

Is Christ In The Psalms?

by William J. Coleman

“The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” The Psalms foretell the incarnation of Christ, the deity of Christ, the eternal Sonship of Christ, the offices of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King, the betrayal of Christ, the agony of Christ, the trial of Christ, the rejection of Christ, the crucifixion of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the ascension of Christ, and the second coming of Christ to judge the world.

Jesus Christ is the subject of the Psalms . They tell us of holiness of heart and life, and Jesus was the one perfectly holy man in the moral history of the world. The Psalms tell us much of the blessedness of the good life and Jesus was the most blessed of men. The Psalms tell us often of the enemies of the good man, and Jesus was encompassed with enemies who at last sent Him to the cross. The Psalms tell us of the punishment of the wicked and Jesus is at last the Judge of all. Jesus is set forth in the Psalms as the Covenant God of the true Israel. He is the Redeemer, the Rock, the Refuge, the Shepherd, the Shield, the Fortress, the High Tower of his people. Christ is the sun of righteousness around which the whole Psalter revolves.

God gave His people a book of praises in the Old Testament. Why did He not give such a book in the New Testament? Could He not have endowed some one of the Apostles to write a book of Psalms? Is God's power limited in providing poets any more than in providing prophets? Could not the Holy Spirit have dwelt richly in some one of Christ's disciples to write songs for the new dispensation? The answer seems to be that the songs they then had were the praises of God in Christ and that they were prepared with heavenly skill to be the songs of all the ages. Jesus told no one to write Psalms. No warrant, no promise of the Spirit is found in the New Testament for any one undertaking to write a new book of Psalms. What He had inspired long ago was full of truth, suited to the latest age and the need was already met. He Himself sang what He had inspired and appointed to be sung.

The Gospels tell us much about the kingdom; the Psalms tell us much about the King. Despite the rebelling of kings and princes, the Father hath appointed his Son to be King in Zion; and he shall rule the nations with a rod of iron. David with his throne on Zion is the chosen type of Christ Who will rule from heaven as David ruled on earth. “For the kingdom is the Lord's; and he is the Governor among the nations.” “Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also; and him that hath no helper.”

The New Testament contains two hundred and forty-three quotations from the Old and one hundred and sixteen of these are from the Book of Psalms, showing that our Lord and his Apostles felt that the Psalms had Him, his life, experience and work, as their subject. Jesus on the cross expressed his greatest agony and his final trust in quotations from the Psalms. The Psalms are in the Gospels and the Gospel in the Psalms. Both have the same subject and their accounts of Jesus coincide. The Gospels give the life of Jesus in story; and many of the Psalms that same life in experience. One gives the outer life of the Son of man; the other his inner thoughts and feelings.

It is remarkable that the Psalms to which some Christians object as un-Christian, as the 69th and the 109th, are Messianic, and tell of the sufferings of Christ and the doom of his enemies. It is not dangerous to object to the work of the Holy Spirit? One might as well object to the 23rd Chapter of Matthew. Christ is to be the Judge and he will deal with every one according to his deserts.

As long as Christians hold to the singing of the Psalms in the worship of God, they hold to the justice of God and the atonement wrought by Jesus Christ that satisfies that justice. No conscientious Psalm-singer doubts the deity of Jesus Christ, or the validity of the atonement, the twin pillars of evangelical preaching and practice. Opened understandings will see the Savior in the Psalms.