

## Young People's Forum (III.15)

Dear Young People,

In the last forum article I was showing you that the Psalms of the Old Testament Psalter speak of all the work of Christ that he performed while on earth. I mentioned a few of these Psalms; I could point you to more: Psalm 110, for example. Our Psalter version in verse 1 goes like this:

The Lord unto His Christ hath said,  
In glory I enthrone Thee  
Till all Thy foes in triumph led,  
Their sovereign King shall own Thee.  
From Zion shall Jehovah send  
Thy scepter, till before Thee bend  
Thee knees of proud rebellion. (Psalter number 302.)

You should read the other two verses as well.

I might add as well that here too we have an instance of singing the Psalms with understanding, and the need to work at this. There is a line in the verse, which reads: "Their sovereign King shall own Thee." The problem lies with the word "own", and we have to realize that this word "own" means here, "admit" or "confess." We ourselves use the word "own" in that sense, when we say, when someone charges a group with doing wrong and they know that they were the ones that did it, they admit their fault by saying "We own up to it."

Another Psalm is Psalm 89, in which God promises David a son who will sit on David's throne forever. It is a beautiful Psalm and, incidentally, proves the unconditionality of God's covenant of grace in Jesus Christ. I will not quote the verses here, but you can read them for yourself. They are verses 1-6 of Psalter number of 243.

Another Psalm is Psalm 40, a versification of which you may find in Psalter numbers 124 and 125. In this Psalm the Psalmist begins a thought that Paul later develops in Ephesians 5 where he describes marriage as a picture of Christ and his church united in the marriage of God's covenant. Psalter 124 speaks of the glory of the Bridegroom, as the title indicates, "The Royal Majesty of Christ," and Psalter number 125 speaks of the church as the bride of Christ, again as the title indicates.

So many, many Psalms speak directly of Christ's work and prophesy of the great salvation Christ brought by means of His work.

But now I want to speak of another aspect of the Psalms that are important for the church to sing, a point that I made only in passing in an earlier letter. The church is singing these songs; we must not forget that. And, as we noticed, the church is singing about many things. It is singing loudly and joyfully of all the great work Christ has done for His church. It is singing of what great works God has done in creation and providence: Psalter numbers 401 – 404; and how God ought to be praised for all his works Psalter numbers 407 – 413. We sing in the Psalters to call our fellow saints, all the angels in heaven, and even the creation itself to join us in praising God; Psalters 411 – 413.

The apostle in his epistle to the Ephesians speaks of admonishing each other in our singing (Eph. 4:24), something important for us to do. Psalter number 262 speaks this kind of language. And so there are many different kinds of Psalms.

But what I want to begin to discuss with you now is how these Psalms are spiritual biographies of you and me. While reading the Psalms a few weeks ago, my wife said to me, "I can always find myself in the Psalms." What she meant was this, "In whatever mood I am in and whatever problems I face, there is a Psalm that expresses exactly how I feel." How true!

But there is an important reason for this. I have insisted before and I insist again that every Psalm is really Christ speaking. I do not mean only those Psalms that directly predict some aspects of Christ's work, but I mean, every single Psalm is Christ singing in the Psalm.

That means two things. It means, of course, first of all that Christ through his Spirit inspired the Psalms, so that they are infallible, that is, without error. But it means in the second place, that Christ is singing **about himself** and telling us about himself in all his lowly birth, suffering, death, resurrection, exaltation, and his coming again at the end of the world.

Now, put that together with the fact that every Psalm is a kind of spiritual biography of every child of God. What does that mean? It seems to me to be pretty obvious that that means that Christ and his people are singing the Psalms together.

But it is not really Christ and his people singing the Psalms together, as much as it is Christ singing **in** us and **through** us.

It is at this point that I must admit that I find things a bit difficult to explain. But what I mean is that the Psalms express our spiritual biography only because we are his possession and are united to him so that we are one with him. We are so much one with him that what Christ suffered while on this earth, we suffer; the very same things in the very same way, so that Christ is, so to speak, living in us in such a way that everything he experienced in his life, we experience in our life. And we experience these things for one reason only: we belong to Christ and are in him, and he makes us his possession and lives in us.

While I want to be a little more specific by demonstrating this from the Psalms, let me just point to the first verse of Psalm 22; "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" We all know that Christ spoke that in his fourth cross word. But we sing the same thing and mean by singing it: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken **me**?" We are forsaken of God sometimes in the same way Christ was forsaken; it is a dreadful thing, but it is true.

Yet, we are forsaken of God along with Christ, because we belong to Christ, because Christ sang this for himself, and is now singing it in and through us as a part of our experience.

But because Christ's abandonment by God was necessary for Christ to accomplish salvation for us, it is also necessary for us to experience such abandonment

so that we can be saved. Abandonment so as to be made glorious! It was for Christ; it is for us. Why? Because we belong to Christ and Christ sings in us and through us of his abandonment, for his abandonment was his and our salvation, and our abandonment is the only way to heaven for us.

I hope you can understand what I am trying to say. Will you think about it? And ponder it? And read the Psalms this way? And maybe next time I write, I can make it a little clearer.

With our love in Christ,

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