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“The Entrance of THY WORDS Giveth Light”

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(b) *Learning* of the faith, and in the faith; such will find new adventures day by day in which faith may be tested, its qualities discovered, its endurance tried, and its powers strengthened. As their guide they had a real pioneer in the path of faith, one who had blazed the trail, and had found in every adventure One Whose grace was sufficient, and Whose help was ever at hand.

Are we without a "leader" in the race of our faith? Surely not, we have One ready and able to show us the way, for has He not trodden it before?

(c) *Loving*. There could be no reality in their relationship without love. Between the master and his disciples, between the teacher and his pupils, between the pioneer and his followers there springs up a real and lasting affection which manifests itself in so many ways. "Love seeks not her own", and in the seeking of the good of the other finds its finest expression. It is that expression that Paul seeks and finds in his "true child". May we, too, give love its fullest expression in our relationships with fellow-believers and so show our "genuine" character and call forth a manifestation of theirs also.

THE HEBREW PSALTER

BY E. W. ROGERS

The word *Selah*

This is a most interesting word that recurs throughout the Psalter. It cannot be ignored without the most serious loss. Whatever its original meaning or significance it is plain that it is intended to indicate a pause, so that the reader (or the singer) may have time to meditate upon that which he has just uttered. It can best be represented in the English phrase "think of that!" Only examples can be given. In verse 2 of Psalm 3 attention is called to the fact that many are prepared to discredit the idea that God can or that God will help His servant when in trouble. Think of that suggestion! But verse 4 is the response: experience is undeniable; it cannot be gainsaid, and in this verse the Psalmist recounts how that he cried to the Lord and secured an answer; think of that!

Or, consider Psalm 32. Think of the mental and physical

damage wrought by unconfessed sin! See vv. 3 and 4. Then think of the remarkable attitude taken up by the righteous God, who hearing the sincere confession of the guilty both removes his punishment and pardons his iniquity: Think of that! (see v. 5).*

Or, look at Psalm 46: In vv. 1 to 3 we find those who are fearless despite the most convulsive disturbances in the physical and political world; think of that! Fearless in such a storm. Then we are assured that the great Jehovah of hosts is with them; and that the God Who not only makes the hosts of stars, men, angels, etc., interests himself in such an undeserving 'worm' as Jacob. Think of that! (see v. 7).

Yet again we may look at Psalm 24: In vv. 1 to 6 we have the moral qualities set out of those who are fit to ascend into the hill of the Lord: Selah! stay and ponder over these and examine yourself in the light thereof and see if you so qualify. Surely none can be there on that ground save One! But the second part enumerates the triumphs of the Lord of glory. He, who once outside of the doors of Jerusalem was given a cross, now re-enters those 'everlasting doors' having proved Himself mighty in the great "Armageddon battle," and asserts and receives His rights. "He is the King of glory". Let Him in. Think of that!

And so we might have gone on. The Bible Student should not ignore this word nor should he refuse to obey its voice. That to which it is attached is of the highest moment and demands reflective meditation.

N. T. usage of the Psalms

As to this we can but give hints. It is a theme which, if dealt with at all adequately, would require a separate volume.

Nestle's Greek Testament sets all such quotations out in heavy type so that they are readily discernable. Westcott and Hort in their Greek N.T. give a list of all such quotations at the end, which is very handy for reference. These should, if possible, be always ready to hand, though being in India as I write this article, I am not able to refer to them.

We may, however, glance at the book of the Acts. Peter quotes Psalm 116 on the day of Pentecost (ch. 2) showing that while David is the author of that Psalm he could not be its subject.

* Where the context admits the word 'iniquity' may be read 'punishment' as well.

Only One could fit it fully and that was Jesus who so recently had been raised from the dead. He further cites Psalm 110 (see Acts 2:34) in proof of the present exaltation of Jesus at God's right hand in heaven. Psalm 118:22 is quoted in Acts 4:11 by Peter who pertinently adds the words "by you", identifying the builders and thus charging home their guilt. In prayer they find the Psalms of service and (see Acts 4:24) they quote Ps. 146:6 and Psalm 2:1 and 2. The reader should examine this carefully, especially v. 27 of Acts 4 to show how illumined the apostles' minds had become as to the meaning of the old Hebrew Psalter. Surely the Lord must have opened it up to them as He showed them in the Psalms, the Law and the Prophets the things concerning Himself.

When Acts 8:21 is linked with Psalm 78:37 the writer becomes aware that in Simon Magus is represented a type of person which existed in the far away days of Israel's Egyptian sufferings and which will persist to the end.

The Psalter became the handbook of Paul from which he quotes freely. In Romans 3 it serves his purpose to demonstrate the sinfulness of men (see vv. 10 to 18). Psalm 143:2 is inspired authority for his doctrine of the utter hopelessness of man in the flesh (see v. 20). Psalm 32 becomes the O.T. basis of his doctrine of forgiveness (see Romans 4:7 and 8). Paul gathers from the experiences of the Lord as set out in Psalm 22 that none who hope in the Lord will be ashamed (see Ps. 22:5 and Rom. 5:5). Psalm 44:22 comes to his aid when he thinks of the difficulties that beset the child of God left as he is in a world of iniquity (see Rom. 8:36). And so we might go on with Paul's writings. In all these we discern the unity of Scripture; its authority in all its parts; it becomes plain that the canon of Scripture is like a body with a variety of limbs, but all necessary to the whole.

Some quotations in the N.T. seem to vary from the original in the Old. This may be due to the fact that the LXX is used, or that the writer led by the Spirit of God makes an alteration. This is not an infringement of the rights of others in an earlier writing. The author of the O.T. is the same as that of the N.T., namely God by His Spirit. He, therefore, has the right to cite his former writings in another sense and to another purpose in a later writing.

Take for example Hebrews 10:5 to 7, cited from Psa. 40:6 to 8. In the Psalm reference is made to the "digging of the ears". In

the citation in Hebrews this is made to read of the "preparation of a body". Doubtless the Greek translators gave the sense instead of a literal translation. If a sculptor is framing a body and has come to the head, he would dig out the ears. Therefore, thought they, evidently a body is being prepared and so they put the whole instead of the part, the body instead of the ears. This is an amplification of the meaning of the Psalm, applied as it must be to the Lord Jesus and referring particularly to His incarnation. All such variations in quotations should be carefully noted. The student must pay heed to these. It will take time and demand concentrated thought but the harvest gleaned will well repay the energy expended.

It is true that the Psalter may furnish "daily readings". Cursorily read they cannot fail to help on the daily road. But how much more help would be received were they to be read in the light of the foregoing simple principles! They are not hard to grasp. Once grasped, the habit will be formed of reading them to greater profit because they are better understood.

So far we have considered general principles which ought to be observed in reading the Psalms. We will now study certain specimen Psalms in order that the student may get such hints as will enable him to study others.

Psalm I

This Psalm may be divided into two: vv. 1 to 3 form Part I and the remainder Part II. Part I has to do with the godly man and the second part has to do with the wicked. The former is in the singular—the godly man, the latter are in the plural. In the present time the majority is on the side of the wicked; ultimately however, the nett result will be otherwise, for in this, as in all things, He "must have the pre-eminence" (Col. 1:18). God is not "on the side of the big battalions."

Of the godly man three things are predicated. He is (a) separate, (b) meditative and (c) prosperous.

(a) *Separate*. This is not a monastic or ascetic separation for our Lord Jesus, who was the Godly Man, was "a friend of publicans and sinners". But never for one moment did He submit to be guided by their counsel; never did He adopt their "way"; nor did He ever sit with scorners. Peter did, but not He. He was "holy, harmless and undefiled" (Heb. 7:26). What He was

in life was endorsed by God's action in resurrection when He "separated Him from sinners". Like the clean animal which had a cloven hoof, He had a separate walk.

(b) *Meditative*. "The Law of the Lord" was His constant delight. In it He heard His Father's voice to which "morning by morning" He opened His ear. To it He went "as the learner" (see Isa. 50:4, 5). He meditated thereupon "day and night". As the clean animal to which we have already alluded, He "chewed the cud", turning the word over in heart and mind. That word was to Him like a "river", and He was as a "tree planted" beside it. As in Eastern countries irrigation channels are cut out from main rivers, thus fertilizing and beautifying the surrounding country, so, too, our Lord Jesus cut out from the main river of the Word of God "streams" (see v. 3, R.V.) which made Him morally what He was.

Because of this He ever found the word a tool ready to hand in times of contest. When tempted by the Devil He could say "It is written"; "it is written"; "it is written"; quoting from the 6th and 8th chapters of Deuteronomy. Had He that very morning been meditating on that particular part of scripture, and thus was furnished with the requisite arrows with which to repel the Adversary?

(c) *Prosperous*. Being situated beside these channels the godly man ever has the evidence of life, a non-withering "leaf": He produces seasonable "fruit"; and all to which He puts His hand "prosper". "Behold my servant shall prosper: He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high" (Isa. 52:13). Like David in his better days, "whithersoever he went he prospered" (1 Sam. 18:5 R.V.). The student may pursue this line of thought through the New Testament.

As to *separation*: "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord God Almighty" (2 Cor. 6). For many in India the cost of such a step is tremendous. How precious then are the appended promises!

As to *Meditation*, "Give attention to the reading, to the exhortation, to the teaching" (1 Tim. 4:13). Although this may primarily refer to the public reading of the scripture, yet the principle abides; it applies both to literates and illiterates.

As to *Prosperity*, we must not think, in these days when the

Lord Jesus is rejected, in terms of material success. For His sake that often has to become forfeit (Phil. 3:8), but we must consider the prosperity of the soul to which John referred when writing to Gaius (3 John 1). That is only secured in so far as we follow these precepts of Psalm 1.

On the other hand these are the "wicked" of whom certain things are enumerated. The student should take care when reading the Psalms to note whether the word "wicked" is in the singular or plural. The context will determine. Is the *verb* plural or singular? If the reference is in the singular, usually "the wicked One", that is, the Antichrist is prophetically in view. The Psalm in which that term is found will then be discovered to be a prophetic Psalm. But here in Psalm 1 it is plural, and denotes a class. Concerning them three things are stated:

(a) They are *without life*; they are but dead chaff; without weight; and without any principle of self-propagation. John Baptist spoke of the great Winnower Who will winnow the floor of this world. The chaff will be cast into unquenchable fire, but the wheat will be gathered into the garner (Matt. 3:12).

(b) They are *without security*. They will be driven away by the wind. "The breath of His mouth" will consume them as it will that 'Wicked One' (2 Thess. 2:8). They shall not stand. To them will be spoken the words "Depart from Me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41).

(c) They are *without hope*. Observe the words "shall perish" and contrast them with similar words in John 3:14 and 16. Faith in Christ is the only means of escape from such a doom. When in the judgment they appear before Him Who judgeth righteously they will not be able to maintain their cause, they shall not stand; the sword will fall and they will perish. But "God is not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter 3:9). He "has no delight in the death of a sinner" (Ezek. 18:23, 32), and He has done all that is possible whereby they should be saved. None, therefore, can complain.

These two classes of individuals—the godly and the wicked—have persisted in the world ever since Cain and Abel. They respectively represented them; they were the heads of each line; and these lines are with us today.