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GOSPEL STANDARDS SOCIETY

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Prayer Meeting Address by Mr J. Delves on Monday evening 28.12.70
at "Ebenezer" Clapham.

Hymns 1110, 959. Reading: Psalm 39

This Psalm of David appears to have been written under very afflictive conditions. It is thought by some that he may have been in grievous bodily affliction under which he entreats the Lord to spare his life, being a stranger here as were his fathers. Feeling that desire in his heart that his life might be spared before the Lord should take him, he says, "Spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more".

Some think that this may have connection with that sad experience of David when he fled the city and when he was cursed by Shimei, cursing him as he went along and casting up stones and dust. Abishai said, "Let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head", but David said, "Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him". So he says, "I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me". "I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred". He seems to have some sober reflections about things, he has a sense of the need of forgiveness. "Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish". This is connected with a particular sense of the shortness of life and the vanity of everything here. "My days are as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee". It seems to bring him to this "And now, Lord, what wait I for?", as though he might say, what can I look for here, what comfort can I find in this world, "mine age is as nothing", "every man at his best state is altogether vanity", every man walketh in a vain show, surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them" "What wait I for?". Reflecting upon such conditions he asks what is there to live for here in this world? It seems all trouble, affliction, distress, hard things. "What wait I for?" "What can I expect other than this? but he goes on to say "My hope is in Thee", to bear me up, to bring me through; under these hard times. "My hope is in Thee".

This may sometimes be the case with you, with us, especially when things go heavy and you may become very disheartened. We may say life seems hardly worth living; you may come to such a position as this, "What wait I for", what is there here? There is nothing to comfort my soul, strengthen my faith and revive me, all is trouble and affliction, "What wait I for", my hope is in Thee".

This is very different from the case of a rebellious spirit that may be in a worldly person who may fret and kick at things and rebel against them. He does not come to this, "My hope is in Thee". This is for a believer, "My hope is in Thee", to be brought through these things; my hope is in Thee to be supported under them, to be delivered from them; my hope is in Thee to bring me one day to a better

land where there will be no more pain or crying and the former things will have passed away.

"My hope is in Thee". Do you know what this means perhaps when you have been very low in mind or spirit or body or in trying circumstances to come almost to despair and you say Lord "What wait I for?". You have something to do with the Lord about in it. It is as though you take it all up to Him and lay it before Him and say, "What wait I for?". Is there nothing better than this, this load of trouble? "My hope is in Thee". This is the grand secret, it shows that the Lord's people in their troubles and afflictions have to do with their God, they take them to Him, put their hope in Him, and not only so but they see His hand in them, as did David.

In the three following verses we might just notice that he sees the hand of God in those things through which he is passing, and of course he may have had some very sad reflections upon his unhappy fall and dreadful sin. In verse 9 he says, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth" - why not? - because Thou didst it". Is not this very expressive? That seemed to bring him to a silence. Why should I reply against this? It is the hand of God, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it". In verse 10 he says "Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand"; Thou didst it Lord, Thou didst strike this blow that almost consumed me. What this was we do not know. Some have thought this stroke may have relation to the death of the child of Bathsheba, for you know what distress of mind he was in when the child was ill. Yet when the child was dead he refreshed himself and seemed so fully resigned to the hand of the Lord in it. Yet before that, when for-seeing it, he prayed to have the trial removed and so in verse 11 he says "When Thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity". He seems to look up to the Source in these things. He does not say as many of the world may, I do not know why this trouble has come, I do not deserve it. They say all this, they cannot understand it, they say they cannot understand how God can allow such things. But what does the exercised child of God say? He says, It is a rebuke from the Lord, "When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity". This is what it brought him to. It seemed to bring him down almost to the very extreme end. He says "Every man is vanity". He sees vanity in everything here. "What wait I for, my hope is in Thee". You can understand that can you not? When you are passing through things, the exercise they may bring and the conflict and the trial and the devil's insinuations and the unbelief of your own heart, may bring you to an extreme condition. "What wait I for? Yet there is this, "My hope is in Thee". May we be favoured to feel this, because whatever may come in providence it does not take this away, "My hope is in Thee" and this is the privilege, comfort and happiness of a believer in his God.