides for their being able to be dead to sin. He takes sin away. Was Paul a man habitually sinning? No; he was living in the power of the life of Christ, and of the marvelous work Christ had accomplished; and he knew the Lord had so presented himself before God, that all contrary to God was met in the humiliation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and says, " I reckon myself to be dead indeed unto sin."

We shall find a striking contrast between Lev. 16 and Heb. 9;10, in connection with what the Lord did. Just remark, as characteristic of this, that we do not get before that eternal redemption or salvation spoken of. There is nothing here on earth, but in heaven there is the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man, and all the sacrifices were offered in connection with the government of God. There had never been a man in heaven until the Lord Jesus Christ went there. He went into the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. Just take some verses, and we shall see what is very remarkable in Hebrews First, it is done in eternity, not in time; secondly, it involves the whole Godhead; thirdly, it is heaven, not earth. Let me read a few verses in chapter 9:11, 12: " Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come... by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." 14: " How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living

God?" 22: " Without shedding of blood is no remission." 24: " Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." 26: "Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." 28: " Christ was once offered... and unto them that look for Him shall He appear... without sin unto salvation." Now when we come to chapter x., we find more than that, not His coming in the end of the ages, but His going in to heaven; and having gone in, in the power of His own sacrifice, He sits down at the right hand of God, and the throne of God becomes-what? The abiding-place of Him who could not add anything more to His work without the denial of His own glory. Without the denial of God's thought about the work He had done, He could not add anything more to the settlement of the question of sin. See how He is spoken of here; the sort of authority He takes, not to set aside the work of Moses, but when it comes to the question of sin, " Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me." The mind rises to God, who prepared a body for Him, who had written a book about Him, rises to Him with full intelligence the Son of God able to choose the good, and refuse the evil, and all that sinful men might, bring in in connection with sin. All was defiled, and not only so, but if men brought thousands and tens of thousands of victims, all would be utterly unable, not only to satisfy God's mind about sin, but even to satisfy their own conscience. If all the flocks on all the hills were brought before me, a man full of sin, are they to be sacrificed? Is it my first-born that I am to give up? What would these do? He comes in with all dignity, " Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not; I delight to do thy will, 0 God." Thus we have God and His Son, and the way the Holy Ghost comes in as a witness to us. (v. 15.)

What was this will of which He speaks as His lot to do? Not sacrifices, but " Lo, I come to do thy will, 0 God." Nobody else had part with Him in doing it. Numbers among Jews and Gentiles will get the fruit of it. He did the work, and did it all alone. " I delight to do thy will, 0 my God." Just mark verse 9, when He said, " Lo, I come," He takes away the first, that is, all the offerings, that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified-set apart once for all. I am persuaded that until the soul gets simply to see the force and meaning of that, and not only so but conscience also, that inward exercise the mind has about itself in God's presence, gets exercised with this offering of Himself, the conscience will never be made perfect and get its proper bearing.

Just see the position, setting up a new state of things, introducing something new. How long has that true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man, how long has that state of things been in existence? I suppose, if we took the thirty-four years of the Lord's life from 1872, we should have the period. And what was the great object? God did it for His own pleasure, before the thing was announced to anybody. It is the revelation of a new character of God. The character of God! How that thought comes to light, that God and sin cannot meet! If He brings me to the place where He is, what do I find there? Not that it is full of sins, but that the great leading Person, who marks the place to me, made an end of sin before He went in there. Quite different from the tabernacle or the temple, where there was nothing but sin, sin, sin; nothing but curtains and distance from God; and now I am told to go right in. What meets me? There is the rent veil, the flesh of God's Son, going through that, the death of Christ. I go in-yes, to see what is at the other side. I go in as confessedly one who has not one word to say for myself, because He has borne the penalty; and the way up leads into the purest light possible, where the object that meets my mind is only one, the Son of man, who sat down at God's right hand. There is no guilt whatever in this place I have come to, a place where sins, where guilt, cannot live. All has been judged, all borne, recorded if you please. Because mercy shines from this place, compassion shines there, and God is presented there as meeting conscience. Ah! the sinner is received in, and seen through, God's delight in that blessed One before Him.

The question comes in very fairly with regard to atonement. What really is the thought of Scripture about it? Is it that there is a debt contracted by the family of God, and that some one has paid it off? That is not Scripture. God presents in the person of His Son all the blessedness of those traits of His character which enable Him to be just, not merely in justifying the sinner clown here, but in enabling Him to be just in receiving the worshipper right into the light where He dwells. As far as God is concerned there is no idea of any other offering. There is often a confounding of confession of sin with an offering to be presented afresh, which is a positive denial, not only of the one sacrifice, but of the character of God Himself. The blessed Lord did bear the penalty on the tree; and all one can do is in reverence to bow when one thinks of the Lord drinking that cup which the Father had put in His hand. There is no possibility of the human mind measuring it. You must be able to comprehend the Son, and know the Son, if you would know what He suffered when forsaken of God. What passed there was known to Himself most surely, to God most surely too; but the clearest thought I can get in connection with what my sin is in the presence of God, is that because my sins were attributed by God to His Son, they hindered the light of God shining in upon His Son-" My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" That thorough independence of God, which is sin, which characterized me, He bore it, bore it all, and lives at the right hand of God. He has taken His seat there, proclaiming that it was according to the foreknowledge of God that He should bear that judgment on Calvary.

See how that meets the question, all that inward balancing of the mind of man, as to his state before God and the question of sin. The believer looks it in the face. Am I a sinner? and has my sin passed all measurement? Yes; the Son of God has borne the penalty, and was forsaken of God on account of my sin. Can God look on anyone, who through grace gets an interest in the humiliation of the Son of God, and attribute to him once more that sin that was judged on the cross? And could God have a thought that that sin should survive in His presence? If He could, the God that appointed a way for bearing judgment would be leaving it still for the sinner to bear. The place this puts the soul in is perfect peace. The conscience does not want a hiding-place now. Sin would have shut man out from God's presence were it not that Christ bore the penalty on the tree.

Just look at the inexorableness of the holiness of God. Nothing could turn Him aside. I might say, reasoning as a man, I am such a contemptible creature, and He was God's Son, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. And what sort of thoughts had God? That when that Person stood in the gap there was no deviation whatever from the impossibility of God and sin meeting together. The Son of God fully able to take the place of charging Himself with the sins of all God's people, saying, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" That is what He did, and then He went to heaven to present Himself there as the One who had done the work. By one offering He hath perfected forever, not those that are purified, but those that are sanctified, set apart by blood. Have you been thus set apart? Have you recognized that blood? And has it made you own that you must walk in a new way? That having gone through the flesh of this Lord Jesus, having gone in by a blood-sprinkled way, and having met God in light, you must count yourself separated to God? If the blood of the Lord has no worth in the mind of a man, no practical effect, you will find his conscience is not perfect. The work and value of Christ's sacrifice cannot be pleaded by him. When the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ has been let by God's mercy into a soul, that person counts himself separated by it.

The difference of grace and law comes out. At Pentecost men were terrified to hear of the Lord Jesus being up in heaven. Now when you hear of the blood, if you draw nigh, you will find all has become yours.

If I have Him whose blood was shed, I know that He has made me perfect before God as far as conscience is concerned. Before a person can start to walk as a Christian safely, he must know that his conscience is perfect, and that the question of sin is settled completely. It is a test for a good many, this truth. If I have been trying to salve over things in myself, I get a measure of contentment, a certain measure of quietness. Now I am getting near to God, and I find that I am not settled. The effect on conscience when it is really perfect is greater the nearer you get to God; the nearer to the light, the more comfort you have. I have all sorts of feelings; but when I stand in the light, I have the conviction of the work and value of Him who is on the throne making it the mercy-seat. That is the character of that place where God and Christ are. If you can go by faith, then you get a perfect conscience; and the nearer you get, the more the thoughts of God about Him who is on that mercy-seat, the more the soul is filled with holy boldness in the presence of God. My conscience is fit for God Himself. God looking on me must recognize that I have no plea except this-that before His Son went into the holiest of all, after dying on the cross, He shed His blood for me, and I am admitted to God on this ground when there is complete victory over the whole question of sin, balancing all the traits of God's character, so that God is glorified in receiving a poor sinner just as he is; and then comes right down to the dark place, as it was, the bright light of God giving confidence that Christ is there. That is the place everything is dated from for us, and the conscience is in keeping with it.

It is a different question if I have a good conscience, not a perfect conscience. A good conscience is where there is no sense of having done anything in thought wrong. A perfect conscience is brought to the light where Christ is, so that the soul can say-I say it humbly-" Thy word points out to me the true tabernacle thou didst pitch. I come on that ground, the blood of Thy Son. If that is Thy ground, it is my ground." The effect is most blessed; for the known certainty that it is God's ground, produces the feeling that He that is precious to God, the Son of His love, is the One that is precious to us, and that we and God thoroughly understand one another, and the conscience is perfect in His presence.

As to worship, the priests had to be continually offering sacrifices. What sort of priests are we? Part of a royal priesthood. The Lord has taken His place on high, and has here people, part of a royal priesthood. Peter speaks of it (1 Peter 2:9), " Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood." Are we to bring sacrifices? Yes. " By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name."

The question of sin is never settled but by the blood shed on Calvary. When in the family of God, if there is failure, is the person to be cast out? Never. Is the sin to be covered up? Never. Then comes in confession-of what? If I fail twenty times a day, I hope I should make confession; I am quite prepared to say it in all simplicity. If I fail to man, I confess to man; if to God, I say that I failed in walking consistently with His complete forgiveness. I have been washed, but have been tampering with the world to-day. I ought to confess, if I have been tampering with the world, that I am heartily ashamed of it; it is not like Christ, and I am one of His, and have been doing something inconsistent. Because I am a son, I should do nothing but serve Him. What could I do down here but serve? Could I go and sit down with ease and comfort in the midst of frivolity? I could not do it. Could the Son of God down here seek merely the unbending of His mind by conversation? I have a purged conscience, and everything that disparages having a conscience fit for God makes light of the blood; not by confession rested in, but in making the confession is power found for resisting evil that was confessed.

I see evil everywhere around me; I look up and see the true tabernacle, the accepted sacrifice, the One by whom is virtue and power. The way is open, right into the holiest of all. To me there is something wonderful in all the infiniteness of the character of God, all the unsearchableness of God, all that expressed Him shown out by the person of the Lord Jesus Christ; ar d I who in judgment before Him always presented a dirty spot within me, am made whiter and cleaner than snow, perfectly spotless, nothing to hinder God's intercourse with me, nothing to hinder the aspiration of my heart.

Another thing; ah, God does rest in His love there! Heaven is a wonderfully bright place, full of glory, a place where our hearts ought to be continually turning, going to get refreshed in Him in God's delight, in Christ. I find the mind of God so occupied with Christ, and in connecting me with Him, that the delight of God in Christ is joy to my own heart. Second thing; there is sin going off, taken away. What is the limit? Christ is the scapegoat.

In Hebrews you do not find the new nature spoken of. If God were to say, " I will take you to heaven just as you are," I hope I should not go so; I hope to get rid of the sin, the sense of contrast between Him in His perfectness and me in my evil. I shall be like Him; but the consciousness of sin comes in in all my communion with Him, and it will be got rid of most certainly. It was no accident; He might have taken the sin clean out of us, but the battle is still going on. By leaving sin in us, He gave us the opportunity of voluntarily identifying ourselves with Him against the old nature. When He got Israel out of Egypt He formed circumstances to drive them in upon Himself, to make Him their choice as He had made them His choice. He leaves us to prove whether we will take part with Christ against the world, the old man, and Satan, who loves to blend the old man and the new together. He is presented to us in humiliation; he that believes is crucified, dead, buried. The old man is dead in God's mind; then I reckon myself so, it is the stoppage of sin. I have lusts and habits of the old nature, and not of the new. God looks on me as dead together with Christ; He reckons me dead; then I can cease from these things.

As to the scene up there, God has got His rest in Christ, evil has been fully put away through faith reckoning self dead, and ceasing from sin. There is no fearful looking for of judgment. Guilt is the state of a man having sinned waiting for the penalty; but the penalty is paid, I have not that to bear. Christ has paid it. Sin is put a stop to in the will of the believer. Sin is self-willed independence of God. I am sure, if anyone has learned what His grace is, he will say, " Whenever I have a will of my own in contrast to Christ's will, I choose to die to my own will; I have made up my mind to do that. I cease from sin."

A Few Leading Thoughts as to the Book of Psalms: An Article from The Present Testimony

Most of the Psalms are expressions afore-prepared by the Supreme Being for His earthly people—expressions of sentiments produced in their hearts, in and by circumstances through which they have to pass.

Among His people I include here the Messiah Himself.1

These expressions give us, in truth, the part which the Spirit takes, as working in the hearts of saints for the earth, amid their sorrows and exercises, and even in their human infirmities and failures, of which, of course, the Messiah had none; and He thus gives, beforehand, the thoughts of faith, and the truth suited to all that happens.

B. Observe here,

1St. These expressions belong to the godly remnant in Judah. and Israel in the last days.

Secondly. It is the spirit of Messiah—the spirit of prophecy which so speaks?2

3rdly. While the sins of the people would morally hinder their having confidence in God amid their distresses, yet He alone can deliver them, and to Him they must look in integrity of heart.

In sum, then, the Psalms are the expression of the spirit of the Anointed One, either in the Jewish remnant, or in saints in Israel, or in His own person as suffering for them, in view of the counsels of Elohim with respect to His elect earthly people.

C. Observe, too, that the positions in which Messiah suffers are three:

1St. From man for His righteousness and love, and for His testimony in that which is good, by which He revealed God. Here He calls for vengeance.

2ndly. From God for sin. Here He is all alone; and blessing and grace the result.

3rdly. From Satan's power and darkness, and the anticipation of death, besides what is referred to in Heb. 2:10. God had not yet given up Israel; but their state was judicially dealt with under His government. Devils and leprosy, sickness and famine, etc., filled the land, as well as the sword of; and tribute to, Caesar heavy upon them, and ten and a half tribes gone, no one knew where. Christ went through that which enables Him to be afflicted in all the afflictions of His own people, and will enable Him to sympathize with them hereafter (Heb. 5:7-9), when as the angel of Jehovah's presence, He comes to save them.3

At the close of His life—we may say, from after the paschal supper—He bare in principle, in His soul, all the distress and affliction under which Israel will come through the government of God—not condemnation, but still the consequences of their sin.

In John 12 He anticipated it, but afterward entered into it.

It was apostate Israel's hour and the power of darkness; and He looked to the Father—not yet forsaken.

D. The Book of the Psalms contains five books.

Book 1, 1-41 gives the state as a whole of the Jewish remnant, or of those of it who are not driven out of Jerusalem, and hence of Messiah Himself, as connected with it. We have thus more of His personal history in it than in all the rest.

Book 2, 42-72, views the remnant as cast out of Jerusalem. Messiah's place is with them, and so they hope. His coming in restores them, in the view of prophecy, to relationship with Jehovah—a people before Him, 45, 46. Previously, when cast out, they speak of Elohim rather than of Jehovah. In 51, they own the nation's guilt in rejecting Him.

Book 3, 73-89, shows the deliverance and restoration of Israel as a nation: Jerusalem at the close being the center of His blessing and government.

78. electing grace stands in royalty when all seems lost.

88. the dread effects of being under law.

89. all mercies centering in Messiah—longed for.

Book 4, 90-106, Jehovah at all times the dwelling place of Israel: they look for Him to deliver. For this the Abrahamic names of El Shaddai and Gnelion are introduced. Messiah comes in and says, "I own them in Jehovah, the Elohim of Israel." There He is found. Then there will be judgment on the wicked and deliverance of the righteous. The full divine nature of Messiah, once cut off, is made the ground of His having the blessings: He is unchangeable, Jehovah. Then, blessing on Israel and creation, and judgment on the goim—but all of that mercy which had so often spared them.

Book 5,107-150, a kind of moral on all: the close triumphant praise.

Note—It is common in the Psalms for the beginning of a psalm to give its thesis, and the after-verses to give that which the spirit passed through in reaching it. This remark will be found often to help the reader in a psalm.

The same principle is true as to the Psalms in their consecutive order; and, perhaps, as a book.

Some great truth is brought forward (as in 1 and 2), and then a series of Psalms follow (as 3-7), expressing the sentiments of the remnant: and then the issue (as in Psa. 8).

Book 1

Let us now turn to the First Book, (1-41. 41 Psalms), and 1St. as to the general structure.4 Psa. 1 to 8 give the basis of the whole Five Books.

Psa. 1 and 2 are standard psalms giving great principles or facts: then

3-7. A series—thoughts produced thereby in the faithful (A), closing with a new fact in

8. the result in the purposes of God.

9. and 10. state of facts in the latter days.

11-15. A series: compare 3-7. (B.)

16-24. Messiah, and the whole Divine testimony; Messiah crucified—atonement.

25-39. A series (C); compare (A) and (B).

40. Messiah's intervention.

41. His people's blessing.

Then, 1, the standard of man's walk on earth raised; and 2, Messiah, earth-rejected, but heaven-owned. (3-7. The thoughts and feelings of the faithful thereupon.)

8. The Son of Man glorified in heaven.

9-10. The basis of what follows to end of 15, being the historic condition of the remnant in the latter day.

(11-15. thoughts and feelings to which that condition gives rise.)

16-24. Messiah entering into the circumstances of the faithful few; the testimonies of Elohim; the sufferings of Messiah, and the final manifestation of His glory when He is owned as Jehovah on His return.

The faithful few are seen in 17, 20, 23; creation and law as testimonies in 19; Messiah the main subject of the rest.

(25-39. Thoughts and feelings of the faithful few thereunder.)

40, 41. The true source of Messiah's intervention in the counsels and plans of Elohim; His place in humiliation and the blessing of him who can enter into that, His humiliation, and that of the believing ones associated with Him.

Observe—The point of departure of the feeling and of the whole of what is said—is any godly Jew whatever in the latter days. Into that Messiah has entered in His own way. But the point of moral departure is always the remnant and their state.

To take it now more in detail:

The first verse or few first verses generally give the thesis of a psalm.

The godly and their blessing under divine government; judgment of the ungodly; moral government on earth made good by judgment in Israel.

Messiah, and the counsels of Jehovah as to Him.

(3-7) the remnant in their moral traits thereon, and position.

3. the condition in general in contrast with 2; and faith a stay.

4. appeals to righteousness; also, in Him, and in themselves.

5. cry to Him who discerns between good and evil.

6. appeal to mercy for selves, and judgment on the wicked.

7. cry to Him who judges the righteous and will judge the wicked. How long?

8. Son of Man owned as set over all things.

(9 and 10. there are 1St, the humble; 2ndly, the goim: 3rdly, the wicked, 9. 5, and 10:15 and 16; the 2nd and 3rd perish together.)

9. Jehovah's intervention in judgment for His own.

10. position of the sorrow and trial of the remnant till Jehovah arises.

Note the character of the wicked (Jew) as to idols and Babylon, and as to Messiah: ver. 12, the humble cry, ver. 16, Jehovah, king forever.

(11-15. founded on 9 and 10.; circumstances.)

(11-15. the remnant in their thoughts and feelings.)

11. What can the righteous do when evil reigns in Jehovah's land? He is in heaven and loves righteousness.

12. He will cut off the proud and deceitful lips.

13. How long, Jehovah! My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

14. He will judge from heaven, for Elohim is in the generation of the righteous.

15. Who shall then abide with Him? The upright in heart.

(16-24. Messiah's place as to the remnant.)

16. Messiah takes formally His own place in grace among the remnant. In thee I trust.

17. the Spirit of Messiah in the remnant, and in Himself amid the wicked. Hear the right.

18. His humiliation the way to and basis of the deliverance and exaltation of Israel, from Egypt till the millennial reign.

19. Testimonies to God. Creation and the law of Jehovah.

20. the remnant associate themselves with Messiah in His sufferings. See 18 and 19.

21. the answer on high to the 20th.

22. Messiah has suffered for sin from God: God glorified about sin will bless man.

23. confidence in the shepherd, Jehovah (compare 16). He knows what to give us.

24. the character of those who will have a part with Jacob (comp. 17): glory on earth.

(25-31. the position of the remnant on a new ground and a different footing.)

25. the remnant, 1 and 2, trust; 3, waiting; 4, 5, guidance; 6, mercy; 7-11, pardon of sins; 9, the meek; 12-14, the fearers' hopes; 15-21, the meek one.5

26. integrity and trust in Jehovah pleaded; and separation sought from the wicked.

27. 1-6, the confidence of the believer; 7-12, cry of distress. Singleness of eye, and the call "Seek ye my face;" and waiting.

28. cry, not to be confounded with the wicked; 6, Jehovah hears; 7, His Messiah.

29. Let the mighty hear the mightier voice of Jehovah. He has a temple and a people.

30. Trust in Jehovah better than trust in prosperity; 3-9, a living people to be blessed upon earth.

31. trust and righteousness and looking for guidance for His name's sake, and for deliverance from enemies.

32. forgiveness of sins, on confession—and no guile. His eye guides.

33. the full result of deliverance is celebrated. He is the joy of the upright.

34. His government is sure: faith can praise at all times.

35. deliverance sought to the praise of Jehovah in Israel restored.

36. warning to the conscienceless wicked. Jehovah my trust! they are fallen.

37. Wait on Him and keep His way, and all is yours.

38. and 39. Governmental rebuking for sins lies on the remnant. Full chastening for sins from the rod of government has reached the sheep of the flock, outwardly and then inwardly.

38. under the stroke of Jehovah, disgrace, shame, and fear, felt and accepted.

39. under the stroke of Jehovah the emptiness of all flesh felt and owned.

40. waiting on Jehovah, Messiah is delivered. He alone has done His whole will (comp. Phil. 2:6-8).

41. Blessed the man who knows this place of the poor of the flock.

Resume—Thus we have (1-8) the whole scene in its principles and result in the purpose of God. 9, 10. the historical circumstances of the Jews in the latter day, whose state forms the groundwork and subject of the whole book. Their state shown, we then have the way of Messiah traced. His life is passed in review; but especially its close.

End of the First Book6

Book 2

Book 2 (42-72, 31 Psalms) gives us the godly cast out of Jerusalem—their anguish, and faith, and hope of restoration. Messiah's deliverance and previous humiliation. The glorious and yet lowly One, and then royal rule in David's line established in Israel.

This ends the dealings of the remnant in the land, looked at as apart from the rest.7

42. Cast out by the heathen, the godly pants after God; hopes in Him, and (43.) longs for the holy hill, tabernacle, altar.

(44-48. from their first appeal to God to their re-establishment in Zion. 49. a comment thereon.)

44. Faith looks back; that gives faithfulness, and this gives hope in God.

45. Messiah comes in and takes the throne.

46. the God of Jacob is then a refuge. He has His city, etc., on earth. He is with us.

47. He is a great king over all the earth.

48. Mount Zion the center of all the blessing.

49. man and all his glory fades; but God is great as a redeemer.

(50. and 51. the separative judgment in Israel connected with sin against God; the remnant's confession.)

50. (1 and 2, thesis). God's arraignment of His earthly people.

51. The true remnant's confession.

(52-64 the exercises of the remnant; the trial side to faith; 65-67 the bright side to faith and hope.)

52. the wicked man will not abide, for the goodness of God abides.

53. God looks down from heaven upon the infidel scoffers.

54. Save, God! for the sake of Thy name, from strangers outside and oppressors inside. Jehovah my praise!

55. anguish from faith finds rest in God. Jehovah will save.

56. the tears of the godly amid the bitter enmity of the wicked are put into God's bottle. He will keep our feet from falling.

57. God a refuge. His wings a covert till all evil is overpast.

58. Righteousness was asleep in the congregation. Judgment sought.

59. Lord God of Israel, awake to visit. All the heathen against me; slay them not, lest my people forget.

60. O God! Thou hast cast us off; turn Thyself to us again. Through Thee we shall do valiantly.

61. from the ends of the earth I cry to thee; Thou hast heard my desires.

62. My soul waits upon God; from Him my salvation: how long?

63. in a land of drought, Thy loving-kindness better than life; my lips praise; Thou my help; the shadow of Thy wings my joy.

64. the enemy shoots at the perfect: God will shoot at him. His judgment shall be owned of all. (65-67. see above, above 52.)

65. Praise still is dumb in Zion; yet to Thee shall all come; Thy chosen, we shall dwell with Thee.

66. His intervention in judgment: purging the souls of His own.

67. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

(That which follows gives the introduction of Israel into its position.)

68. God at the head of His people; their joy and the shame of the wicked. His character as so doing known of old. The Lord ascended up on high to receive; gives as man, and for rebellious man, Himself—the root of it all. Israel restored.

69. but the pathway into the same blessedness (68.) is moral glory proved in the depths of humiliation. Messiah (as in Psa. 22) was alone, forsaken of God when atonement was made. But having been thus made sin, He can in spirit and heart enter into all the sorrows of the remnant of Israel, into which as under God's government the nation brings itself. It will not be forsaken, then, though judged in time, and He who had been once forsaken can sympathize with the remnant, and pray against the wicked mass.

70. a summing up of the principle on which the spirit speaks in the remnant, and of the association of Messiah with their sorrows: one poor and needy trusted in God.

71. the sum of all God's ways with Israel from the beginning. He will not leave them at the last in the depths.

72. the full reign of peace and royal blessing.

End of the Second Book.8

Book 3

Book 3, (73-89, 17 Psalms) takes up Israel as well as Judah; but only the remnant in Israel. There is only one "Psalm of David" in it. The history of the nation as such is given, still a true-hearted remnant is distinguished. Christ, Israel, and general principles.

73. "God is good to Israel, to such as are of a clean heart." The prosperity of the wicked perplexes a good man's mind, till he goes into the sanctuary and sees the end.

74. O God, why hast Thou cast us off forever? They have cast fire into Thy sanctuary. Arise! plead Thine own cause.

75. When Messiah receives the congregation He will judge uprightly.

76. In Judah is God known; His name great in Israel; terrible to the kings of the earth.

77. The godly man goes back in trouble to the faithfulness of old of the Most High to Israel: the ways of God with himself.

78. The history of Israel's failure under law, and the security of blessing on the principle of electing love.

79. The heathen lay waste Jerusalem. Wilt Thou let them say, Where is now their God?

80. Israel under the shepherd care of God, as in the wilderness. Let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand.

81. Israel, supposing itself upon the old historic ground, is judged for unfaithfulness.

82. God judges the judges of the earth, and even of the land.

83. God invoked to judge the confederacy, that men may know that Jehovah is 'Most High over all the earth.

84. joy in the prospect of appearing in Zion.

85. restored to the land, they look for the full blessing of millennium rest.

86. the meek yet confiding expectation of a godly soul, of blessing from Jehovah.

87. Jehovah loves Zion; reckons the Redeemer and the redeemed to her as children: all my springs are in Thee.

88. looking to a Savior from utter ruin and condemnation in self, under law.

89. Jehovah's mercies centered in and clustering round Messiah, when men had no claim to any blessing.

End of the Third Book.9, 10

Book 4

Book 4,11 (90-106, 17 Psalms). The coming of Messiah; this connects the nation with Messiah, as well as with Jehovah.

(90 the nation looking to Adonay's return to bless them, that His beauty may be on them. 91 The connection of Messiah as a man on this earth with the nation. 92 gives, in prophetic celebration, the great result into which 93-100.12 enter in the whole establishment of it. 101 and 102 deeply interesting details as to Messiah. 103 and 104 the general result as illustrating Jehovah's ways as to Israel and the earth. 105 and 106 His dealings from the first, and Israel's ways with Him.)

90. The believing people's faith in Adonay ever their dwelling place; His works.

91. Messiah confesses Jehovah as His God; and the promised blessing is declared His.

92. celebration of the open display of the results of 91.

93. Jehovah reigns; He is mightier than the wicked. His testimonies sure and holy.

94. cry to Jehovah the God of vengeance to show Himself as against the wicked.

95. Oh, come, let us [Israel] sing unto Jehovah.

96. all the earth is bidden to come, in the spirit of the everlasting gospel.

97. His coming is now celebrated. His judgments in power precede Himself.

98. Jehovah has made known His salvation and mercy to Israel.

99. He is sitting between the cherubim in Zion.

100. all the earth, or land, called to come and praise.

101. He declares how He will govern His house and land.

102. the contrast between the isolation of the man of sorrows, and the divine glory of the same; and glory.

(103-106 the results and the covenant in grace, and the responsibility of Israel's history. 103 the voice of Messiah in Israel is praise as to Jehovah's dealings with them. 104 the same in creation. 105 God's ways in grace from Abraham to the giving of the land, now to be possessed in grace. 106 Israel's ways from first to last; but looking for Jehovah's mercy which endures forever.)

103. forgiveness and salvation for the remnant'; the blessing from Jehovah.

104. Jehovah as creator of the earth: sinners will be consumed out of it.

105. Thanks to Jehovah who gave unconditional promises to Abraham, and acts in grace to Israel. (N.B.—The previous book does not go back beyond Moses.)

106. Praise Jehovah; His mercy forever: we have sinned with our fathers; but He is our Savior. Praise ye Him.

(As the 3rd so the 4th book speaks of all Israel, not only of mere Jewish circumstances.)

End of the Fourth Book.13

Book 5

Book 5, (107-150). The people restored; a survey of God's ways, and a divine comment on it all, ending in praise.

107. The goodness of Jehovah. Israel redeemed from the enemy and brought back from every land: His mercy forever. In temporal things on earth.

108. I praise God, and will praise Him among the nations and all races: He will deliver all our heritage for us.

109. imprecation on the apostate; but Jehovah stands at the right hand of the poor who trusts Him.

110. Jehovah exalts Messiah at His right hand on high, until He sets Him in Zion as Melchizedek:

(111-113 a hallelujah as to Jehovah's ways in delivering Israel.)

111. Jehovah's works glorious: He has brought redemption to His people; and His fear the beginning of wisdom.

112. Blessed the man that fears Him: the desire of the wicked shall perish.

113. Praise for the same, only "for evermore," and "from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same."

114. The presence of Jehovah with His people, as in the redemption from Egypt.

115. Cry to Jehovah to glorify His name in contrast to idols and to Israel (blessed of Him), and those that fear Him to trust in Him.

116. I love Jehovah; He brought me up from the grave's mouth, and saved me from despair.

117. the nations to praise Jehovah for His mercy to us (Israel).

118. Compassed by nations, thrust sore at by the enemy, chastened sore of Jehovah—yet am I delivered. The gate of Jehovah. The rejected stone now made head of the corner. The day made by Him. Blessed is He that comes in the dame of Jehovah.

119. the law written in their hearts, they confess they had gone astray.

Aleph. Blessed the returner who walks with the Lord.

Beth. The word associates with God-cleansing.

Gimel. Leaning on Divine mercy, if the law is in the heart.

Daleth. Soul cleaves to the dust: the word quickens.

He.. Looking for Divine guidance and teaching.

Vav. For establishment before adversaries through instruction.

Zain. Reckoning upon the word of Jehovah-is strength: for

Cheth. Thus, Jehovah is my portion; those that fear Him my companions.

Teth. I can look upon circumstances with God's eye and mind.

Tod. Thou art my Creator; thou wilt guide me' even through afflictions.

Caph. My soul faints for Thy deliverance from evil.

Lamed. But for Thy word I should have perished in affliction.

Mem. Joy in the law, and its effects on the intelligence.

Nun. It guides and comforts me in spite, of enemies and snares; and

Samech. "Gives the horror of vain thoughts.; and terror at the judgments on wickedness.

Ain. Cry to Jehovah to work they have made void Thy law.

Pe—Schin. Give the effects of love to Jehovah's law and testimonies —its value— His trials, walk, grief at transgressors. He looks for teaching, quickening, keeping, and holds fast.

Tau. A general summing up of the whole.

*** Is this the moral state of Israel in the last days, when in the land, the law is written in their hearts ere full deliverance and final blessing are come?

(120-134. Songs of degrees. Israel in the land, but the power of Gog not yet destroyed.)

120. I cried to Jehovah, Save me from the lying lips and deceitful tongue; and was heard.

121. Jehovah, appealed to, is security.

122. Jerusalem, the alone center of blessing.

123. Filled with contempt of the wicked, I wait for Him that dwells in the heavens.

124. had not Jehovah been for us, all, all would have been lost.

125. trust in Jehovah; He judges the wicked, but is peace to Israel.

126. they that sow in tears shall, through Jehovah, leap in joy.

127. all temporal blessings on earth will be from Jehovah.

128. such blessings promised to those that fear and own Him.

129. Jehovah is righteous: by past sorrows He loosened from us the cords of the wicked.

130. forgiveness with Thee that thou mayest be feared.

131. humbled, I have so walked: let Israel trust in Jehovah forever.

132. Grace acted by power in bringing the ark to a sure dwelling-place: and David's seed supplants David's self as root of blessing.

133. the beauty of His people dwelling together in unity under Jehovah.

134. all His servants to bless Jehovah the blesser. (135 and 136 calls to praise Jehovah and His works.)

135. call to praise Jehovah, God of Jacob and Israel; contrasted with idols.

136. answer to the call.

(Here close the Historical Psalms.)

(137-150. A sort of supplement.)

137-144. characteristic sorrows and hopes of blessing and deliverance. 145-150 millennial praises.

137. the captives' love to Zion, and joy at the thought of the judgment on Babylon and Edom.

138. I will praise—for mercy, and for Thy truth, and for Thy care of the lowly one.

139. searched by and known to Thee, I can trust Thee for good.

(140-144. Israel restored, but in conflict: on the road to full blessing.)

140. Deliver me, O Jehovah, from the wicked. Thou wilt maintain the upright.

141. Jehovah, keep my lips and heart amid the wicked that are to be judged.

142. Jehovah my refuge and my portion amid trouble.

143. cry in extremity for Jehovah's merciful interference for me.

144. Jehovah, my strength! What is man? Give judgment, and there will be blessing.

145. Messiah and the remnant, Spirit-led, in dialog, anticipating the millennium with praise of Jehovah.

(146-150. the full final praise.)

146. commences the full final praises. His character towards Israel in the last days.

147. praise for His mercy to Israel, and that He who rules in creation has shown His word to Jacob:

148. all, and all creation to praise Him who has exalted the horn of His people.

149. praise from the congregation of saints, and joy in Israel; He has given them power to destroy the heathen.

150. summons to universal praise to Jehovah.

End of the Fifth Book.14

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