

Subject: The promise of the 23rd Psalm – “Divine Love is caring for me”

PART ONE - God’s Promise

From the Bible

Isaiah

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Isaiah 40:1 (KJV)

Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour:

Isaiah 43:1-3 (KJV)

Listen, far-flung islands, pay attention, faraway people:

“When the time’s ripe, I answer you. When victory’s due, I help you. I form you and use you to reconnect the people with me, To put the land in order, to resettle families on the ruined properties. I tell prisoners, ‘Come on out. You’re free!’ and those huddled in fear, ‘It’s all right. It’s safe now.’ There’ll be food stands along all the roads, picnics on all the hills—Nobody hungry, nobody thirsty, shade from the sun, shelter from the wind, For the Compassionate One guides them, takes them to the best springs.”

Heavens, raise the roof! Earth, wake the dead! Mountains, send up cheers!

God has comforted his people. He has tenderly nursed his beaten-up, beaten-down people.

Isaiah 49: 1, 8-10, 13 (The Message)

From *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy

Truth's immortal idea is sweeping down the centuries, gathering beneath its wings the sick and sinning. The promises will be fulfilled.

SH 55

PART TWO - The 23rd Psalm

Psalms

God, my shepherd! I don't need a thing.

You have bedded me down in lush meadows, you find me quiet pools to drink from.

True to your word, you let me catch my breath and send me in the right direction.

Even when the way goes through Death Valley, I'm not afraid when you walk at my side.

Your trusty shepherd's crook makes me feel secure.

You serve me a six-course dinner right in front of my enemies.

You revive my drooping head; my cup brims with blessing.

Your beauty and love chase after me every day of my life.

I'm back home in the house of God for the rest of my life.

Psalm 23 (The Message)

From *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*

[DIVINE LOVE] is my shepherd; I shall not want.

[LOVE] maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

[LOVE] leadeth me beside the still waters.

[LOVE] restoreth my soul [spiritual sense]: [LOVE] leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for [LOVE] is with me; [LOVE'S] rod and [LOVE'S] staff they comfort me.

[LOVE] prepareth a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: [LOVE] anointeth my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house [the consciousness] of [LOVE] for ever.

PART THREE - God's Tender Care

The Miracle of the Ax Head

Second Kings

Now the company of prophets said to Elisha, "As you see, the place where we live under your charge is too small for us. Let us go to the Jordan, and let us collect logs there, one for each of us, and build a place there for us to live." He answered, "Do so." Then one of them said, "Please come with your servants." And he answered, "I will." So he went with them. When they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. But as one was felling a log, his ax head fell into the water; he cried out, "Alas, master! It was borrowed." Then the man of God said, "Where did it fall?" When he showed him the place, he cut off a stick, and threw it in there, and made the iron float. He said, "Pick it up." So he reached out his hand and took it.

2 Kings 6:1-7 (NRSV)

God Sends Ravens to Feed Elijah

First Kings

Now Elijah said to Ahab, "As the Lord the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word." The word of the Lord came to him, saying, "Go from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the Wadi Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. You shall drink from the wadi, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." So he went and did according to the word of the Lord; he went and lived by the Wadi Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the wadi.

1 Kings 17:1-6 (NRSV)

The Fiery Furnace

Daniel

Nebuchadnezzar was so filled with rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face was distorted. He ordered the furnace heated up seven times more than was customary, and ordered some of the strongest guards in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and to throw them into the furnace of blazing fire.

So the men were bound, still wearing their tunics, their trousers, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the furnace of blazing fire. Because the king's command was urgent and the furnace was so overheated, the raging flames killed the men who lifted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

But the three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down, bound, into the furnace of blazing fire.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up quickly. He said to his counselors, "Was it not three men that we threw bound into the fire?" They answered

the king, "True, O king." He replied, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the fourth has the appearance of a god."

Nebuchadnezzar then approached the door of the furnace of blazing fire and said, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men; the hair of their heads was not singed, their tunics were not harmed, and not even the smell of fire came from them.

Daniel 3:19-28 (NRSV)

James

Take the old prophets as your mentors. They put up with anything, went through everything, and never once quit, all the time honoring God. What a gift life is to those who stay the course! You've heard, of course, of Job's staying power, and you know how God brought it all together for him at the end. That's because God cares, cares right down to the last detail.

James 5:9-11 (The Message)

From Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures

The ancient prophets gained their foresight from a spiritual, incorporeal standpoint, not by foreshadowing evil and mistaking fact for fiction. When sufficiently advanced in Science to be in harmony with the truth of being, men (and women) become seers and prophets involuntarily, controlled not by demons, spirits, or demigods, but by the one Spirit.

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From beginning to end, the Scriptures are full of accounts of the triumph of Spirit, Mind, over matter. Moses proved the power of Mind by what men called miracles; so did Joshua, Elijah, and Elisha.

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(definition of Miracle from the Glossary chapter) Miracle. That which is divinely natural,

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The miracle of grace is no miracle to Love.

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Acquaintance with the Science of being enables us to commune more largely with the divine Mind, to foresee and foretell events which concern the universal welfare, to be divinely inspired, — yea, to reach the range of fetterless Mind.

To understand that Mind is infinite, not bounded by corporeality, not dependent upon the ear and eye for sound or sight nor upon muscles and bones for locomotion, is a step towards the Mind-science by which we discern man's nature and existence.

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Mortals must gravitate Godward, their affections and aims grow spiritual, — they must near the broader interpretations of being, and gain some proper sense of the infinite,

This scientific sense of being, forsaking matter for Spirit, by no means suggests man's absorption into Deity and the loss of his identity, but confers upon man enlarged individuality, a wider sphere of thought and action, a more expansive love, a higher and more permanent peace.

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Spiritual living and blessedness are the only evidences, by which we can recognize true existence and feel the unspeakable peace which comes from an all-absorbing spiritual love.

When we learn the way in Christian Science and recognize man's spiritual being, we shall behold and understand God's creation, — all the glories of earth and heaven and man.

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PART FOUR - IN CONCLUSION

Psalms

By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation;
you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.

Psalm 65:5 (NRSV)

AND From *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*

The divine Love, which made harmless the poisonous viper, which delivered men from the boiling oil, from the fiery furnace, from the jaws of the lion, can heal the sick in every age and triumph over sin and death.

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Hymns

411 - Rejoice, ye people, praise His name

148 - In heavenly Love abiding

389 - My God, my help and defender