

PSALMS 92 TO 97

the earth saw and was in birth-throes:⁴⁴

- 5 The mountains like wax melted at the presence of Jehovah,
at the presence of the Lord⁴⁵ of the whole earth:
- 6 The heavens declared his righteousness,
and all the peoples saw his glory.
- 7 Put to shame are all they who were serving an image,
who were boasting themselves in nothings:⁴⁶
all messengers divine⁴⁷ bow ye down to him.
- 8 Zion heard and was glad,
and the daughters of Judah exulted,—
Because of thy righteous decisions⁴⁸ O Jehovah.
- 9 For thou Jehovah art Most High over all the earth,
greatly hast thou exalted thyself above all messengers
divine.⁴⁷
- 10 Ye lovers of Jehovah! hate ye wrong.
He preserveth the lives⁴⁹ of his men of kindness,
from the hand of lawless ones he rescueth them.
- 11 Light hath arisen⁵⁰ for the righteous one,
And for such as are upright of heart gladness.
- 12 Be glad O ye righteous in Jehovah,
and give thanks unto his Holy Memorial.

(Nm.)

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 92

A Song To Sing On The Lord's Day¹

It is good to say, "Thank You" to the Lord, to sing praises to the God who is above all gods.

2 Every morning tell Him, "Thank You for Your kindness," and every evening rejoice in all His faithfulness.

3 Sing His praises, accompanied by music from the harp and lute and lyre.

44. Cp. 96:9.

45. Heb.: 'adon.

46. "Nothingnesses"—Dr.

47. Or: "gods." Heb. 'elohim. But see 8:5, 96:4.

48. Or: "thy judgments."

49. Or, "persons"; Heb. *naphshoth*; U.: "souls." Intro., Chap. III. "Souls."

50. So in some MSS. (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.). Cp. 112:14—Gn. M.T.: "is sown."

1. Literally, "for the Sabbath day."

STUDIES IN PSALMS

4 You have done so much for me, O Lord. No wonder I am glad! I sing for joy.

5 O Lord, what miracles you do! And how deep are Your thoughts!

6 Unthinking people do not understand them! No fool can comprehend this:

7 That although the wicked flourish like weeds, there is only eternal destruction ahead of them.

8 But the Lord continues forever, exalted in the heavens,

9 While His enemies—all evil-doers—shall be scattered.

10 But You have made me as strong as a wild bull. How refreshed I am by your blessings!²

11 I have heard the doom of my enemies announced and seen them destroyed.

12 But the godly shall flourish like palm trees, and grow tall as the cedars of Lebanon.

13 For they are transplanted into the Lord's own garden, and are under His personal care.

14 Even in old age they will still produce fruit and be vital and green.

15 This honors the Lord, and exhibits His faithful care. He is my shelter. There is nothing but goodness in Him!

PSALM 93

Jehovah is King! He is robed in majesty and strength. The world is His throne.¹ O Lord, you have reigned from prehistoric times, from the everlasting past.

3 The mighty oceans thunder Your praise.

4 You are mightier than all the breakers pounding on the seashores of the world!

5 Your royal decrees cannot be changed. Holiness is forever the keynote of Your reign.

PSALM 94

Lord God, to whom vengeance belongs, let Your glory shine out. Arise and judge the earth; sentence the proud to the penalties they deserve.

3 Lord, how long shall the wicked be allowed to triumph and exult?

2. Literally, "anointed with fresh oil."

1. Literally, "The world is established . . . Your throne is established."

PSALMS 92 TO 97

4 Hear their insolence! See their arrogance! How these men of evil boast!

5 See them oppressing Your people, O Lord, afflicting those You love.

6, 7 They murder widows, immigrants, and orphans, for "The Lord isn't looking," they say, "and besides, He¹ doesn't care."

8 Fools!

9 Is God deaf and blind—He who makes ears and eyes?

10 He punishes the nations—won't He also punish you? He knows everything—doesn't He also know what you are doing?

11 The Lord is fully aware of how limited and futile the thoughts of mankind are,

12, 13 So He helps us by punishing us. This makes us follow His paths, and gives us respite from our enemies while God traps them and destroys them.

14 The Lord will not forsake His people, for they are His prize.

15 Judgment will again be just and all the upright will rejoice.

16 Who will protect me from the wicked? Who will be my shield?

17 I would have died unless the Lord had helped me.

18 I screamed, "I'm slipping Lord!" and He was kind and saved me.

19 Lord, when doubts fill my mind, when my heart is in turmoil, quiet me and give me renewed hope and cheer.

20 Will You permit a corrupt government to rule under Your protection—a government permitting wrong to defeat right?

21, 22 Do You approve of those who condemn the innocent to death? No! The Lord my God is my fortress—the mighty Rock where I can hide.

23 God has made the sins of evil men to boomerang upon them! He will destroy them by their own plans! Jehovah our God will cut them off.

PSALM 95

Oh, come, let us sing to the Lord! Gave a joyous shout in honor of the Rock of our salvation!

2 Come before Him with thankful hearts. Let us sing Him psalms of praise.

1. Literally, "the God of Jacob."

STUDIES IN PSALMS

3 For the Lord is a great God, the great King of¹ all gods.

4 He controls the formation of the depths of the earth and the mightiest mountains; all are His.

5 He made the sea and formed the land; they too are His.

6 Come, kneel before the Lord our Maker,

7 For He is our God. We are His sheep and He is our shepherd! Oh, that you would hear Him calling you today and come to Him!

8 Don't harden your hearts as Israel did in the wilderness² at Meribah and Massah.

9 For there your fathers doubted Me, though they had seen so many of My miracles before. My patience was severely tried by their complaints.

10 "For forty years I watched them in disgust," the Lord God says. "They were a nation whose thoughts and heart were far away from Me. They refused to accept My laws.

11 Therefore in mighty wrath I swore that they would never enter the Promised Land, the place of rest I planned for them."

PSALM 96

Sing a new song to the Lord! Sing it everywhere around the world!

2 Sing out His praises! Bless His name. Each day tell someone that He saves.

3 Publish His glorious acts throughout the earth. Tell everyone about the amazing things He does.

4 For the Lord is great beyond description, and greatly to be praised. Worship only Him among the gods!

5 For the gods of other nations are merely idols, but our God made the heavens!

6 Honor and majesty surround Him; strength and beauty are in His Temple.

7 O nations of the world, confess that God alone is glorious and strong.

8 Give Him the glory He deserves! Bring your offering and come to worship Him.¹

9 Worship the Lord with the beauty of holy lives.² Let the earth tremble before Him.

1. Literally, "above."

2. Exodus 17:7.

1. Literally, "enter His courts."

2. Or, "in the priestly robes."

PSALMS 92 TO 97

10 Tell the nations that Jehovah reigns! He rules the world. His power can never be overthrown. He will judge all nations fairly.

11 Let the heavens be glad, the earth rejoice; let the vastness of the roaring seas demonstrate His glory.

12 Praise Him for the growing fields, for they display His greatness. Let the trees of the forest rustle with praise.

13 For the Lord is coming to judge the earth; He will judge the nations fairly and with truth!

PSALM 97

Jehovah is King! Let all the earth rejoice! Tell the farthest island to be glad.

2 Clouds and darkness surround Him! Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.

3 Fire goes forth before Him and burns up all His foes.

4 His lightning flashes out across the world. The earth sees and trembles.

5 The mountains melt like wax before the Lord of all the earth.

6 The heavens declare His perfect righteousness; every nation sees His glory.

7 Let those who worship idols be disgraced—all who brag about their worthless gods—for every god must bow to Him!

8, 9 Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah have heard of Your justice, Lord, and are glad that You reign in majesty over the entire earth and are far greater than these other gods.

10 The Lord loves those who hate evil; He protects the lives of His people, and rescues them from the wicked.

11 Light is sown for the godly and joy for the good.

12 May all who are godly be happy in the Lord and crown¹ Him, our holy God.

EXPOSITION

It will be observed that there is but one original headline to Pss. 92 to 97; and therefore it will be no great strain on our credulity if, from this circumstance, we assume that these psalms, thus undivided from each other in the Hebrew text, at a very early period in their history formed one continuous Service of Song for a *Sabbath Day*. That the series was composed of

1. Literally, "give glory to His holy name."

STUDIES IN PSALMS

several distinct psalms, probably written by two or three psalmists, is clear from internal evidence.

Ps. 92 is intensely *personal*: as witness the phrases *hast made me glad—I will ring out my joy* (ver. 4)—*my horn—I am anointed—mine eyes—my lurking foes—my wicked assailants—mine ears* (vers. 10, 11). It is at the same time thoroughly *experimental*: which is evident, not only from the above expressions, but also from the writer's *thankfulness* (ver. 1), and from his persuasion that he has been blessed with some insight into Jehovah's *works* and *plans* (ver. 5), as well as from that sense of nearness to God which leads him to designate him *My Rock* (ver. 15). The writer of the psalm is probably a *king* in the line of David: which accounts for his expectation that his *horn* will be exalted, in spite of his unscrupulous *foes* (vers. 10, 11). He is not only a king, but an enthusiastic *musician*: understanding what it is to *sweep the strings* (ver. 1), and appreciating differences in musical instruments, as his selection of the deep-toned *lyre* to accompany his poetic soliloquy in his royal chambers sufficiently indicates. Out of these observations emerges the natural conclusion, that its writer was King Hezekiah.

Ps. 93 forms a striking contrast. It is by no means personal; but public, lofty, grand. It propounds a thesis worthy of the most far-seeing prophetic gift: for it tells of nothing less than an especial assumption of sovereignty by *Jehovah himself*, who on the basis of his *ancient rule and being* makes a new Divine advance to manifested kingship over the earth. The psalm is but brief, calling *sea-streams* to witness to the Divine Majesty, and claiming that the Divine *Testimonies* and *Temple-worship* are confirmed by Jehovah's Royal Proclamation. The two most remarkable things about this short psalm are: *first*, that it gives the key-note of the series; in which, be it noted, Jehovah is proclaimed King three times, which key-note is carried over to the abbreviated Sabbath Service of Song which we may assume to be formed by Pss. 98, 99; so that *four times* in the double series is this Proclamation made; *second*, another remarkable thing is that King Hezekiah—himself a king in the royal, covenant line of David—should have given so much prominence to such a theme, if he prepared this Service of Song, a theme to give currency to which looks greatly like an act of self-effacement on his part, *as though* neither he nor any of his descendants could be regarded as *The Coming King*. Not only, then, does this psalm demand a lofty prophetic gift for its production, but it requires a prophet

PSALMS 92 TO 97

of unquestionable standing and commanding weight to secure its insertion in this Service of Song. These conditions are remarkably well fulfilled in ISAIAH; especially if we may safely come back—as it would appear we may—to the old-fashioned custom of regarding *him* as the author of the whole of the book which goes under his name. For, in that case, we have not only the vision of Isaiah, chapter 6, to give a commanding place to the conception of Jehovah's becoming King of all the earth, but we have patterned by Isaiah himself—of course under Divine guidance—in 52:7 almost the exact formula for proclaiming Divine Kingship which stands out so prominently in these psalms. Isaiah is the man who has had the vision, and who is possessed by the conception which the vision conveys. And he has the age, the standing, and the unquestionable spiritual authority to secure Hezekiah's ready acceptance of Jehovah's own Royal proclamation of Himself as suitable for a large place in this Sabbath Service of Song. From this point of view, the bringing together of the two men—Isaiah and Hezekiah—under the dominance of a great expectation, throws an unexpected but most welcome sidelight on that strange wail of disappointment issuing from Hezekiah's sick-room (Isaiah 38) that now—if he must at once die—he will “not see Yah in the land of the living,” as under Isaiah's tuition he had conceived that he might. So that any imagined unlikelihood that Hezekiah would make such a theme so prominent in his Sabbath Service of Song, is completely overborne by the evidence which shews how naturally he might have done this very thing.

Ps. 94 differs from both the preceding: from 92 by not being mainly joyous, and from 93 by rather lamenting that Jehovah has not become King, than by proclaiming that he has ascended his earthly Royal Seat. This psalm, again, has a rather strong personal note, and may very well have been written by Hezekiah himself or at his dictation. If so, however, its totally different tone would drive us to conclude that it must have been written at another and probably an earlier time, evidently a time of sore national trouble. Indeed, so predominant is the note of lamentation throughout this psalm, that some critics have concluded it to be wholly out of its place where it now stands. Perhaps they have been hasty in their judgment. But let us glance through the psalm. Three stanzas (vers. 1-7) suffice to make it clear that Israel's foes are dominant, relentless and persecuting. That they are foreigners is already made probable

STUDIES IN PSALMS

by their being called *lawless* (ver. 3) and practically certain by the way they speak of *the God of Jacob* (ver. 7). Their doings are so wicked as to call for the *vengeance* of the Judge of all the earth, and so protracted as to lead the sufferers to cry out *How long, O Jehovah!* Their *pride* and *arrogance* strongly remind us of the haughty speeches of that "villain" Rabshakeh, the Assyrian general. Stanza IV. (vers. 8-11) induces the belief that even some Israelites were in danger of falling away to the foreigner, and needed to be severely reasoned with. Stanza V. (vers. 12-15) might have been a photograph for which Hezekiah himself sat; and goes far to persuade us that the actual writer of this psalm was one of Hezekiah's men, who could say of his master what his master would scarcely have said of himself. In Stanza V. (vers. 16-19) the voice of Hezekiah is again plainly heard: the drawing is true to the life—Hezekiah has confronted the *silence* of death—has *slipped*—has had *disquieting thoughts* and restorative *consolations*. Stanza VI. (vers. 20-23) reminds us that all the while, behind the arrogant menaces of Rabshakeh, stood the iniquitous *throne* of Assyria, which, as cruel and God-defying, could well be described by a godly Israelite as a throne of *engulfing ruin*. Suffice it to remind ourselves of the signal way in which these perfect tenses of prophetic certainty—*hath become a lofty retreat, hath brought back on themselves their trouble* were at least typically fulfilled in the overthrow of Sennacherib. Such is the psalm. Is there need any longer to ask, what it does here in this Sabbath-day Service of Song: as though the Jewish Sabbath were not, above all things, a day of hallowed memories? On what principle it appears so interlocked, as it does here, with Jehovah's Royal Advent, we may yet discover. After this, we need not concern ourselves further with the question of authorship in its bearing on this Sabbath-day Service of Song. With Hezekiah and Isaiah at work in its production, we are ready for any contingency which Hezekiah's Chief Musician could suggest; since we can conceive of no suggestion as to either words or music, which Hezekiah and his godly helpers could not easily supply. But let us rapidly push forward this survey to a conclusion.

Ps. 95 is remarkable for the facility with which, after a 4-line invitation to worship, it resolves itself into two 10-line stanzas, the former joyous, and the later admonitory. As to the fitness of the latter to find place here,—with such waverers in view as the previous psalm reveals (94:8-11), it cannot be

PSALMS 92 TO 97

said that the solemn warning of this psalm (95:7-11) is in any wise out of place. It is, further, something to remember—that this Sabbath-day's Service of Song points onwards to a Divine Sabbath of Sabbaths, which undoubtedly will be inaugurated by the Coming Divine King.

Ps. 96 enriches us with fresh thoughts: by bringing us into sight of a *new* manifestation of Divine Kingship, calling for a *song that is new*; that it commissions a particular *land* to herald the gladdidings of the Coming Divine Reign to the other *nations* of the earth (vers. 2, 3, 10); that, while there are Divine *representatives* (Elohim) who are real beings (ver. 4), there are other so-called Elohim ("gods") who have no existence (ver. 5); that even in the Coming Divine Reign, there will be a *sanctuary* (ver. 6) into which the *families of the peoples* (ver. 7) can enter with their presents (ver. 8) and there *worship* (ver. 9); and that such a changed state of things will amount to a *New Birth* for or a *Readjustment of the world* (vers. 9, 10), whereat all Nature—including the *heavens*, the *earth*, the *sea*, the *plain*, the *forest*—may well go into ecstasies; for the good reason that Jehovah is *coming to reign* over all the *peoples of the world in righteousness and faithfulness* (vers. 10, 13).

Ps. 97, the last of this longer Sabbath-day series, is notable in that, whatever cause for fear and trembling any of the individuals and nations of the world may have, in prospect of this *new* and immediate Divine Rule, the great event itself is mainly an occasion for joy: *Let the earth exult*. Probably not without peculiar interest to Europeans (and it may be Americans also) the West—under the significant Biblical name of *Coastlands*—is particularly called upon to *rejoice*:—a glimpse into the future which was, as we know, vouchsafed to Isaiah, independently of this psalm (Isaiah 24:15, 41:1, 42:4, 49:1, 59:18, 60:9, 66:19). Other things observable in this closing psalm of the first series are: that the promised Divine Advent is to be, in some way, open and palpable to *the whole earth*; conveying its testimony of Divine *righteousness* to all men's minds (vers. 4-6); that it will be sufficiently sudden to put some *boastful* idolaters to *shame* (ver. 7); sufficiently demonstrative to cause *all true messengers divine* to prostrate themselves before the world's Divine King (ver. 7); and yet sufficiently local in some phases of its manifestation to give occasion to carry the joyful tidings thereof to *Zion* and the *daughters of Judah* (ver. 8). Real *divine messengers*, such as kings and judges, will be permitted

STUDIES IN PSALMS

to govern longer, only on condition of being manifestly in subjection to *Jehovah* as *Most High over all the earth* (ver. 9). No wonder that such good news as this should be finally employed by way of admonition: *Ye lovers of Jehovah! hate ye wrong* (ver. 10). They who persist in wrong will be punished. The wronged—the imperilled—are to be *preserved*, to be *rescued* (ver. 10). Truly we may say, *light* has *arisen* for the *righteous* king Hezekiah (ver. 11), and for myriads besides who will open their eyes. And, ye *righteous*, who are made *glad* in *Jehovah*, forget not to *give thanks to his Holy Memorial*; with the understanding that “his Holy Memorial” is “his Holy Name,” *Jehovah* (Exod. 3:15, Ps. 135:1-3); that is, *Yahweh*; that is, *the Becoming One*; and that here, in this beautiful Sabbath Service of Song, He hath prophetically *BECOME the King of all the earth*, as unveiled to your believing and rejoicing eyes.

For further “General Reflections,” see at the close of Ps. 99.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

PSALM 92

1. Why are these psalms (i.e. 92 through 97) placed under one heading?
2. What is meant by the thought that this psalm is both intensely *personal* and also thoroughly *experimental*?
3. The writer of the psalm is a king and a musician. How do we know this?

PSALM 93

1. What is the theme of this psalm?
2. How is the theme developed?
3. What are the two most remarkable things about this psalm?
4. Why does Rotherham feel Isaiah is probably the author of this psalm?

PSALM 94

1. This psalm differs from 92 or 93. In what way?
2. What is the general tenure of this psalm?
3. Rotherham seems to have a definite set of circumstances for the writing of this psalm. What are they? Who is “Rabshekeh”?
4. In what way is this psalm appropriate as a part of the sabbath day service in the Temple?

PSALMS 92 TO 97 AND 98 AND 99

PSALM 95

1. We should sing and be thankful to God—i.e., according to verses 1 and 2. Give at least two reasons for doing so according to verses 3-5.
2. Show how the solemn warning of this psalm was appropriate when written and also today.

PSALM 96

1. What are the *new* thoughts introduced by this psalm?
2. This is called “a missionary song”. Why?
3. The material reign of Christ on earth in Jerusalem in a restored Temple seems to be the suggestion of the comments on this psalm. Discuss.

PSALM 97

1. Someone seems to think America and Europeans should take a particular interest in this psalm. Why?
2. Read and interpret Isa. 24:15; 41:1; 42:4; 49:1; 59:18. Discuss.
3. Rotherham has a marvelous ability of seeing a literal earthly fulfillment of vs. 4-11. Discuss.

PSALMS 98 and 99

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

A Shorter Service of Song (for a Sabbath Day).

ANALYSIS

Psalm 98: An Invitation to Sing the New Song of Jehovah's Victory in behalf of the House of Israel.

Psalm 99: Jehovah's Assumption of Kingship Proclaimed: with a Renewed Call to Worship.

PSALM 98

(Lm.) Psalm.

- 1 Sing ye to Jehovah a song that is new,
for wondrous things hath he done,—

STUDIES IN PSALMS

his own right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory!¹

- 2 Jehovah hath made known his victory,
to the eyes of the nations hath he unveiled his righteousness:
- 3 He hath remembered his kindness and his faithfulness to the
house of Israel,
all the ends of the earth have seen the victory¹ of our God.
- 4 Shout ye to Jehovah all the earth,
break forth and ring out your joy and make ye melody:
- 5 Make ye melody to Jehovah with the lyre,—
with the lyre and the voice of psalmody;
- 6 With trumpets and the sound of the horn
shout ye before the King—Jehovah!
- 7 Let the sea thunder and the fulness thereof,
the world and they who dwell therein:
- 8 The streams—let them clap their hands,
together the mountains—let them ring out their joy:—
- 9 Before Jehovah for he is coming to judge the earth:
he will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with equity.

(Nm.)

PSALM 99

(Nm.)

- 1 *Jehovah hath become king*²—let the peoples tremble,
enthroned on cherubim—let the earth quiver.
- 2 Jehovah in Zion is great,
and high is he above all the peoples.
- 3 Let them thank thy name great and fearful:
- (4) "*Holy is he.*—4 and strong,
a king who loveth justice."
Thou hast established equity,
justice and righteousness in Jacob hast thou thyself wrought.
- 5 *Exalt ye Jehovah our God,*
and bow down at his footstool:
"Holy³ is he!

1. Or: "salvation."

2. As in 93:1, 96:10, 97:1.

3. Some cod. (w. Sep., Vul.): "For holy"—Gn.

PSALM 98 AND 99

- 6 Moses and Aaron among his priests,
and Samuel among the callers on his name,—
callers [were they] unto Jehovah and he used to answer
them:
- 7 In a pillar of cloud used he to speak unto them:
they kept his testimonies,
and a statute he gave to them.
- 8 Jehovah our God! thou thyself didst answer them,
a forgiving GOD becamest thou unto them;
but one taking vengeance on the evil deeds of them.
- 9 *Exalt ye Jehovah our God,
and bow down at his holy mountain;
For holy is Jehovah our God.*

(Nm.)

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 98

Sing a new song to the Lord telling about His mighty deeds!
For He has won a mighty victory by His power and holiness.

2, 3 He has announced this victory and revealed it to every
nation by fulfilling His promise to be kind to Israel. The whole
earth has seen God's salvation of His people.

4 That is why the earth breaks out in praise to God, and
sings for utter joy!

5 Sing your praise accompanied by music from the harp.

6 Let the cornets and trumpets shout! Make a joyful
symphony before the Lord, the King!

7 Let the sea in all its vastness roar with praise! Let the
earth and all those living on it shout, "Glory to the Lord."

8, 9 Let the waves clap their hands in glee, and the hills
sing out their songs of joy before the Lord, for He is coming to
judge the world with perfect justice.

PSALM 99

Jehovah is King! Let the nations tremble! He is enthroned
upon the cherubim. Let the whole earth shake.

2 Jehovah sits in majesty in Zion, supreme above all rulers
of the earth.

3 Let them reverence Your great and holy name.

4 This mighty King is determined to give justice. Fairness
is the touchstone of everything He does. He gives justice
throughout Israel.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

5 Exalt the Lord our holy God! Bow low before His feet.

6 When Moses and Aaron and Samuel, His prophet, cried to Him for help, He answered them.

7 He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud and they followed his instructions.

8 O Jehovah our God! You answered them and forgave their sins, yet punished them when they went wrong.

9 Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His holy mountain in Jerusalem, for He is holy.

EXPOSITION

The warrant for regarding Pss. 98 and 99 as a Shorter Service of Song for Sabbath Worship is informal, but probably sufficient. The comparative brevity of this "Service" is obvious. Its distinctness from what has gone before is marked by the superscribed word *Psalm* over 98. Its substantial identity of theme with Pss. 92-97 is easily perceived; and chiefly appears in the recurrence of the Proclamation of Jehovah's Kingship, sustained by similar invitations to worship, and a repetition, in 98:9, of the heard note of 96:13.

Ps. 98 opens like 96, only with a clearer statement of the precise nature of Jehovah's *victory*: that it amounts to an *unveiling* of his *righteousness*, by fulfilling his promises to *the house of Israel*.

Ps. 99 contains a considerable amount of new matter: as, for example, Jehovah's occupancy of his *cherubic throne*; *Zion* being the especial place where his *greatness* is displayed; with a tolerable clear reminder of the "trisagion" or "thrice holy" cry of the Seraphim in Isa. 6. Again, it is very pointedly said that Jehovah *himself* has wrought *justice and righteousness in Jacob*—the use of which name, for "Israel," offers a further assurance that it is to the historic nation of the Twelve Tribes that the psalm refers. It is perhaps a little difficult to determine the motive for referring by name to *Moses, Aaron and Samuel*: probably not so much to generalise, by intimating that even now they have among them *a Moses, an Aaron, and a Samuel* to intercede for them (as Kp. suggests) as to connect, in a more general way the old history with the new, and to enjoin the lesson of holy fear as not out of place in the coming glorious time.

The foregoing rapid survey of the two Sabbath Services of

PSALM 98 AND 99

Song has been submitted for the purpose of preparing the reader for the following.

GENERAL REFLECTIONS

on the entire twofold series of psalms whose Keynote is *Jehovah hath become King*.

The *first* reflection is: That here we have intimated some NEW DIVINE ACTION based upon the abiding and unalterable Sovereignty of God, but in advance of it; coming into effect at a special time and place and under special circumstances; and furthermore leading to results so stupendous as naturally to raise the question how far they have even yet been fulfilled. It is satisfactory to observe with what practical unanimity Expositors agree that such "New Divine Action" is affirmed by the great words of proclamation four times over used in these psalms: *Yahweh malak*=*Jehovah hath become King*. Thus the "Speakers' Commentary" says: "The verb rendered 'is (now) king' is here used in reference to the inauguration of the Theocracy in its final and complete manifestation." Similarly Perowne: "IS KING. More exactly, 'hath become King,' as if by a solemn coronation (comp. the same expression of a new monarch ascending the throne, 2 Sam. 15:10, 1 Kings 1:11, 2 Kings, 9:13). He has been King from everlasting, but now His kingdom is visibly set up, His power and His majesty fully displayed and acknowledged." More fully Delitzsch: "Heretofore Jahve's rule, seeing He has waived the use of His omnipotence, has been self-abasement and self-renunciation; now, however, He manifests Himself in all His majesty, which soars above everything; He has put this on as a garment; He is King and now shows himself to the world in His royal robe." In like manner Thrupp: "There is in the words themselves, as Hengstenberg just remarks, an allusion to the form used at the proclamation of the commencement of the reign of an earthly sovereign; and hence it follows that the language does not apply to the constant government of God, but to a new glorious manifestation of his dominion." With equal explicitness, Briggs: "Not the assertion of his everlasting royal prerogative, but the joyous celebration of the fact that He has now shown Himself to be King by a royal advent, taking His place on His throne to govern the world Himself, and no longer through inefficient or wicked servants." (Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Kingdom.")

The *second* reflection is: That these psalms are JEHOVISTIC

STUDIES IN PSALMS

RATHER THAN MESSIANIC, as a glance through them will at once shew. No Messiah, no Son of David, is once named in them. At first this is startling: ultimately it seems less strange. For, let us consider: Since "No man can see God and live" (Exo. 33:20), since "No man hath seen God himself at any time" (John 1:18), it follows that whenever men have been held to have seen him, it can only have been through a veil. It is well known that there are incidents and suggestions even in the Old Testament looking in this direction, particularly with regard to the Messenger in whom is the name Jehovah (Gen. 16:10-13, 19:24, Exo. 23:20, 21, 33:14, 15). Then, too, Christians, holding Jesus of Nazareth to have been the Messiah, consistently conceive of him as the veiled manifestation of Deity—veiled "in self-renunciation and self-abasement"; and therefore no man was compelled to see his glory; which glory, now, for the present, is "hid in God" (Col. 3:3) and ready at any time to burst forth *as in these Theocratic psalms*.

A *third* reflection naturally follows: That these psalms, for their fulfilment, await THE MESSIAH'S SECOND ADVENT. The psalms are highly poetic, and even dramatic, as all sober interpreters admit. Still, it by no means follows that they have no clear burden to deliver; and therefore the dictate of sanctified common sense would appear to be to say, Will the burden of these psalms, when due allowance has been made for figures of speech, be well met when the Messiah returns, according to the plain sense of his own and his apostles' sayings about his Second Coming?

We may here strengthen these reflections by quoting the weighty words of Delitzsch: "In addition to such psalms as behold in anticipation the Messianic future, whether it be prophetically or only typically, or typically and prophetically at once, as the world-overcoming and world-blessing kingship of the Anointed of Jahve, there are others, in which the perfected theocracy as such is seen beforehand, not as the parousia of a human king, but as the parousia of Jahve himself, as the kingdom of God manifest in all its glory. These theocratic psalms form along with the Christocratic two series of prophecies, referring to the last time, which run parallel with one another. The one has for its goal the Anointed of Jahve, who from out of Zion rules over all peoples; while the other has Jahve, seated above the cherubim, to whom the whole world pays homage. Although these two series converge in the Old Testament, they

PSALM 98 AND 99

do not come together; it is the historical fulfilment that first of all makes it clear that the parousia of the Anointed One and the parousia of Jahve are one and the same. It is only at a few climaxes of prophecy that this thought flashes forth in the Old Testament"—Intro. to Ps. 98.

A *fourth* reflection is: That as soon as the ultimate blending of the Theocratic and the Christocratic prophecies is accepted, and information is accordingly sought in the New Testament regarding the Messiah's Second Coming as destined to fulfil these psalms, particularly as to the Destruction of the Lawless One by that Second Coming, according to 2 Thes. 2,—so soon is THE POSITION OF PSALM 94 IN THIS SABBATH SERVICE OF SONG TRIUMPHANTLY VINDICATED. It cannot be denied that its position here is extraordinary; nor can it be doubted that the psalm itself—both in its description of so gigantic a development of *Lawlessness*, as is portrayed therein, and in its outcries for *Divine Vengeance* there-upon—readily carries us beyond Hezekiah and beyond Sennacherib. It would surpass the wit of man to coin a more apt phrase for describing the COMING LAWLESS ONE, in the awful doings to be permitted him, than as *the Throne of Engulfing Ruin framing Mischief by Statute*. Given, then, the conclusions that this Throne of Iniquity will yet prove specially disastrous to Hezekiah's nation; and that Jehovah's overthrow of that Throne will constitute the great *Victory* by which the Theocracy will be visibly set up on earth, and Jehovah's final reign inaugurated,—then nothing could be more appropriate than the insertion of this psalm just here in Hezekiah's larger Sabbath-day's Service of Song. Indeed, only to see this, is nothing short of discovering a new, unexpected and most welcome proof of Jehovah's wondrous overruling ways; and it may be forgiven any Christian if, under such an impulse, with bowed head he here sends up to heaven his welcome to YAHWEH-CHRIST as EARTH'S COMING KING.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the reasons for considering psalms 98 & 99 as a shorter service of song for a sabbath day?
2. What is the purpose of referring to Moses, Aaron, and Samuel by name?
3. Rotherham makes *four reflections* on these two psalms—shall we state and discuss the thought of each: (a) On the basic pre-supposition that *Jehovah hath become king*,

STUDIES IN PSALMS

What is the "new divine action"? Evidently the rule or kingship of God has taken on a new aspect. (b) What is meant by saying "these psalms are Jehovistic rather than Messianic"? What is the ultimate conclusion? (c) The fulfillment of these psalms await the return of the Messiah. Are we to believe there is to be a literal rule of God through Christ in Jerusalem? Discuss. (d) Psalms 94 is vindicated—how? What does II Thess. 2 say about this? Is the "lawless one described in Psalm 99? Discuss.

PSALM 100

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Invitation to All the Earth to Come In before
Jehovah and Worship.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-3, Invitation to Worship, based on Jehovah's Claims as Creator and Shepherd. Stanza II., vers. 4, 5, Renewed Invitation, based on Jehovah's Own Perfections.

(Lm.) Psalm—For a Thank-offering (or For Thanksgiving.)

- 1 Shout ye unto Jehovah all the earth!
- 2 serve Jehovah with gladness,
come in before him with a ringing cry.
- 3 Know that Jehovah he is God,
he made us and his are we,¹—
his people and the flock of his shepherding.²
- 4 Come into his gates with thanksgiving,³
into his courts with praise,⁴—
give thanks to him, bless his name;
- 5 For good is Jehovah
to the ages his kindness,—
and unto generation after generation his faithfulness.

(Nm.)

1. So Heb. marg. (*kri*=read preferred by Del., Per., Kp., Br., Dr.).
Heb. text (M.T.): "and not we ourselves."

2. Cp. 79:13, 95:7, (Isa. 63:11).

3. Or: "a thank-offering."

4. Or: "a song of praise."

PSALM 100
PARAPHRASE

PSALM 100

Shout with joy before the Lord, O earth!

2 Obey Him gladly; come before Him singing with joy.

3 Try to realize what this means—the Lord is God! He made us—we are His people, the sheep of His pasture.

4 Go through His open gates with great thanksgiving; enter His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him and bless His name.

5 For the Lord is always good. He is always loving and kind, and His faithfulness goes on and on to each succeeding generation.

EXPOSITION

The close connection between this psalm and those immediately preceding it is evident, and at once supplies guidance as to the breadth of the outlook which should be given to the first line as an appeal to *all the earth* rather than to "all the land." It is true that the Hebrew word *'erez* means "land" as well as "earth," and further true that once in the foregoing series (96:1) it has here been rendered "land." But that was for a special passing reason; namely, because of an apparent distinction between a particular "land" and the remaining nations of the earth. Hence, as it cannot be denied that in most of the 15 occurrences of the word in Pss. 94-100, "earth" has far stronger claims to stand in English than the more limited word "land," it is submitted that "earth" is the right word here. The dominant thought of the psalms now closing is that Jehovah is lord of the whole earth and has now entered upon the manifest kingship of all the world; and that no sufficient reason comes in here, at the opening of this new and final psalm, to limit the appeal to a smaller sphere than the whole world. We are not just here following Asaph pleading for the reunion of the tribes, as we were some twenty psalms back; but rather are we under the guidance of Isaiah, who is familiar with the conception that Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem is to be "a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isa. 56:7) and that Jehovah purposes to "gather together all nations and tongues to come and see his glory," yea and that "all flesh shall come in and bow down before me, Saith Jehovah" (Isa. 66:18, 23). Hence we may with reasonable confidence give the fullest possible breadth to the opening invitation: *Shout ye unto Jehovah all the earth.*

STUDIES IN PSALMS

The more firmly we take up this position, the more frankly it becomes us now to submit that the language of the psalm points to the gathering, periodic or otherwise, of all the earth to a local centre: *Come in before Jehovah—Come into his gates, into his courts* (ver. 4). And this too is in the spirit of the psalms which have gone before, in which are many local indications: such as *the house of Jehovah, the courts of our God* (92:13)—*Come to meet his face, Come in, let us kneel* (95:2, 6)—*Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary* (96:6)—*Bring ye a present and come into his courts* (96:8)—*Jehovah in Zion is great* (99:2)—*Bow down at his footstool* (99:5)—*Bow down at his holy mountain* (99:9). So that it is entirely in the vein of these Sabbath-day Services of Song to abide by the local indications in the psalm now before us. These psalms deal with Israel and the Nations. They have already carried us beyond the present intermediate dispensation, having transported us beyond Messiah's Second Advent into the Coming final Theocracy. The Church, indeed, has no local centre, unless it is in heaven. But here we are in touch with the final, earthly Jerusalem; and clearly it does not follow that because the Church has no local, earthly centre, therefore there will be no such centre of worship in the Coming Kingdom. Unless we are prepared to turn the whole Old Testament into allegory, a hundred texts are at hand to shew that there will be such a centre in the Final Theocracy. Still (speaking here to Christians), on the principle that "all things are ours" we can rejoice in all that here unveils itself to our admiring eyes; and even in the Ecclesia, we can, in the spirit of trustful anticipation, sing the Songs of the Kingdom. (Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Kingdom.")

Note, then, what it is which is here set before us: it is nothing less than a worshipping world—a world worshipping with unspeakable gladness, because of what at first sight appear as two primordial truths, which however ultimately resolve themselves into one; namely the relationship to the world as both Creator and Shepherd sustained by Jehovah. This is the inspiration: this the gladness: this the motive and theme of praise. "Ye men of *all the earth*, know this: that *Jehovah*, God of the Hebrew nation, of grace and revelation and redemption is God of all the earth; *He made us, and His we are—His people, and the flock of his shepherding.*" If *all the earth* is appealed to, to *shout with gladness* and give a *ringing cry*,—this of necessity is to be the burden of that "ringing cry": which prophetically

PSALM 100

implies that when this song is sung according to its main intention, all the earth will have come into line with all who know God and rejoice in him as their Shepherding Creator. As Delitzsch has well said: In this announcement, *He made us, and His we are*, "lies a rich store of comfort and warning; for the Creator is also the Owner; His heart clings to his creature; while the latter owes himself entirely to Him, without whom he would neither have had being nor continue to exist." It is worth while to ensure perfect correctness by observing that the Divine relationships to all the earth here celebrated are essentially one. It does not say, "He created us all, and some of us are his people and the flock of his shepherding." That may be the exact truth now; yea, and may have been the exact truth in all past ages. But it is not the whole truth as it is to be realised and rung out with joy in the Final Theocracy; for it is not the whole truth as here set forth by prophetic anticipation. The "various reading" here preferred itself carries us further: *He made us, and His are we—His people*. Not merely "his creatures"; which of itself turns the broader word *made* to excellent account. He made us—what we are, *His people*; He made us—what we are, *His flock*. This opens our eyes to see that *to make* here means more than to create: it includes tending, training, forming our characters. What he makes us to be is not mere men; but good men, communing with him, like him; otherwise we could not be *His people, the flock of his shepherding*.

Does this lofty conception, when applied to *all the earth*, introduce confusion? It may: if we make of the past an iron-mould for the stereotyping of our thoughts; otherwise, there is no necessity for confusion. God has already had more than one people on the earth: the Jewish nation—now alas in a great measure in abeyance; the Christian Church—sometimes too wise in her own conceits, as for instance when she so far forgets herself as to affirm that "the Church Catholic has been manifestly revealed as that 'mountain of the Lord' unto which, according to prophecy, all nations were to flow."¹ We have only to let in the thought that as God has had more "peoples" than one in succession to each other, so he may yet have many peoples simultaneously whom he may graciously acknowledge as his own. Of this prospect we have distinct intimations both in Old Testament and New: In the former, in such remarkable words as these—"In that day shall Israel be a third with Egypt

1. Thrupp, Vol. II., 147.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

and with Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the earth: whom Jehovah of hosts hath blessed saying,—Blessed be my people—the Egyptians, and the work of my hands—the Assyrians, and mine own inheritance—Israel” (Isa. 19:24). And in the latter, in such ravishing words as these—“Lo! the tent of God is with men, And he will tabernacle with them, And they shall be his peoples [mark the plural!], And he shall be God with them, And he will wipe away every tear out of their eyes” (Rev. 21:3, 4). Confusion disappears when the right perspective is obtained. The glorious prospect therefore is: That in the Final Theocracy all the earth will be able to shout—*Jehovah made us and his we are,—his people and the flock of his shepherding.*

We may perhaps revert to Israel as again singing to all the earth in the words of the second stanza of this delightful psalm: *Come into his gates.* But, in any case, we are prepared for the final observation, that here we have “renewed invitation based on Jehovah’s own perfections”: *For good is Jehovah, Age-abiding his kindness, And unto generation after generation his faithfulness;* and can weld the essential thoughts of the psalm into a unity by observing that even Divine Creatorship so involves Divine Promise as to give scope to Divine faithfulness; and thus can, with a sense of triumph, point to the harmony of scripture with scripture, by reminding ourselves of the fact that to the Christian Apostle Peter (I. Eph. 4:19) we are indebted for the blended noun and adjective which yield the much forgotten but most welcome appellation “FAITHFUL CREATOR.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. There is some connection between this psalm and those which precede it. What is it?
2. Rotherham is quite set on the opinion that here we have a prophetic psalm of the time when “all the earth” will come to a center (Jerusalem) and worship the Lord. How is this opinion obtained? Is it valid? Discuss.
3. This is a psalm of Thanksgiving. In the two stanzas there is a call to praise and worship the Lord and then a reason for doing it. Let us share this worship and discover the reasons.

PSALM 101

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

A King's Resolve to have a pure House and Court and Royal City.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-2a, The Theme of Song Announced and Applied to the Conduct becoming, and based upon Jehovah's Presence. Stanza II., vers. 2b-4, Personal Blamelessness Outlined. Stanzas III. and IV., vers. 5-8, The Blamelessness Demanded of Others to secure a City Worthy of Jehovah.

(Lm.) By David—Psalm.

- 1 *Of kindness and justice fain would I sing
to thee O Jehovah would I sweep the strings.*¹
- 2 *I would act circumspectly in a blameless way—
When comest thou unto me?*
I will behave in the blamelessness² of my heart—
in the midst of my house:
- 3 I will not set before mine eyes—
a thing that is vile:³
The doing of swerving deeds I hate—
it shall not cleave to me;
- 4 A crooked heart shall depart from me—
wrong will I not approve.
- 5 He that slandereth in secret his friend—
him will I exterminate:
The lofty of eyes and arrogant of heart—
him will I not suffer.
- 6 Mine eyes are on the faithful of the land—
to dwell⁴ with me,
He that walketh in a blameless way—
he shall minister unto me.
- 7 There shall not dwell⁵ in the midst of my house—
a doer of deceit:

1. Or: "harp," or "play."

2. Or: "singleness," "devotion," (ml.) "wholeness."

3. Ml.: "an affair of Belial (The abandoned one)."

4. Or: "to sit" (as assessors in judging).

5. Or: "sit down" (as a guest).

STUDIES IN PSALMS

A speaker of falsehoods shall not be established—
before mine eyes,

- 8 Morning by morning will I exterminate—
all the lawless of the land,
To cut off out of the city of Jehovah—
all the workers of iniquity.⁶

(Nm.)

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 101

I will sing about Your lovingkindness and Your justice,
Lord. I will sing Your praises!

2 I will try to walk a blameless path, but how I need Your
help; especially in my own home, where I long to act as I should.

3 Help me to refuse the low and vulgar things; help me to
abhor all crooked deals of every kind, to have no part in them.

4 I will reject all selfishness and stay away from every evil.

5 I will not tolerate any slander of my neighbors; I will not
permit conceit and pride.

6 I will make the godly of the land my heroes, and invite
them to my home. Those who are truly good shall be my
examples.

7 But I will not allow those who deceive and lie to stay in
my house.

8 My daily task will be to ferret out criminals and free the
city of God from their grip.

EXPOSITION

This psalm, it will be noticed, is attributed *To David*; and there seems to be no good reason why this assignment should not be trusted. The lofty moral tone which breathes through it, is in every way worthy of the Son of Jesse in his young and noble days, when he came to the throne of Israel, and particularly when he brought the Sacred Ark up to Jerusalem. The *kindness* and *justice* of Jehovah's own character, when reflected by a King and his Court, would call forth just such resolute purity and nobleness of conduct as are sketched through the psalm. We can almost feel the hand of Jehovah upon his servant David; and can easily believe that by this time the trembling fear

6. Or: "mischief" ("naughtiness"—Dr.).

PSALM 101

caused by the visitation upon Uzza is being mellowed by patience into a longing desire that Jehovah would without further delay come and dwell in the city of his choice. He thinks of the scrupulous conduct which would become himself in welcoming so Holy a Guest; and then suddenly prays for that supporting Presence which could alone enable him to reach his ideal: *When comest thou unto me?* The language vibrates between fear and hope. Hope becoming the stronger feeling, the psalmist arises to the occasion and promises the personal conduct which he knows will alone please: *I will behave in the blamelessness of my heart.* And first in his *house*—his home! in himself. His ideals should be lofty; his deeds unswerving; his mind straight; his approbation reserved for that only which was right. From himself he passes to those he must have about him. He had suffered enough from *slanderers* in the court of Saul to think of trusting them now, even though they might fawn upon him. The *conceited*, the *assuming*—these he knew he could not endure. He would keep his eyes open and draw to himself the right men from among *the faithful of the land*. Whether as *assessors* on the seats of justice or as *guests* in his home he would call to himself the men who would create the desirable atmosphere, guard him from his weaknesses, gladly help on his plans: especially the men who would tell him the truth. Probably with the early morning tribunals in mind, and in the full consciousness of his autocratic power, he almost alarms us by declaring that *morning by morning he will exterminate all the lawless of the land*. We may sufficiently reassure ourselves, not to draw hasty inferences in favour of indiscriminate autocracy, by noting well that the sphere of this King's action is *the city of Jehovah*: Jehovah's own representative, acting in Jehovah's presence in Jehovah's city. These are not conditions that can be reproduced anywhere, any day, by any one. In point of fact: If we have here speaking, either David personally, or any of David's Sons, then we have speaking a type of the Messiah; who shall one day autocratically govern in that Final Theocracy of which we have been recently reading. At the same time we do well to remind ourselves that Government, when most Divine, is least arbitrary; and that this whole psalm, forcible as it truly is against evil-doers, is dominated by the word with which it begins; and that the Theocracy which Divine *justice* regulates Divine *Kindness* founds.

STUDIES IN PSALMS
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. We are again considering that "man after God's own heart." What period in David's life does this cover?
2. This little outline will help:
I The King 1-4
 1. His personal desire 1, 2;
 2. His relative determination 3, 4II The Kingdom 5-8
 1. The citizens must be worthy 5, 6
 2. The center must be clean 7, 8 (Scroggie)Relate this to David and then to yourself.
3. When God is God in our own home we will be able to make Him God in every other place. Read verses 3, 4 and relate to your own home as David did to his home.

P S A L M 102

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

The Prayer of a Humbled One brings a
Threefold Answer of Peace.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-11, A Humbled One's Complaint. Stanza II., vers. 12-17, The FIRST CONCLUSION, Adapting the psalm to the Close of the Captivity in Babylon. Stanza III., vers. 18-22, The SECOND CONCLUSION, Adapting the psalm to a Future Generation. Stanza IV., vers. 23-28, The Original Conclusion now placed at the Close of the Composite Psalm.

(Lm.) Prayer—By the Humbled One when he fainteth and
before Jehovah poureth out his Soliloquy.¹

- 1 Jehovah! oh hear my prayer,
and let my cry for help unto thee come in.
- 2 Do not hide thy face from me,
in the day of my distress incline thine ear unto me;
in the day I keep calling haste thee answer me;
- 3 For vanished in² smoke are my days,
and my bones like a hearth are burned through.³

1. Or: "murmuring," "complaint."

2. Some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Vul.): "like"—Gn.

3. So Dr., Del.

PSALM 102

- 4 Smitten like herbage and withered is my heart,
for I have forgotten to eat my bread.
- 5 By reason of the noise of my groaning
cleaveth my bone to my flesh.
- 6 I am like a pelican of the desert,
I am become like an owl of the ruins:
- 7 I have watched and moaned⁴ like a solitary bird on a roof.
- 8 All the day have mine enemies reproached me,
they who are mad against me by me have sworn.⁵
- 9 For ashes like bread have I eaten,
and my drink with my tears have I mingled,—
- 10 Because of thine indignation and thy wrath;
for thou hast lifted me up and flung me away.
- 11 My days are like a shadow that is stretched-out,
and I myself like herbage shall dry up.
- 12 But thou Jehovah to the ages sittest (enthroned),
and thy memorial⁶ is to generation after generation.
- 13 Thou wilt arise and have compassion upon Zion.
for it is time to shew her favour⁷ for the set time hath come:
- 14 For thy servants take pleasure in her stones,
and on her dust look with favour.
- 15 So will the nations revere the name of Jehovah,
and all the kings of the earth thy glory:
- 16 Because Jehovah hath built up Zion—
hath appeared in his glory,
- 17 Hath turned unto the prayer of the destitute—
and hath not despised their prayer.
- 18 Let this be written for a generation to come,
and let a people to be created offer praise unto Yah:
- 19 That he hath looked forth from his holy height,⁸
Jehovah from the heavens unto the earth hath directed his
gaze:
- 20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner,⁹
to loose such as are appointed to die:¹⁰

4. So *Gt.* Cp. Ps. 55:17—Gn.

5. Cp. Isa. 65:15, Jer. 29:22, "He who swears by one in misfortune says 'May I bear the like if I break my faith.'"—T.G. 802.

6. Cp. Exo. 3:15. Some cod. "thy throne"—Gn.

7. Or: "to be gracious unto her."

8. Cp. Isa. 63:15.

9. Isa. 42:7, 61:1, Ps. 79:11.

10. *ML.*: "the sons of death."

STUDIES IN PSALMS

- 21 That they may tell in Zion of the name of Jehovah,
and his praise in Jerusalem:
22 When the peoples are gathered together,¹¹
and the kingdoms to serve Jehovah.
23 He hath humbled¹² in the way my¹³ strength,¹⁴
he hath shortened my days.
24 I say—"My GOD! do not take me away in the midst of my
days,
through the generation of generations are thy years:
25 Of old the earth thou didst found,
and the work of thy hands are in the heavens:¹⁵
26 They shall perish but thou shalt endure,
and they all like a garment shall wear out,—
as a vesture shalt thou change them and they shall vanish;
27 But thou art the Same,¹⁶
and thy years shall have no end:
28 The sons of thy servants shall abide,
and their seed before thee shall be established."

(Nm.)

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 102

A prayer when overwhelmed with trouble.

Lord, hear my prayer! Listen to my plea!

2 Don't turn away from me in this time of my distress.
Bend down Your ear and give me speedy answers,

3, 4 For my days disappear like smoke. My health is
broken and my heart is sick; it is trampled like grass and is
withered. My food is tasteless, and I have lost my appetite.

5 I am reduced to skin and bones because of all my groan-
ing and despair.

6 I am like a vulture in a far-off wilderness, or like an owl
alone in the desert.

7 I lie awake, lonely as a solitary sparrow on the roof.

8 My enemies taunt me day after day and curse at me.

11. Isa. 60:4.

12. The Heb. word here may be either "humbled" or "answered."

13. Ancient authorities are divided between "my" and "his."

14. For the effect of these variations see Exposition.

15. Cp. Isa. 48:13, 44:24.

16. Mt.: "he" "That is He who is (as opposed to the transitory fabric
of the world)"—Dr. Cp. Deu. 32:39, Isa. 41:4, 43:10, 46:4, 48:12.

PSALM 102

9, 10 I eat ashes instead of bread. My tears run down into my drink because of Your anger against me, because of Your wrath. For You have rejected me and thrown me out.

11 My life is passing swiftly as the evening shadows. I am withering like grass.

12 While you, Lord, are a famous King forever. Your face will endure to every generation.

13 I know that You will come and have mercy on Jerusalem—and now is the time to pity her—the time You promised help.

14 For Your people love every stone in her walls and feel sympathy for every grain of dust in her streets.

15 Now let the nations and their rulers tremble before the Lord, before His glory.

16 For Jehovah will rebuild Jerusalem! He will appear in His glory!

17 He will listen to the prayers of the destitute, for He is never too busy to heed their requests.

18 I am recording this so that future generations will also praise the Lord for all that He has done. And a people that shall be created shall praise the Lord.

19 Tell them that God looked down from His Temple in heaven,

20 And heard the groans of His people in slavery—they were children of death—and released them,

21, 22 So that multitudes would stream to the Temple to praise Him, and His praises were sung throughout the city of Jerusalem; and many rulers throughout the earth came to worship Him.

* * * * *

23 He has cut me down in middle life, shortening my days.

24 But I cried to Him, "O God, You live forever and forever! Don't let me die half through my years!"

25 In ages past You laid the foundations of the earth, and made the heavens with Your hands!

26 They shall perish, but You go on forever. They will grow old, like worn-out clothing, and You will change them as a man putting on a new shirt and throwing away the old one!

27 But You Yourself never grow old. You are forever, and Your years never end.

* * * * *

28 But our families will continue; generation after generation will be preserved by Your protection.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

EXPOSITION

The marked structural peculiarities of this psalm are probably best explained by the supposition that it was at first the soliloquy of an individual, and was afterwards adapted for national use on two successive occasions. The first and last stanzas (vers. 1-11 and 23-28) in all likelihood constituted the original psalm. The former of these is mainly a prolonged *complaint*, which may well have been written by or for King Hezekiah, since it strikingly meets his case, and runs closely parallel with his prayer as preserved in Isaiah 38. Throughout this stanza the personal note predominates—it is *I* and *me* all the way through; and the observable thing is, that there is no return to this personal note until verse 23 is reached, on the recurrence of which, however, we are again reminded of Hezekiah,—for, who so likely as he to have said—*Take me not away in the midst of my days!* and although, even then, the psalm does not close exactly as we might have expected Hezekiah to close it, yet nothing inconsistent comes in: the personal note still prevails, though only in the lofty strain which sets the abiding personality of Jehovah over against the frail and fleeting personality of the suppliant. Precisely how this contrast could have seemed to be a pertinent Divine response to the long drawn-out wail of the personal sufferer, it may be that a sacrificed line or phrase would have clearly shewn. As a working hypothesis, however, we can easily assume that these two personally dominated stanzas formed the original Hezekian psalm.

Time rolls on. The great exile to Babylon for seventy years takes place. Towards the close of this period, some gifted scribe observes the striking *parallel* between the afflicted *king* and the afflicted *nation*; and, to adapt the old psalm to new conditions, especially to hearten and prepare his people for a return to the Fatherland to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, he introduces the present Second Stanza (vers. 12-17). It would seem to be prejudiced and arbitrary *not* to suppose some such occasion for the touching allusions to Jerusalem's *stones* and *dust*, and especially the inspiring belief that the *set time to compassionate Zion* had now arrived, which this stanza includes. Looking again through this second stanza with these thoughts in mind, we are, on the one hand, no longer surprised to find in it no further reference to the original suppliant King; but, on the other hand, we easily realise how perfectly in keeping it is with the national intention suggested that the psalmist should indulge

PSALM 102

in a purely national outlook; a sort of glorified forecast of the grand things now to be expected by the redeemed and renewed Chosen People. The poet rises to a prophetic anticipation of those coming good things, when not only should *Zion* have been *re-built*, but *Jehovah* have *appeared in his glory*, and in every way have signally *turned to and not despised* the prayer of the as yet *destitute* nation.

But as time passes, it is realised that the *Return itself* is only feebly and by instalments accomplished; and especially that, as yet, there are no signs of the friendly *gathering of nations* to witness *Jehovah's glory* and to *serve him* which the prophets—especially *Isaiah*—had led them to expect. Hence a further addition is made to this now national psalm, by a significant intimation that the main fulfilment of it awaits a *coming generation*: even if a new *Israel* has to be *created* to witness its complete accomplishment, the promises of *Jehovah* shall be ultimately fulfilled. *Jehovah*, meanwhile, is not indifferent; but wherever, under the whole heavens, there are prisoners belonging to *Israel* crying to him in their misery, there his eye rests, thence the cry comes into his ears. The prisoners are to be released—to come to *Zion*—to rehearse in *Jerusalem* *Jehovah's* praise under circumstances most auspicious: *When the peoples are gathered together, And the kingdoms to serve Jehovah*. No doubt the picture is an *ideal* one: only to be made *real* after unforeseen delays. For, as *Kirkpatrick* well says, in abatement of our surprise that, “As a matter of fact the return was an insignificant event, and no startling results immediately followed it”:—“*Prophecy constantly combines in one view the nearer and the remoter future, depicting the eventual result, without indicating the steps by which it is to be reached.*”

Another easy movement, and the structure of the whole psalm is accounted for. After the two additions contained in Stanzas II. and III. had been made, it may then have been observed by a final editor that the original close of the personal psalm still held good, furnishing a most fitting conclusion for the whole composite psalm; which was therefore added,—quite possibly by *Ezra*, with or without a finishing touch to complete the unification of the whole as one of the Songs of *Zion*.

Probably there are but few present-day readers of the psalms who cannot find assistance in some such modest theory of origin of this psalm as the foregoing. Better far so to apprehend how the psalm *may* have assumed its present form, than to

STUDIES IN PSALMS

be driven to the unwelcome conclusion that it is radically and irretrievably incoherent; seeing especially that such a conclusion is likely to foster the deplorable habit of regarding Holy Scripture as a mere fetish, whose chief value lies in a meaningless repetition of sounds in which sense is at a discount.

The reasons for regarding ver. 23 as originally continuous with ver. 11 will become more and more evident on examination. Not only does the personal element then reappear after being so long in abeyance, but it reappears with the same theme uppermost: ver. 11 is speaking of *my days*, and it is to *my days* that ver. 23 returns.

It is no doubt a little disconcerting to observe that, just where this junction reveals itself, there some difficulty should appear as to both "rendering" and "reading." As to "rendering," attention may be called to the undoubted fact that the very first word in verse 23 (*'anah*) may be rendered either "humbled," as in this translation, or "answered," as in the ancient Greek version, the Septuagint. As to "reading," it is not to be denied that on the length of a single down-stroke it depends whether the affixed pronoun to the noun "strength" be "my" or "his"—"my strength" or "his strength." If the latter were clearly ruled out by the context, we might serenely disregard it; and, as a fact, it is declined in this translation on the ground of a smaller amount of probability in its favour. Yet by no means so decisively declined as to make it unworthy of further notice. Not only is there the circumstance to be reckoned with that in some Hebrew copies and in the Sep. and Vul. versions the pronoun "his" is preferred; but there is the further stubborn fact to be admitted that the Septuagint has woven out of the two doubtful elements an entirely different result from that which appears above and in our public versions (A.V., R.V., and P.B.V.); the Septuagint rendering being as follows: "He answered him in the way of his strength: tell me the shortness of my days. Do not take me away," &c. It is perhaps impossible to be quite sure that there is nothing of importance in this ancient result; although, of course, it *may* be merely an ancient mistake in construing the original Hebrew text: hence it is here passed on for the respectful consideration of candid critics; and the more readily, because of a slight misgiving that something further than now appears originally stood here—something *possibly* tending to set forth Hezekiah as a type of the Messiah in respect of *the shortening* of his *days*. Suffice it to have called

PSALM 102

attention to this remarkable variation; in order now to resume a working assurance, sincerely felt, that in the "rendering" and "reading" followed in the text of this translation, as near an approach to absolute truth is made as our present means admit. It may be reassuring to observe that nothing further is here at stake than simply the precise terms in which verse 23 should appear as the original continuation of verse 11. Even the Septuagint rendering could still be said to resume the *personal* strain of the psalm in respect of the *days* of the individual sufferer. These nice points being thus disposed of, we are fairly entitled to review the psalm as a whole in regard to its larger outstanding features.

The one thing which nothing can hide is the grandeur of the psalm; the way in which it sets over against the afflictions of the man and the afflictions of the nation, the eternity and elevation of Jehovah. Because of the stability of his throne and the inexhaustible resources of his being, there is hope for the nation; and because of the eternity of his years, there is solace for the individual—though *this* is implied rather than expressed in the present psalm. It seems to be implied in the sudden transition made by the suppliant (in ver. 24) from his own *days* to the eternal *years*: as much as to say—"Why needest thou, whose *years* run on from generation to generation, cut down by one half my allotted *days*, few as they are at most?" That, after all, the hope of the individual should be left thus, rather implied than expressed, may be attributed to the fact that as yet "life and incorruption have not been illumined by the Gospel."

No such feebleness of expression can be affirmed of this psalm as regards the *national* hope. It is marvellous how strongly these holy men of old assert and reassert this. Zion is to be so favoured as to cause *the nations to revere the name of Jehovah, and all the kings of the earth his glory*. Not only will Jehovah *build up Zion*, but he himself *will appear in his glory*. When the imprisoned Israelites are released, they will come to Zion and rehearse their story. Concurrently with this—so the psalmist intimates—there will be *a gathering of peoples of kingdoms—to serve Jehovah*. The significance of these assurances ought on the face of them to be beyond dispute or doubt; especially when viewed in the light of Isaiah's predictions and of the Theocratic psalms (92-99) which we have lately studied. To allege that these foretellings are now being fulfilled in the Church,

STUDIES IN PSALMS

is not only to rob Israel, but it is to degrade the Church from her heavenly calling and to throw all scripture into confusion. It is respectfully submitted that Christian theologians ought to know the Pauline Epistles better than thus to teach.

The above allusion to the "Theocratic Psalms" suffices to remind us that, here as well as there, what is affirmed of Jehovah in the psalm is in the Epistle to the Hebrews alleged to have been spoken "of the Son." Some expositors of the Psalms have shewn solicitude to discover this reference to the Son in this psalm as clearly as by the statement in the Epistle it might seem it ought to be discoverable; and it was partly from sympathy with that expectation, that care was taken to admit that all doubt could not at present be said to have been conclusively set at rest as to the exact terms of the original resumption of Hezekiah's psalm at verse 23. One able critic, at any rate, sees in the circumstance that the Divine name in verse 24 is *El* rather than *Elohim*, a probable note of transition to "the Son." However this may be, it will probably be a relief to plain Christians to rest in the apparently well-warranted conclusion, that the radical significance of the Memorial name *Jehovah*—as "Yah-weh," "the Becoming One," renders the transition easy, when context and circumstance require it, to Him who in the fulness of time "*became* flesh and tabernacled among us." As already suggested when expounding the Theocratic psalms, whenever visible Divine Manifestation is implied, then some veiling of Absolute Deity must also be understood; and this veil Christians already possess in Jesus on whom our Apostle Paul explicitly teaches "was graciously bestowed The Name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Please try to appreciate the historical circumstances of this psalm. Discuss possibilities.
2. Evidently at least three persons had a part in writing this psalm and three periods in the history of Israel are contemplated. Discuss.
3. "One thing which nothing can hide is the grandeur of the psalm: ". . . just what is involved in this grandeur and how is it expressed?
4. Just what is (or was) the national hope of Israel? Discuss Rotherham's view point and others.

PSALM 102 AND 103

5. What is said of God here is said of the Son in Hebrews. What is the significance of this?

PSALM 103

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Bless Jehovah; for He is Worthy.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-5, Bless Jehovah: For his Personal Dealings. Stanza II., vers. 6-10, For his Revealed Character. Stanza III., vers. 11-14, For his Kindness, Forgiveness, Compassion, and Considerateness. Stanza IV., vers. 15-18, For the Continuity of his Dealings, in Contrast with Man's Frailty. Stanza V., vers. 19-22, For the Permanence and Universality of his Kingdom, let All his Creatures Bless Him.

(Lm.) By David

- 1 *Bless Jehovah O my soul,*
and all within me his holy name:
- 2 *Bless Jehovah O my soul,*
and forget not any of his dealings:—
- 3 who pardoneth all thine iniquities,¹
who healeth all thy diseases,
- 4 who redeemeth from the pit thy life,
who crowneth thee with kindness and compassions,
- 5 who satisfieth with good thy desire,²
thy youth reneweth itself like an eagle.³
- 6 A doer of acts of righteousness is Jehovah,
and acts of vindication for all who are oppressed:
- 7 Who made known his ways to Moses.
to the sons of Israel his doings:—
- 8 *Compassionate and gracious is Jehovah,*
*slow to anger and abundant in kindness.*⁴

1. So (pl.) some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn., Sep., Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "iniquity" (sing.)

2. So Sep. "Supplication"—Del. "Age"—Carter. "Spirit"—Leeser.

3. Or: "vulture." So Dr.

4. Cp. Exo. 34:6, 7. The Refrain of the Bible (see "The Emphasised Bible").

STUDIES IN PSALMS

- 9 Not perpetually will he contend,
nor to the ages retain [anger]:
- 10 Not according to our sins hath he done to us,
nor according to our iniquities hath he dealt with us.
- 11 For as the heavens are exalted over the earth
exalted⁵ is his kindness over such as revere him:
- 12 As far as the east is from the west
hath he put far from us our transgressions:
- 13 Like the compassion of a father on sons
is the compassion of Jehovah on such as revere him;
- 14 For he knoweth how we are formed,⁶
putteth himself in mind that dust are we.
- 15 Weak man—like grass are his days,
Like the blossom of the field so doth he blossom:
- 16 When a wind hath passed over it then it is not,
nor acquainted with it any more is its place.
- 17 But the kindness of Jehovah is from age to age
on such as revere him,
And his righteousness is unto children's children
- 18 unto such as keep his covenant
and unto such as remember his precepts to do them.
- 19 Jehovah—in the heavens hath he established his throne,
and his kingdom over all hath dominion.
- 20 *Bless Jehovah* ye⁷ his messengers,
heroes of vigour doers of his word,—
hearkening to the voice of his word:
- 21 *Bless Jehovah* all ye his hosts,
his attendants doers of his pleasure:
- 22 *Bless Jehovah* all ye his works,
in all places of his dominion:
Bless Jehovah O my soul.

(Nm.)

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 103

I bless the holy name of God with all my heart.

2 Yes, I will bless the Lord and not forget the glorious things He does for me.

3 He forgives all my sins! He heals me!

5. So *Gt.*—*Gn.* M.T.: "Mighty."

6. *MI.* "our formation."

7. Some *cod.* (w. *Sep.* and *Vul.*): "all ye"—*Gn.*

PSALM 103

4 He ransoms me from hell! He surrounds me with loving-kindness and tender mercies!

5 He fills my life with good things! My youth is renewed like the eagle's!

6 He gives justice to all who are treated unfairly.

7 He revealed His will and nature to Moses and the people of Israel.

8 He is merciful and tender toward those who don't deserve it; He is slow to get angry and full of kindness and love!

9 He never bears a grudge, nor remains angry forever.

10 He has not punished us as we deserve for all our sins,

11 For His mercy towards those who fear and honor Him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth.

12 He has removed our sins as far away from us as the east is from the west.

13 He is like a father to us, tender and sympathetic to those who reverence Him.

14 For He knows we are but dust,

15 And that our days are few and brief, like grass, like flowers,

16 Blown by the wind and gone forever.

17, 18 But the lovingkindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting; to those who reverence Him; His salvation is to children's children of those who are faithful to His covenant and remember to obey Him!

19 The Lord has made the heavens His throne; from there He rules over everything there is.

20 Bless the Lord, you mighty angels of His who carry out His orders, listening for each of His commands.

21 Yes, bless the Lord, you armies of His angels who serve Him constantly.

22 Let everything everywhere bless the Lord. And how I bless Him too!

EXPOSITION

The superscription of this psalm is *By David*, and the few grammatical peculiarities found in the psalm itself are probably insufficient to discredit this ancient literary tradition; since, according to Chwolson, quoted by Thirtle (O.T.P. 29), those peculiarities may be merely "genuine ancient Hebrew grammatical forms accidentally retained." By whomsoever written, this sacred song breathes a deeply devotional and tenderly trustful spirit:

STUDIES IN PSALMS

whoever has sins to mourn or sorrows to carry may find therein solace or instruction.

I. BLESS JEHOVAH, FOR HIS PERSONAL DEALINGS.

Ver. 1. *Bless*, as on bended knee, *Jehovah* (*Yahweh*) "the Becoming One," who, out of his own Divine resources, can supply all creature-need: *O my soul*, my true inner self, realising thy complete personality in and through all the parts and powers wherewith thou art endowed. *And all within me*, especially my "heart" or *mind*, and my "reins" or *impulses*; (bless) *his holy name*, as the summarised expression of his revealed person and character.

Ver. 2. *Bless Jehovah, O my soul*; for thus again I address thee, that is myself; "I" being subject and object, inspector and inspected, teacher and taught in one; about to project myself from myself, to look at and examine myself, to encourage and admonish myself; and, therefore, by reason of the mysterious complexity of my being, responsible for my state and conduct before God. Thou, *O my soul*, thus gifted, use the ready instrument of self-discipline, thy memory: *Forget not any of his dealings*: his *benefits*, if thou wilt,—but have not all his "dealings" been "benefits," though sometimes in disguise? forget not *any* of his dealings, for whereas it would be difficult to forget them "all," be it thy care, as far as may be, that thou forget *none*, since the forgotten mercy or chastisement may be that which thou dost now most need to recall. (Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Soul.")

Vers. 3-5. *Who*—that is *Jehovah* (five times repeated!). By the help of these pronouns, catechise thyself, *O my soul*! How many of these appeal to thee? Knowest thou nothing of *the pardon of thine iniquities*—thus searchingly put first, as most concerning thee? Even of *the healing of thy diseases* art thou unmindful? Has *thy life* never been *redeemed* from the pit of Hades? Have no garlands of Divine *kindness* and *compassions* ever decked thy brow? On what numberless occasions have not thy lawful *desires* been *satisfied*—desires for food, sleep, rest and countless other mercies; and canst thou forget *Who* it is that, through all channels, has been the bountiful satisfier of thy craving? Dost thou arise each morning a *new* man, still in thy *youth* right down to old age, and canst thou forget whose recreative energy it is that thus worketh within thee?

PSALM 103

II. FOR HIS REVEALED CHARACTER.

Vers. 6-10. Nor is this all, O my soul. He who has become all this to thee, has revealed and made public his character; by *acts of righteousness* fulfilling his promises, by *acts of vindication* for all who are oppressed, chiefly by bringing Israel out of Egypt, approving himself of old to the confidence of his people, *making known his ways unto Moses*, and *his doings to the sons of Israel*; especially proclaiming himself to the former as *Compassionate and Gracious*, *Slow to Anger and Abundant in Kindness*; thereby giving occasion to "The Refrain of the Bible" (see Emphasised Bible on Exo. 34:6, 7)—of which hast thou not heard, O my soul?—a Refrain running through the Holy Scriptures, and shewing how holy men remembered and pleaded it in times of national trouble? In harmony with which Refrain, thou mayest confidently reckon, O my soul, that although Jehovah may long complain, yet will he *Not perpetually contend*; although he "leave not altogether unpunished, but visiteth the iniquity of fathers on sons and upon son's sons unto a third and unto a fourth generation," yet *Not age-abidingly, Not age-without end*, will he *retain* the sinner in being, and his *anger* against the sinner; seeing that he himself has declared that before his perpetual wrath no spirit could abide (Isa. 57:16). Therefore, be thou sure, O my soul, that even in his most awful visitations he never ceases to deserve thy praise; while, as to thyself and thy brethren, thou canst still say, *Not according to our sins hath he done to us, Nor according to our iniquities hath he dealt with us*. For his revealed character, then,—*Bless Jehovah, O my soul*.

III. FOR HIS KINDNESS, FORGIVENESS, AND CONSIDERATENESS

Ver. 11. Lift up thine eyes on high, O my soul, and see how *lofty* are those overarching heavens: in like manner, *lofty* beyond all thought and hope is Jehovah's *kindness* over *these who revere him*.

Ver. 12. Canst thou measure from *east to west*, when each recedes as thou approachest? So neither canst thou mete the distance to which he removes from thee the transgressions which he forgives. "The wages of sin is death"; but "in his favour is life"; and these can never meet and mingle.

Ver. 13. Thou knowest *the compassion of a father on his sons*, how like it is to the compassion (from *r-ch-m*="womb")

STUDIES IN PSALMS

of a mother for her babe. Thou, then, only *revere him* and such tender Divine compassion shall rest on thee.

Ver. 14. Do thy source in *dust*, and thy continued kinship therewith, ever enfeeble and hamper thee, in the service thou wouldst fain render him; doth thy temper fail because thy nerves are unstrung; hast thou to cease from work, even for him, because thou art weary, hungry, cold? Be of good cheer: he knows it all, he made thee thus. *He puts himself in mind* that, even where the spirit is willing, the flesh may be weak.

IV. FOR THE CONTINUITY OF HIS DEALINGS IN CONTRAST WITH MAN'S FRAILTY.

Vers. 15 and 16. Art thou discouraged, O my soul, because of the frailty of thy being and the brevity of thy *days*, so like the withering *grass* and the fading *blossom*? Shrinkest thou from the nipping *wind* that shall cut thee off, and from the thought that the vacancy thou leavest will soon be filled and thou shalt be missed no more? Yet hear thou again.

Vers. 17, 18. Not so is *the kindness of Jehovah*, even with regard to thee. It has perpetuating ways of its own. It descendeth from generation to generation. Thy progenitors are gone? Yea, but leaving behind for thee a legacy of blessing, in so far as they revered Jehovah in their day. Thou, therefore, in like manner, mayest leave a blessing behind thee: only teach thou thy children how to inherit it. And of this be sure: that in the end *righteousness* and *faithfulness* and *obedience* shall prove stronger than sin. Therefore still "Bless Jehovah."

V. FOR THE PERMANENCE AND UNIVERSALITY OF HIS KINGDOM

Ver. 19. The object of thine adoration is supreme, for it is *Jehovah* himself whom thou wouldst bless. Beyond him is there none; outside his *dominion* is there none: *in the heavens*, high above this earth, *hath he established his throne*; just to the degree, therefore, to which he comes to reign on earth, he must needs bring heaven with him. *And his kingdom over all hath dominion*; therefore are there no beings unaccountable to him, therefore is there no creature-freedom uncircumscribed by him, therefore can there never be any events not subservient to his rule. Moral evil can only enter and stay in his dominions as long as he permits. This, O my soul, is thy safety and stay. My soul, thou art the richer, that there are heavens, within the compass of which are gathered subjects of thy King; for,

PSALM 103

although the Creator might be above all locality, yet not so the creature; and therefore it is a joy to thee to think of inhabited heavens, especially if and so far as they are peopled by loyal fellow-subjects of thine. Thine emotions must needs go forth to them. They may not hear thine appeal to them, save through their Sovereign and thine; yet wouldst thou fain emulate or even provoke their devotions, and feel the ecstasy of fellowship as they bless Jehovah.

Ver. 20. *Bless Jehovah, ye his messengers* whose privilege it is, when ye have entered his presence and listened to his commanding word, to depart on your several errands of state, thus making good your official name, in which alone ye appear to delight: with swiftness ye fly, with *heroic vigour* ye execute, with loyal promptness ye return to *hearken again* to your Sovereign Lord.

Ver. 21. *Bless Jehovah, all ye his waiting hosts, his attendants*, abiding more continually in his presence, *doers of his pleasure*, howsoever made known, by look, by hint, by perceived need and fitness, by inward impulse—*his pleasure*, not your own.

Ver. 22. *Bless Jehovah, all ye his works, in all places of his dominion*: whether with reason, or with instinct; or with neither, leaving it to more favoured ones to perceive your use and beauty and render praise for the same, becoming interpreters of your parts and powers, and employing you to rise the higher towards the Divine Throne. And, both first and last, chiefly thou, finding thyself in such large and glorious fellowship as thou humbly tenderest thine adorations,—*Bless Jehovah, O my soul*.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is meant by the expression: "Bless Jehovah"?
2. How is the word "soul" used?
3. What a beautiful penetrating analysis of man is given in the comment on verse 2. Read it again.
4. What is "the ready instrument of self-discipline"?
5. There are five areas of God's personal dealings with us. Please list them (as in vs. 1-5) and make personal application.
6. In what sense is our strength renewed like an eagle?
7. In what two or three acts has Jehovah revealed His character?

STUDIES IN PSALMS

8. There are four personal characteristics of Jehovah. Name them and discuss their application to Israel and to you.
9. In what way does our Lord deal with us like sons?
10. Is our frailty ever an excuse for sin?
11. The brevity of life is a great source of discouragement. How is it overcome?
12. The heavens are peopled or populated. Of what comfort is this to us?
13. Who are the messengers of our God? What is their ministry? How does it relate to us?

PSALM 104

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

A Creation Hymn.

ANALYSIS

It is difficult to frame an Analysis of this psalm. The course of thought and observation followed therein bears Some Resemblance to the Method Pursued in Gen. 1:1—2:3; but the Differences are Considerable. So far as the psalm submits itself to external measurement, it may be said that 10-line stanzas prevail; but two out of the six run up to 20 and 17 lines respectively. The chief *refrain* of the previous psalm is repeated here. There is here no Superscribed Line, as to the previous psalm there was no Subscribed Line: probably furnishing evidence that the Two Psalms at an early time became Practically One.

(Lm. None)

- 1 *Bless Jehovah O my soul!*
Jehovah my God thou art exceeding great,
Majesty and state hast thou put on:
- 2 Wrapping thyself in light as a mantle,
stretching out the heavens as a tent-curtain:
- 3 who layeth in the waters the beams of his upper-chambers,
who maketh the clouds his chariot,
who walketh on the wings of the wind:
- 4 Making his messengers winds,¹
his attendants fire and flame.¹

1. Or: "Making his messengers of winds His attendants of fire and flame."

PSALM 104

- 5 He hath founded the earth on its bases,
it shall not be shaken to the ages and beyond:
- 6 With the deep as a garment hast thou covered it,
above the mountains the waters take their stand:
- 7 At thy rebuke they flee,
at the voice of thy thunder they hurry away—
- 8 Mountains rise valleys between them sink—
into the place which thou hast founded for them:
- 9 A boundary hast thou set they shall not overpass,
they shall not again cover the earth.
- 10 Who sendeth forth springs into the torrent-beds,
Between the mountains they flow along:
- 11 They give drink to all the wild beasts of the plain,
the wild asses break their thirst:
- 12 Above² them the bird of the heaven settleth down
from amidst the foliage they utter a voice.
- 13 He watereth³ the mountains out of his upper chambers,
of the fruit of thy works the earth taketh her fill.
- 14 He causeth⁴ grass to spring up for the cattle,
and herb for the service of man,⁵
that he may bring forth⁶ bread out of the earth;
- 15 And wine rejoiceth man's heart,
that he may cause⁷ [his] face to shine with oil;
and bread sustaineth man's heart.
- 16 The trees of Jehovah take their fill,
the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted:
- 17 Where the birds build their nests,
as for the stork fir trees⁸ are her house:
- 18 Mountains that are high are for the wild-goats,
the crags are a refuge for the rock-badger.⁹
- 19 He hath made the moon for stated seasons,
the sun knoweth his place for going in:
- 20 Cause thou darkness and it becometh night,
in it creepeth forth every wild beast of the forest:

2. Or: "Beside."

3. Ml.: "Watering."

4. Ml.: "Causing."

5. Or: "mankind."

6. Or simply: "To bring forth."

7. Or Simply: "To cause."

8. Or: "cypresses."

9. So Del. (adding "rather *Hyrax syriacus*") "Rock-rabbit"—Dr.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

- 21 The young lions are roaring for prey,
and seeking from GOD their food:
- 22 Let the sun arise they withdraw,
and in their lairs they lay them down:
- 23 Forth goeth man to his work,
and to his labour until evening.
- 24 How many are thy works O Jehovah!
all of them in wisdom hast thou made;
the earth is full of thy possessions.¹⁰
- 25 Yonder is the sea great and broad on both hands,
There are gliding things innumerable;
Living things small with great:
- 26 There ships sail along,
leviathan¹¹ which thou hast formed to play therein:¹²
- 27 All of them for thee do wait,
that thou mayest give [them] their food in its season:
- 28 Thou givest unto them they gather,
thou openest thy hand, they are satisfied with good:
- 29 Thou hidest thy face they are dismayed,
thou withdrawest their spirit¹³ they cease to breathe.
and unto their dust do they return:
- 30 Thou sendest forth thy Spirit¹³ they are created,
and thou renewest the face of the ground.
- 31 Let the glory of Jehovah be age-abiding,
let Jehovah rejoice in his works:
- 32 Who looketh on the earth and it trembleth,
he toucheth the mountains and they smoke.
- 33 I would fain sing to Jehovah while I live,
I would harp to my God while I continue:
- 34 Pleasing unto him be my soliloquy,
I myself will rejoice in Jehovah.
- 35 Let sinners come to an end¹⁴ out of the earth,
and lawless ones no longer exist.
Bless Jehovah O my soul!

(Nm.)¹⁵

10. Or: "acquisitions." Or (Dr.) "productions." Some authorities have the word in the sing.

11. "Whale"—O.G. "A general term for all 'sea-monsters'"—Per.

12. Or: "with him."

13. Or: "breath"—so Dr. and Per. twice. Shd. be both alike.

14. "Be consumed"—Per., Dr. "Vanish"—Del.

15. See 105 (beginning).

PSALM 104
PARAPHRASE

PSALM 104

I bless the Lord: O Lord my God, how great You are! You are robed with honor and with majesty and light! You stretched out the starry curtain of the heavens,

3 And hollowed out the surface of the earth to form the seas. The clouds are His chariots! He rides upon the wings of the wind!

4 The angels¹ are His messengers—His servants of fire!

* * * * *

5 You bound the world together so that it would never fall apart.

6 You clothed the earth with floods of waters covering up the mountains.

7, 8 You spoke, and at the sound of Your shout the water collected into its vast ocean beds, and mountains rose and valleys sank to the levels You decreed.

9 And then You set a boundary for the seas, so that they would never again cover the earth.

* * * * *

10 He placed springs in the valleys, and streams that gush from the mountains.

11 They gave water for all the animals to drink. There the wild donkeys quench their thirst,

12 And the birds nest beside the streams and sing among the branches of the trees.

13 He sends rain upon the mountains and fills the earth with fruit.

14 The tender grass grows up at His command to feed the cattle, and there are fruit trees, vegetables and grain for man to cultivate,

15 And wine to make him glad, and olive oil as lotion for his skin, and bread to give him strength.

16 The Lord planted the cedars of Lebanon. They are tall and flourishing.

17 There the birds make their nests, the storks in the firs.

18 High in the mountains are pastures for the wild goats; and rock-badgers burrow in among the rocks and find protection there.

1. Literally, "spirits."

STUDIES IN PSALMS

19 He assigned the moon to mark the months, and the sun to mark the days.

20 He sends the night and darkness, when all the forest folk come out.

* 21 Then the young lions roar for their food; but they are dependent on the Lord.

22 At dawn they slink back into their dens to rest,

23 And men go off to work until the evening shadows fall again.

24 O Lord, what a variety You have made! And in wisdom You have made them all! The earth is full of Your riches.

25 There before me lies the mighty ocean, teeming with life of every kind, both great and small.

26 And look! See the ships! And over there, the whale You made to play in the sea!

27 Every one of these depends on You to give them daily food.

28 You supply it, and they gather it! You open wide Your hand to feed them and they are satisfied with all Your bountiful provision.

29 But if You turn away from them, then all is lost. And when You gather up their breath, they die and turn again to dust.

30 Then You send Your Spirit, and new life is born² to replenish all the living of the earth.

31 Praise God forever! How He must rejoice in all His work!

32 The earth trembles at His glance; the mountains burst into flame at His touch.

33 I will sing to the Lord as long as I live! I will praise God to my last breath!

34 May He be pleased by all these thoughts about Him, for He is the source of all my joy.

35 Let all sinners perish—all who refuse to praise Him. But I will praise Him. Hallelujah!

EXPOSITION

In the words of Perowne, "here we have a picture which for truth and depth of colouring, for animation, tenderness, beauty, has never been surpassed." Leaving the reader to mark and admire the poetic features of the psalm for himself, atten-

2. Literally, "created."

PSALM 104

tion may be called to the weighty theological lessons here taught.

1. In the *first* place: Jehovah is here represented as BEFORE, ABOVE AND BEYOND his works. The *honour and majesty* in which he reveals himself are external to himself—he *puts* them on; *light* is the *mantle* in which he *enwraps* himself. Yet there are means by which he makes himself known; and they suggest the idea of eyes needed to observe them, minds susceptible of being impressed by them—they are relative terms.

2. In the *next* place: Jehovah is revealed as PRESENT in the midst of his works. The space curtained in by the outspread heavens is his tent, wherein he dwells; for no other Presence is suggested in that connection. Yet he is himself unseen. The wind itself we see not, save in its effects: how much less can we behold him who *walks* on its *wings*. Even this tent, indeed, cannot contain him: he has *upper chambers* into which our eyes cannot penetrate.

3. Nevertheless, it is HERE that the interest of the psalm is CONCENTRATED. This sun and moon, these stars, these mountains, yonder sea, together with the living creatures large and small thus brought under our notice: these are sufficient to impress the psalmist with their *number*, with the *wisdom* displayed in their formation, with the *richness* of their Creator in possessing them, and with the *pleasure* he takes in them. It would be rash to infer, alone from this concentration of interest, that this world is eternal; but assuredly we are led to expect that it is destined to become the theatre of important Divine dealings.

4. Noting, in passing, that the position assigned to MAN in this psalm is—if not exactly a subordinate one—certainly one less exalted than that assigned him in the Genesis account—it becomes the more observable how prominent a place is given to the ANIMAL WORLD. It is not simply that animals are here seen lovingly gathered around their Creator, feeding as it were out of *his hand*; but that, in them, the alternations of life and death are illustrated in a remarkably suggestive manner. Animals are sentient beings; they are breathing creatures, whose breath is in their nostrils; and in these respects they are akin to man. It would almost appear as though their kinship with man were utilised to furnish object-lessons for man himself. Animals live as long as they breathe: so do men. The breathing power of animals is a divine gift; and, when it is *withdrawn*, they *cease to breathe*: so it is with men. Man's breath or spirit, answers to, or is correlated with God's breath or spirit. The same word

STUDIES IN PSALMS

ruah expresses either "breath" or "spirit" or both. The consecutive use of the term in this psalm is profoundly suggestive; because the law of continuity strongly operates to bring the breath of the creature into line with the breath of the Creator; and the breath of the Creator is itself creative. *Thou withdrawest their ruah they cease to breathe; thou sendest forth thy ruah they are created*. It does not matter which English word is used, provided the continuity is kept up. Say—"their breath . . . thy breath," then the phrase "thy breath" is uplifted into the significance of "thy life-giving spirit," for it cannot be less than that. Say—"their spirit" . . . thy spirit," then "spirit" in the former member of the sentence must be lowered sufficiently to allow animals to partake of it, *at least as a loan from God*. To deny "spirit" to animals is to deny them life. To assert that, because man has "spirit," therefore he is deathless, is by consequence to assert far too much of animals, unless we are prepared to affirm that they too are immortal. Beyond all this lies the weighty question—How far "spirit" enters into the individuality of animals—the personality of men: as to which, Biblical evidence must be elsewhere sought. But just here, in this and similar texts, the alphabet of the subject is to be found—at least if it is Biblical psychology we seek.

5. Of like interest and value is the side-light here thrown on the essential meaning of the word "CREATION": *Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created; Thou renewest the face of the ground*. This is startling: it is nothing less than subversive of certain popular but very superficial views on the subject of creation. If creation is essentially *the making of something out of nothing*, then creation denies procreation; and assumes that every new generation of animals comes direct from God, without parentage after its kind; inasmuch as we have here presented, not the original stocking of the earth with animal life, but the *renewal* which is continually supplying the vacancies caused by death. The fact is, that God holds all life in his own hand: all living things "live and move and have their being in him." If this is true of animals, much more is it true of men. God is "the God of the spirits of *all flesh*": in every living thing save the first, concur both procreation and creation, the parental contribution and the divine. God is the father of our spirits. I am God's creature, as well as my parent's child. If to create is to make a new thing—to embody an original idea—then there is something new and distinctive in every creature which

PSALM 104

Jehovah has made. Probably no two animals were ever perfectly alike: one may feel certain that no two men ever were. The differentia of men should amplify as well as radiate the glory of God.

6. There is something singularly IMPRESSIVE in the last stanza of this magnificent psalm. Therein the personality of the psalmist starts forth afresh into bold relief. The psalm started with emotion, brought over from the previous psalm. Then for a moment it flashed forth (in 1b and following lines) with a direct address to Jehovah, so supplying an element remarkably wanting in the foregoing psalm. But, having offered this personal greeting to his God, the psalmist's own personality quietly falls into the background; and, though you follow the pointing of his finger as he directs you to look at object after object, and do just perceive the vibration of his voice as he bursts out in adoration at ver. 24, he gives you no time to turn round and look him in the face. Now, however, at ver. 31, pent-up feeling rises to the poet's lips, seeking an utterance which it scarce can find. As if apprehensive that Jehovah might lose some of the glory which is his due and in some way be grieved with his own handiwork, he adopts the language of *desire*: *Let the glory of Jehovah be age-abiding, Let Jehovah rejoice in his works.* As if admonished of the lowering possibility of Divine displeasure, he introduces a couplet which sounds like a dark hint: *who looketh on the earth, and it trembleth; He toucheth the mountains, and they smoke.* It is like the muttering of distant thunder, while as yet the sky is all blue. Then, as if unable to endure the thought of a hiding of Jehovah's face, he moves himself, by the significant "cohortative" mood, to keep voice and harp attuned to high praise: *I would fain sing to Jehovah while I live, I would harp to my God while I continue. Pleasing unto him be my soliloquy, I myself will rejoice in Jehovah,*—drinking in my joy at the fount of his joy—only let *him* rejoice: but are there, then, works in which he cannot rejoice? *I myself*, he says with formal emphasis, *I myself* will rejoice—whatever *others* may do. So then, alas! there *may be*—there *are*—others not likeminded! Out of the blue, the bolt falls: *Let sinners come to an end out of the earth, And lawless ones no longer exist.* It was remarked above that the trend of this whole psalm seemed to betoken that this earth is designed to be the theatre of important Divine dealings. This ominous couplet confirms that impression: unless, indeed, we are war-

STUDIES IN PSALMS

ranted in thinking of sinners as merely banished to some other place, as if there were some such place not included in Jehovah's dominions (cp. 103:19). Still, that is not what is either said or suggested in this psalm; and it would seem dutiful to accept the natural interpretation of the solemn words before us. Suffice it that "there is a future for the righteous" (Ps. 37, 73); and that the overthrow of moral evil will so be accomplished as to call forth the self-incited refrain—*Bless Jehovah, O my soul!*

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the theme of this psalm?
2. What purpose is seen in creation?
3. What is meant by saying "Jehovah is here represented as *before, above, and beyond* his works"?
4. What figures of speech are used to show God is present in His creation? Why suggested?
5. This earth is made very important in this psalm. If it is all to be burned up, why so much emphasis?
6. Do animals have a spirit? Are they the same as man? Discuss.
7. This psalm could give a new meaning to the word "creation". Discuss.
8. What is impressive about the last stanza of the psalm?
9. There is "a dark hint" of what?
10. Are we to unavoidably conclude that this earth will be the theatre of God's activities for all future time?

PSALM 105

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

A Hymn of Praise to Jehovah for Giving Israel a
Covenant Land in which to Observe His Law.

ANALYSIS

The Main Design of this Psalm is clearly to Endear the Land to the People for whom it was designed, that therein they should Observe Jehovah's Law. To attain this end the History of their First Fathers is traced as Circling Round this Land, and then the Steps are Traced by which the Nation was Brought Into the Land to Dwell There.

PSALM 105

(P.R.I.) Praise ye Yah!¹

- 1 Give ye thanks to Jehovah proclaim his name,²
make known among the peoples his doings:
- 2 Sing to him harp to him,
soliloquise³ of all his wondrous works:
- 3 Make your boast in his holy name,
joyful be the heart of such as seek Jehovah
- 4 Search out Jehovah and his strength,
seek diligently his face at all times:
- 5 Commemorate his wondrous works which he hath done,
his tokens and the just decisions⁴ of his mouth.
- 6 Ye seed of Abraham⁵ his servants,⁶
ye sons of Jacob his chosen ones:
- 7 He Jehovah is our God,
through all the land⁷ are his regulations.⁸
- 8 He remembereth to the ages his covenant,
the word he commanded to a thousand generations:
- 9 Which he solemnised with Abraham,
and his oath unto Isaac;
- 10 And he confirmed it to Jacob as a statute,
unto Israel a covenant to the ages,—
- 11 Saying "To thee will I give the land of Canaan,
the lot of your inheritance."
- 12 While as yet they⁹ were men easily counted,
indeed few¹⁰ and strangers therein:
- 13 And they wandered¹¹ from nation unto nation,
from a kingdom unto another people:

1. That is, "Public Reader's Invitation." "There can hardly be a doubt," says Ginsburg, "that this [a sentence and not a mere single word] exhibits the primitive reading." Ginsburg further expresses the confident conclusion that the phrase was originally the prelector's [the public reader's] invitation to the worshipers to join in the public responses.—Gn. Intro., pp. 375-81. Hence the omission of the phrase at end of this psalm, as there acknowledged.

2. So Dr. Cp. Isa. 12:4.

3. "Compose a song"—Br. "Discourse"—Del. "Muse ye"—Dr.

4. Or: "judgments."

5. Some cod.: "Israel." Cp. I Ch. 16:13—Gn.

6. So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr.)—Gn.

7. Or: "earth."

8. That is, "by-laws," "code of laws"—as in Exo. 21—23. Or: "just decisions"—as in ver. 5 above.

9. Some cod. (w. Aram., Syr.): "ye." Cp. I Ch. 16:19—Gn.

10. "Caph veritatis"—O.G. 454.

11. "went to and fro"—Per.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

- 14 He suffered no son of earth to oppress them,
and rebuked for their sakes kings: [saying]
- 15 "Ye may not touch mine anointed ones,¹²
nor to my prophets do harm."
- 16 And he called a famine on the land,
all the staff of bread he brake:
- 17 He sent before them a Man,¹³
as a slave was he sold—[even] Joseph:
- 18 They humbled with fetters his feet,¹⁴
into iron entered his soul:¹⁵
- 19 Until the time when came in his word,
speech of Jehovah had tested him:
- 20 A king sent and released him,
a ruler of peoples and unloosed him:
- 21 He made him lord of his house,
and ruler over all his possessions:
- 22 To bind his princes at his pleasure,¹⁶
and unto his elders to impart wisdom.
- 23 So Israel came into Egypt,
and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.
- 24 When he made his people very fruitful,
and made them stronger than their adversaries¹⁷
- 25 Their heart turned to hate his people,
to deal treacherously with his servants.
- 26 He sent Moses his servant,
Araon whom he had chosen:
- 27 He¹⁸ among them the threat of his signs,¹⁹
and his tokens in the land of Ham.
- 28 He sent darkness and made it dark,
but they rebelled²⁰ against his threats.²¹

12. Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Anointed."

13. Almost—"great man."

14. Written "feet"; read "foot." Some cod. both read and write "foot"
—Gn.

15. "Pathetic circumlocution for personal pronoun"—Dr. Prob. not merely his "person" physically; but all his sense of humiliation: "Joseph's whole sensitive personality"—Kp.

16. Ml.: "according to his soul"="liking."

17. Cp. Exo. 1:7.

18. So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.): Cp. 78:48.

19. N.B. that the signs were threatened before they came.

20. So it shd. be (w. Sep. and Syr.)—Gn.

21. Same word as in ver. 27.

PSALM 105

- 29 He turned their waters into blood,
and caused their fish to die.
- 30 Their land swarmed with frogs,
in the chambers of their kings:
- 31 He spake and there came in the gadfly,²²
gnats,²³ in all their bounds.
- 32 He made their showers to be hail,
a fire of flames throughout their land;
- 33 And smote down their vine and their figtree,
and brake in pieces the trees of their bound.
- 34 He spake and there came in locusts,
and young locusts without number;
- 35 And devoured all the herbage in their land,
And devoured the fruit of their ground.
- 36 And he smote all the firstborn in their land,
the beginning of all their strength:
- 37 And brought them out with silver and gold,
and there was none among his tribes that faltered.
- 38 Glad was Egypt when they went forth,
because fallen was the dread of them upon them,
- 39 He spread out a cloud for screen,
and fire to give light by night.
- 40 They asked²⁴ and he brought in the quail,
and with the bread of heaven he used to satisfy them:
- 41 He opened a rock and there gushed forth waters,
they flowed along through parched places [as] a river.
- 42 For he remembered his holy word
with Abraham his servant;
- 43 And brought forth his people with gladness,
with a cry of joy his chosen ones;
- 44 And gave unto them the lands of the nations,
and of the toil of the peoples they took possession:
- 45 In order that they might observe his statutes,
and over his laws might keep watch.²⁵

(Nm.)²⁶

22. "Dog-fly"—Dr.

23. Meaning dubious—O.G. Prob. "gnats" as Exo. 8:12, 13, 14.

24. So it shd. be (w. Aram., Sep., Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "he asked."

25. Here follows, in M.T., "Praise ye Yah"—prob. by erroneous anticipation of the following at the beginning of Ps. 106. See note at the beginning of this psalm.

26. See 106 (beginning).

STUDIES IN PSALMS

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 105

Thank the Lord for all the glorious things He does; proclaim them to the nations.

2 Sing His praises and tell everyone about His miracles.

3 Glory in the Lord; O worshipers of God, rejoice.

4 Search for Him and for His strength, and keep on searching!

5, 6 Think of the mighty deeds He did for us, His chosen ones—descendants of God's servant Abraham, and of Jacob. Remember how He destroyed our enemies.

7 He is the Lord our God. His goodness¹ is seen everywhere throughout the land.

8 Though a thousand generations pass He never forgets His promise, His covenant with Abraham and Isaac,

10, 11 And confirmed with Jacob. This is His never-ending treaty with the people of Israel:

"I will give you the land of Canaan as your inheritance."

12 He said this when they were but few in number, very few, and were only visitors in Canaan.

13 Later they were dispersed among the nations, and were driven from one kingdom to another;

14 But through it all He would not let one thing be done to them apart from His decision.² He destroyed many a king who tried!

15 "Touch not these chosen ones of Mine," he warned, "and do not hurt My prophets."

16 He called for a famine on the land of Canaan, cutting off its food supply.

17 Then He sent Joseph as a slave to Egypt to save His people from starvation.

18 There in prison they hurt his feet with fetters, and placed his neck in an iron collar,

19 Until God's time finally came—how God tested his patience!

20 Then the king sent for him and set him free.

21 He was put in charge of all the king's possessions.

22 At his pleasure he could imprison the king's aides and teach the king's advisors.

1. Literally, "His judgments."

2. Literally, "He suffered no man to do them wrong."

PSALM 105

23 Then Jacob (Israel) arrived in Egypt and lived there with his sons.

24 In the years that followed, the people of Israel multiplied explosively, until they were a greater nation than their rulers.

25 At that point God turned the Egyptians against the Israeli; they hated and enslaved them.

26 But God sent Moses as His representative, and Aaron with him,

27 To call down miracles of terror upon the land of Egypt.

28 They^s followed His instructions and He sent thick darkness through the land,

29 And turned the nation's water into blood, poisoning the fish.

30 Then frogs invaded in enormous numbers; they were found even in the king's private rooms.

31 When Moses spoke, the flies and other insects swarmed in vast clouds from one end of Egypt to the other.

32 Instead of rain He sent down murderous hail, and lightning flashes overwhelmed the nation.

33 Their grape vines and fig trees were ruined; all the trees lay broken on the ground.

34 He spoke, and hordes of locusts came,

35 And ate up everything green, destroying all the crops.

36 Then He killed the oldest child in each Egyptian home, their pride and joy—

37 And brought His people safely out from Egypt, loaded with silver and gold; there were no sick and feeble folk among them then.

38 Egypt was glad when they were gone, for the dread of them was great.

39 He spread out a cloud above them to shield them from the burning sun, and gave them a pillar of flame at night to give them light.

40 They asked for meat and He sent them quail, and gave them manna—bread from heaven.

41 He opened up a rock, and water gushed out to form a river through the dry and barren land;

42 For He remembered His sacred promises to Abraham His servant.

3. Implied.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

43 So He brought His chosen ones singing into the Promised Land.⁴

44 He gave them the lands of the Gentiles, complete with their growing crops; they ate what others planted.

45 This was done to make them faithful and obedient to His laws. Hallelujah!

EXPOSITION

A sense of the value of these historical psalms grows upon us as we proceed with their study. Books were few, and comparatively inaccessible: hence, if history had to live for practical ends, it must be lodged in the memories of the people; and poetry was well adapted to effect that lodgment—especially poetry such as we here find, with its sententious brevity of expression, its happy use of parallelism, its abounding figures of speech, its picturesque brightness, its easy and rapid flow. Such poetry puts history “into the mouths” of the people (Deu. 31:19) by fixing it in their memories, enabling them readily to repeat it, and encouraging them to sing and harp its strains. It was a history worth repeating, not only because it was *their* history and was unique, but because there ran through it the golden thread of Divine interposition. If God is revealed in all history, he is pre-eminently revealed in Israel’s, since He was ever and anon giving them new epochs, new starting points of development; as well as constant watchful care. But it was so full and significant a history as to abound with lessons of a most varied description—fitted to warn, to encourage, to move to devotion in prayer and praise. Hence it was a task worthy of gifted psalmists, so to select and epitomise, so to bring to the front and leave in the background, as to point the moral as well as adorn the tale. These historical psalms thus became national stories told with a purpose. This becomes clear when the three leading historical songs (78, 105, 106) are laid side by side as to their main scope and design. Thus the 78th gains immensely in interest when viewed as an Asaphic appeal put forth in the time of Hezekiah for the purpose of encouraging and cementing the Reunion of the Tribes. The present psalm, the 105th, is mainly devotional, it is true; but it clearly has, as its didactic purpose, so to foster confidence in the covenant faithfulness of Jehovah, as to encourage the spirit of obedience, and the desire on the

4. Implied.

PSALM 105

part of the people to dwell in their own land for the very purpose of having perfect freedom to observe all Divine ordinances. The psalm which immediately succeeds this, the 106th, while equally devotional in its setting with its predecessor, is wholly different in its chief aim. It is, as we shall see, above all things, an admonitory psalm: its warnings are loud and long, and that they should ever have been turned into measure for psalm-singing, redounds to the everlasting praise for honesty of the psalmist that durst compose it and of the people who were willing to sing it.

Settling down for a little on the particular psalm now before us, it is observable (vers. 1-5) with what fulness of appeal the psalmist seeks to kindle the devotional spirit: *give thanks—proclaim — make known — sing — harp — soliloquise — boast — be joyful—search—seek diligently—commemorate,—*note after note of invitation is struck till every ear is attent, and every mind is fixed on Jehovah as the one object of worship.

Then observe, with what force of appeal (vers. 6-11), the fathers of the nation are introduced; and how these worshippers now addressed are reminded of the fact that they are the children of those patriarchs, and are themselves chosen to be the people of their father's God—that they are a covenant people, inheritors of the covenant *land*.

It is needless to recapitulate the psalm. But note how attention is for awhile held on the story of their first fathers (vers. 12-15); then (vers. 16-23) on the providentially over-ruled famine in Canaan, on the touching story of Joseph—whose name, it will be observed, is quite dramatically introduced, and to whom are devoted no less than twelve most effective lines. The remarkable providences are thus displayed by which the man *Jacob—Israel*, whose names become those of the nation, is brought down into Egypt: and so at length (vers. 24, 25) the familiar story is begun of the dangerous increase of Israel, the mission of Moses and Aaron (ver. 26), the threatening of the plagues (too often overlooked) as well as the infliction of them (ver. 27) of which a selection is then given (vers. 28ff.),—a selection only, it is true, but sufficiently full and detailed to raise the whole question of historicity to the high level of perpetual national celebration; and to challenge the modern sceptical mind to say whether such a story—so detailed, so significantly dovetailed into the history, so celebrated down to the present day—had, after all, no solid foundation in fact. And finally observe

STUDIES IN PSALMS

how the land-covenant, introduced as early in the psalm as the eighth verse, is reintroduced as far on as at the forty-second verse, so leading up to the unifying theme and climax of the psalm—the LAND as the Divinely ordained sphere of the full and unmolested observance of the LAW.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What particular value are these historical psalms?
2. Why was there a need to repeat the events of the past?
3. There seems to be several purposes in the historical psalms: (78, 105, 106). Give the purpose of each.
4. An intense devotional attitude can be developed by following the appeals here made: there are eleven of them. Try two or three and see.
5. A very strong nationalistic spirit is here generated—why?

PSALM 106

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Humbled Israel Confessing Her Sins as a Nation.

ANALYSIS

Enclosed within an Introduction of Praise and Prayer, vers. 1-5, and a Conclusion of Prayer and Doxology, vers. 47, 48, stands a National Confession of Sin, vers. 6-46, Relieved only by the Merciful Deliverances of Jehovah, the Intercession of Moses, ver. 23, the Interposition of Phinehas, ver. 30, and the Compassion of Israel's Captors, ver. 46. The Sins Confessed are chiefly the following:—Incredulity, ver. 7; Murmuring for Food and Drink, ver. 13; Rebellion against their Leaders, ver. 16; Worship of the Golden Calf, ver. 19; Refusal of the Land, ver. 24; Worship of the Moabitish Baal, ver. 28; Rebellion against Moses and Aaron, ver. 32; Non-Extermination of Idolatrous Peoples, and the Taking Part in their Licentious and Cruel Idolatry, vers. 34-40.

(P.R.I.) Praise ye Yah!¹

- 1 Give ye thanks unto Jehovah *for he is good,
for to the ages is his kindness.*²

1. Cp. 105 notes at beginning and end.

2. Cp. refrain of 136; also I Ch. 16:34, Ezra 3:11, Jr. 33:11.

PSALM 106

- 2 Who can express the mighty deeds of Jehovah?
cause to be heard all his praise?
- 3 How happy they who observe justice,
he that doeth³ righteousness at all times!
- 4 Remember me⁴ O Jehovah when thou favourest thy people,⁵
visit me⁵ with thy salvation:
- 5 That I⁶ may gaze upon the good things of thy chosen ones,
may rejoice in the rejoicing of thy nation,
may glory with thine inheritance.
- 6 We have sinned⁷ with our fathers,
we have acted perversely have been lawless:
- 7 Our fathers in Egypt heeded not thy wondrous works,
they remembered not the abundance of thy kindnesses,
but rebelled against the Most High⁸ at the Red-sea.⁹
- 8 Yet saved he them for the sake of his name,
to make known his heroic might:
- 9 So he rebuked the Red-sea and it dried up,¹⁰
and he led them in the deeps as a wilderness.¹¹
- 10 Thus saved he them from the hand of a hater,
and redeemed them from the hand of a foe;
- 11 And the waters covered their adversaries,
not one from among them was left:
- 12 So they believed in his words,¹²
they sang his praise.¹³
- 13 They soon forgot his works,¹⁴
they tarried not for his counsel:
- 14 But longed a longing in the desert,
and put GOD to the proof in the waste;¹⁵

3. Some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "they that do"—Gn.

4. Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.): "us"—Gn.

5. "When thou again (cp. ver. 47) showest thyself gracious unto them"
—Del.

6. Or: "we" (according to the pronoun adopted above).

7. Here begins the confession of sin. Cp. I K. 8:46-53, Neh. 9

8. So *Gt.* Cp. 78:17, 56—Gn. So also Br.

9. Cp. Exo. 14:11, 12.

10. Exo. 14:21-29.

11. Isa. 63:13.

12. Exo. 14:30, 31.

13. Exo. 15.

14. Or: "doings."

15. Exo. 15, 16, 17; Num. 11.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

- 15 And he gave them their request,
and sent them food¹⁶ to their desire.¹⁷
- 16 And they were jealous of Moses in the camp,
of Aaron the consecrated one of Jehovah:¹⁸
- 17 Earth opened and swallowed up Dathan,
and covered the company¹⁹ of Abiram;
- 18 And a fire consumed their company,¹⁹
a flame licked up the lawless ones.
- 19 They made a calf in Horeb,²⁰
and bowed down to a molten image;
- 20 And changed my²¹ glory
for the similitude of an ox eating herbage.
- 21 They forgot GOD their saviour,
though he had done²² great things in Egypt,
- 22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham,
fearful things at the Red-sea.
- 23 Then would he have commanded to destroy them,
had not Moses his chosen
stood forth in the breach before him,
to turn back his wrath from inflicting ruin.
- 24 Moreover they refused the desired land,²³
they believed not his word;
- 25 And they murmured in their tents,
they hearkened not unto the voice of Jehovah.
- 26 Then lifted he his hand unto them,—
that he would let them fall²⁴ in the desert;
- 27 And would disperse²⁵ their seed among the nations,
and would scatter them through the lands.

16. So Br. "The most probable reading of a difficult passage" [*mazon* for *razon*]. Maclaren, content with *razon* ["leanness," "wasting"] smartly says: "Full-fed flesh makes starved souls."

17. *ML.*: "soul." *Cp.* 78:18.

18. *Num.* 16, 17.

19. *U.*: "congregation."

20. *Exo.* 32; *Deu.* 9:8-12.

21. So it was originally; but was changed by the Sopherim to "their glory." *G. Intro.*, 360. *Cp. ante*, *Intro.*, *Chap. I.*, *Obs. 1.*

22. *ML.*: "Doing."

23. *Num.* 13, 14.

24. The permissive *hiphil*. There is no need to introduce active causation here.

25. So it shd. be (w. *Syr.*; *cp. Eze.* 20:23)—*Gn.*

PSALM 106

- 28 And they joined²⁶ themselves to Baal-peor,²⁷
and did eat the sacrifices of the dead:
- 29 So they gave provocation by their doings,
and a plague made a breach among them.
- 30 Then stood forth Phinehas²⁸ and interposed,
and stayed was the plague;
- 31 And it was accounted to him as righteousness,
to generation after generation unto the ages.
- 32 And they gave provocation at the waters of Meribah,
and it fared ill with Moses for their sakes;
- 33 For they embittered his spirit,
and he spake rashly with his lips.²⁹
- 34 They did not destroy the peoples,
of whom Jehovah had spoken to them;³⁰
- 35 But had fellowship with the nations,
and learnt their doings.
- 36 And they served their idols,
and they³¹ became to them a lure;
- 37 And they sacrificed their sons
and their daughters unto demons.³²
- 38 And they poured out innocent blood,
the blood of their sons and their daughters,—
whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan,
and polluted was the land with bloodshed:
- 39 And they became unclean in their deeds,
and unchaste in their practices;
- 40 And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against his people,
and he abhorred his inheritance.
- 41 So he gave them over into the hand of the nations,
and they who hated them ruled over them;
- 42 And their enemies oppressed them,
and they had to bow down under their hand.
- 43 Many times he rescued them,

26. Points to the prostitution with which Baal Peor, this Moabitish Priapus, was worshipped"—Del.

27. "Baal of Peor"—Dr. Num. 25:2-5.

28. Num. 25:7-13.

29. Num. 20:11f, Deu. 1:37, 32:51.

30. Exo. 23:32, 34:12, Deu. 7:16, Judg. 1:36.

31. Some cod. (w. Sep., Vul.): "it"—Gn.

32. "Unto Shedim": Or: "*demi-gods*"; mentioned besides only in Deu. 32:17"—Dr. Cp. Deu. 12:31.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

but they rebelled in their counsel,
and sank low in their iniquity.

- 44 Then looked he on the strait they were in,
when he heard their piercing³³ cry;
45 And he remembered for them his covenant,
and was moved to pity according to the abundance of his
 kindnesses;³⁴
46 And gave them to be objects of compassion
before all their captors.
47 Save us Jehovah our God,
and gather us from among the nations:
to give thanks unto thy holy name,
to make our boast of thy praise.
48 Blessed be Jehovah God of Israel,
from antiquity even unto futurity!³⁵
and let all the people say—"Amen."³⁶

(Nm.)

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 106

Hallelujah! Thank You, Lord! How good You are! Your love for us continues on forever.

2 Who can ever list the glorious miracles of God? Who can ever praise Him half enough?

3 Happiness comes to those who are fair to others and are always just and good.

4 Remember me too, O Lord, while You are blessing and saving Your people.

5 Let me share in Your chosen ones' prosperity and rejoice in all their joys, and receive the glory You gave to them.

6 Both we and our fathers have sinned so much.

7 They weren't impressed by the wonder of Your miracles in Egypt, and soon forgot Your many acts of kindness to them. Instead they rebelled against You at the Red Sea.

33. U.: "ringing." "As in I. K. 8:28 . . . *rinnah* is a loud lamentation"—Del.

34. Authorities divided between singular and plural.

35. Ml. (as at the close of Book I., Ps. 41): "From the age (concealed duration in the past) even unto the age (concealed duration in the future)."

36. M.T.: "Praise ye Yah" (not found in Sep. or Syr.—Gn.) carried forward to head of next psalm. See notes at beginning and end of Ps. 105.

PSALM 106

8 Even so You saved them—to defend the honor of Your name and demonstrate Your power to all the world.

9 You commanded the Red Sea to divide, forming a dry road across its bottom. Yes, as dry as any desert!

10 Thus You rescued them from their enemies.

11 Then the water returned and covered the road and drowned their foes; not one survived.

12 Then at last His people believed Him. Then they finally sang His praise.

13 Yet how quickly they forgot again! They wouldn't wait for Him to act,

14 But demanded better food,¹ testing God's patience to the breaking point.

15 So He gave them their demands, but sent them leanness in their souls.²

16 They were envious of Moses; yes, and Aaron, too, the man anointed³ by God as His priest.

17 Because of this the earth opened and swallowed Dathan, Abiram and his friends;

18 And fire fell from heaven to consume these wicked men.

19, 20 For they preferred a statue of an ox that eats grass, to the glorious presence of God Himself.

21, 22 Thus they despised their Savior who had done such mighty miracles in Egypt and at the Sea.

23 So the Lord declared He would destroy them. But Moses, His chosen one, stepped into the breach between the people and their God and begged Him to turn from His wrath, and not destroy them.

24 They refused to enter the Promised Land, for they wouldn't believe His solemn oath to care for them.

25 Instead, they pouted in their tents and mourned and despised His command.

26 Therefore He swore that He would kill them in the wilderness

27 And send their children away to distant lands as exiles.

28 Then our fathers joined the worshipers of Baal at Peor and even offered sacrifices to the dead!⁴

29 With all these things they angered Him—and so a plague broke out upon them

1. Literally, "lusted exceedingly."

2. Or, "but sent a plague to punish them."

3. Literally, "the holy one of Jehovah."

4. Or, "to lifeless idols."

STUDIES IN PSALMS

30 And continued until Phineas executed those whose sins had caused the plague to start.

31 (For this good deed Phineas will be remembered forever.)

32 At Meribah, too, Israel angered God, causing Moses serious trouble,

33 For he became angry and spoke foolishly.

34 Nor did Israel destroy the nations in the land as God had told them to,

35 But mingled in among the heathen and learned their evil ways,

36 Sacrificing to their idols, and were led away from God.

37, 38 They even sacrificed their little children to the demons—the idols of Canaan—shedding innocent blood and polluting the land with murder.

39 Their evil deeds defiled them, for their love of idols was adultery in the sight of God.

40 That is why Jehovah's anger burned against His people, and He abhorred them.

41, 42 That is why He let the heathen nations crush them. They were ruled by those who hated them and oppressed by their enemies.

43 Again and again He delivered them from their slavery, but they continued to rebel against Him, and were finally destroyed by their sin.

44 Yet, even so, He listened to their cries and heeded their distress;

45 He remembered His promises to them and relented because of His great love,

46 And caused even their enemies who captured them to pity them.

47 O Lord God, save us! Regather us from the nations so we can thank Your holy name and rejoice and praise You.

* * * * *

48 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Let all the people say, "Amen!" Hallelujah!

EXPOSITION

Attention has already been called to this psalm (see Exposition of 105) as not only one of a series of historical psalms—and as such serving an important purpose in the training of the people,—but especially as a national confession of sin. This

PSALM 106

characteristic is so marked, and morally so significant, as to be worthy of further thought. Not only are our minds arrested by the evident honesty of the nation, and especially its prophets, in thus recording their own shame; but we are made to pause and ponder in presence of this spiritual phenomenon. If we try to conceive of this psalm as being originated earlier than the Exile, we shall probably fail. We can easily imagine an Isaiah or a Jeremiah charging sin home upon the people; but we find the greatest difficulty in representing it to ourselves as possible that they could have led the way in a national confession such as this psalm supplies. The time was not ripe for this: the atmosphere of public confession did not yet exist. As we read the great national confession of sin preserved in Nehemiah 9, or that found in the early part of Daniel 9 which though not national in form is nevertheless intensely and intentionally national in spirit, we feel at home in the prayer and realise that the prayer is at home in its historical and literary surroundings. It fits in with the time: is the genuine product of the strange and startling events which have come to pass in Israelitish history. There had been earlier invasions of the holy land, and the lessons of Divine providence had sunk deep into the best and most thoughtful minds in Israel; but nothing like this had happened before: that Jerusalem itself should be overthrown, and the whole land permanently brought under the heel of the Foreigner. The effect on the minds of the people must have been profound. There was no denying the great, sad fact of Hebrew humiliation; and though many of the people may have shrewdly and stoically adapted themselves to this revolutionary change in their environment, yet the moral only needed to be pointedly drawn and strongly driven home by prophetic voices in and after the Babylonish Exile, to carry home conviction to the average Hebrew mind. This is not to say, that the spiritual sense of humiliation was equally deep in all minds; but it is to say, that when prophets declared—"Our sins as a nation have brought these evils upon us," the general conscience must have responded—"There is no denying it!" This acquiescence in the undeniable, it was, which created the atmosphere in which public confession of national sin could live; for it should be well noted that both these elements—that the confession is public and the sin national—are involved in the case now before us. Its being publicly made with general consent silences cavil; and the sins being national lifts them up to the level of undeniable notoriety. From this point of view, survey

STUDIES IN PSALMS

the long catalogue of sins, beginning with the first protests of incredulity in Egypt, down to the latest practices of licentious cruelty perpetrated in Palestine. Imagine the humiliation and severe spiritual discipline involved in reciting so many national sins in a single psalm. What spiritual authority in these Western Isles would dare to draw up such a catalogue of national offences against the laws of God and man? How can we picture to ourselves congregations throughout our land publicly humbling themselves under the piled-up iniquities of many centuries? The attempt to conceive these things may open our eyes to something of the startlingly unique spiritual phenomenon which the ancient temple-use of this psalm presents to our view. No man can study the Hebrew nation successfully who does not study its solidarity; and no man can appreciate its solidarity in the highest realm of the spirit, who does not bend his mind to the spectacle of a nation confessing the sins it had committed from the Exodus to the Exile. That is the spectacle we have here.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the major emphasis of this psalm?
2. How is the element of honesty of the nation and their prophets seen?
3. At about what time was this psalm originated?
4. What other texts seem to be like this psalm?
5. There seems to be the most profound of impressions involved in this psalm. Why?
6. When the prophets said: "Our sins as a nation have brought these evils upon us"—what was the response?
7. Catalogue the sins of Israel and relate them to America. What should be our attitude?
8. Rotherham cannot imagine the British Isles confessing their sins in 1909. What has happened since should teach us something. Discuss.

THE PSALMS

BOOK THE FIFTH¹

PSALM 107

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Examples of Men's Straits, leading to Prayer;
and of Jehovah's Deliverance, calling for Praise.

ANALYSIS

After a Summons to Thanksgiving addressed to the Redeemed, vers. 1-3,
Examples are given:—

1. Of Hungry Wanderers, vers. 4-9;
2. Of Guilty Prisoners, vers. 10-16;
3. Of Dying Transgressors, vers. 17-22;
4. Of Imperilled Sailors, vers. 23-32;

whose Straits move them to Prayer, and whose Prayer brings them from
Jehovah Deliverance. Further Examples are suggested:—

5. Of a Fruitful Land, first Sterilised, then Blessed, vers. 33-38;
6. Of Nobles, first Diminished, then Multiplied, vers. 39-42

(These suggestions are without the *Refrains* with which the previous "Examples" are "finished.") A Brief Admonition Closes the Psalm.

(P.R.I.) Praise ye Yah!²

- 1 *Give ye thanks to Jehovah for he is good,
for to the ages is his kindness.*
- 2 Let the redeemed of Jehovah³ say—
whom he hath redeemed out of the hand of the adversary;

1. See Table II., *ante*.

2. See notes to Ps. 105. Sep and Vul. have this "P.R.I." here.

3. Cp. Isa. 62:12 (also Isa. 63:4, 35:9).

STUDIES IN PSALMS

- 3 And out of countries hath gathered them,—
out of the east and out of the west,
out of the north and out of the south.⁴
- 4 Men have wandered about in a desert in a waste,
way to a city to dwell in have they not found:
- 5 Hungry yea thirsty
their soul within them fainteth.
- 6 *So they make outcry unto Jehovah in the strait they are in,
that out of their distresses he will rescue them.*
- 7 And he leadeth them in a way direct,
that they may come to a city to dwell in.
- 8 *Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his kindness,
and his wondrous doings for the sons of men:*
- 9 Because he hath satisfied the longing soul,
and the hungry soul hath filled with good.
- 10 Men are sitting in darkness and death-shade,
prisoners in humiliation and iron,—
- 11 Because they have rebelled against the sayings of GOD,
and the counsel of the Highest have spurned,⁵
- 12 And he humbleth with travail their heart,
they have staggered and there is no one to help.
- 13 *So they cry out unto Jehovah in the strait they are in,
that out of their distresses he will save them.*
- 14 And he leadeth them forth out of darkness and death-shade,
and their bands he bursteth asunder.⁶
- 15 *Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his kindness,
and his wondrous doings for the sons of men:*
- 16 Because he hath shattered the doors of bronze,
and the bars of iron hath hewn asunder.⁷
- 17 Foolish men because of their way of transgression,
and because of their iniquities bring on themselves
humiliation:
- 18 All food their soul abhorreth,
and they draw near unto the gates of death.
- 19 *So they cry out unto Jehovah in the strait they are in,
that out of their distresses he will save them.*

4. So Gt.—Gn. And so Dr. M.T.: "the sea."

5. Or: "despised."

6. Or: "he teareth open."

7. Isa. 45:2.

PSALM 107

- 20 He sendeth forth his word⁸ and healeth them,
and rescueth [them] out of their pits.⁹
- 21 *Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his kindness,
and his wondrous doings for the sons of men;*
- 22 And let them sacrifice sacrifices of thanksgiving,
and tell of his works¹⁰ with jubilation.¹¹
- 23 Men go down to the sea in ships,
doing business through great waters:
- 24 They have seen the works of Jehovah,
and his wondrous doings in the deep;
- 25 And he commandeth and there ariseth ¹² a tempestuous wind,
and it lifteth on high the waves thereof:
- 26 They mount the heavens they descend the deeps,
their soul by trouble dissolveth:
- 27 They reel and stagger like a drunken man,
and all their wisdom is engulfed.
- 28 *So they make outcry unto Jehovah in the strait they are in,
that out of their distresses he will bring them forth.*
- 29 He stilleth the storm to a whisper,¹³
and silent are their waves:
- 30 Then are they glad because they subside,
and he guideth them to their desired haven.¹⁴
- 31 *Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his goodness,
and his wondrous doings for the sons of men;*
- 32 And let them extol him in an assembly of people,
and in a seated company of elders let them praise him.
- 33 He turneth rivers into a desert,
and springs of water into thirsty ground:
- 34 A land of fruit into a waste of salt,—
for the wickedness of them who dwell therein.
- 35 He turneth a desert into a pool of water,
and a parched land into springs of water;

8. Job 33:23, John 1:1.

9. "That is, *their graves*"—Dr. "Pitfalls"—Del. "From the pit their life"—Br. (conj.).

10. Or: "doings."

11. Or: "a ringing cry."

12. So it shd. be (w. Sep.)—Gn.

13. "He husheth the storm to a gentle air"—Per. "He turned the storm into a gentle breeze"—Del.

14. "Longed-for-haven"—Del. "Haven of their desire"—Dr. "City of their desire"—O.G.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

- 36 And causeth to dwell there the hungry,
and they establish a city to dwell in;
37 And sow fields and plant vineyards,
and obtain fruits to be gathered in.
38 So doth he bless them and they multiply greatly,
and their cattle suffereth he not to be few.
40 He poureth contempt upon nobles,¹⁵
and letteth them wander in a pathless waste;¹⁶
39 And they become few and are brought low—
by the pressure of misfortune and sorrow.¹⁷
41 And he setteth the needy on high out of humiliation,
and maketh families like a flock.¹⁸
42 The upright see and are glad,¹⁹
and all perverseness hath shut her mouth.²⁰
43 Who is wise?—let him observe these things,²¹
and diligently consider the kindness of Jehovah.

(Nm.)

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 107

Say "Thank You" to the Lord for being so good, for always being so loving and kind.

2. Has the Lord redeemed you? Then speak out! Tell others He has saved you from your enemies.

3 He brought the exiles back from the farthest corners of the earth.

4 They were wandering homeless in the desert,

5 Hungry and thirsty and faint.

6 "Lord, help!" they cried, and He did!

7 He led them straight to safety and a place to live.

8 Oh, that these men would praise the Lord for His loving-kindness, and for all of His wonderful deeds!

9 For He satisfies the thirsty soul and fills the hungry soul with good.

15. Vers. 39 and 40 are transposed according to the judgment of Ginsburg on the inverted *nun* found here in the margin.

16. Heb. *tohu*: cp. Gen. 1:2. Cp. Job 12:21-24.

17. So Del. "Through coercion, adversity, and sorrow"—Dr.

18. Cp. Job 21:11.

19. Cp. Job. 5:16.

20. Cp. Job 22:19.

21. Cp. Ho. 14:9.

PSALM 107

10 Who are these who sit in darkness, in the shadow of death, crushed by misery and slavery?

11 They rebelled against the Lord, scorning Him, who is the God above all gods.

12 That is why he broke them with hard labor; they fell and none could help them rise again.

13 Then they cried to the Lord in their troubles, and He rescued them!

14 He led them from the darkness and shadow of death and snapped their chains!

15 Oh, that these men would praise the Lord for His loving-kindness and for all of His wonderful deeds!

16 For He broke down their prison gates of brass and cut apart their iron bars.

* * * * *

17 Others, the fools, were ill because of their sinful ways.

18 Their appetites were gone and death was near.

19 Then they cried to the Lord in their troubles, and He helped them and delivered them.

20 He spoke, and they were healed—snatched from the door of death.

21 Oh, that these men would praise the Lord for His loving-kindness and for all of His wonderful deeds!

22 Let them tell Him "Thank You" as their sacrifice, and sing about His glorious deeds.

* * * * *

23 And then there are the sailors sailing the seven seas, plying the trade routes of the world.

24 They, too observe the power of God in action.

25 He calls to the storm winds; the waves rise high.

26 Their ships are tossed to the heavens and sink again to the depths; the sailors cringe in terror.

27 They reel and stagger like drunkards and are at their wit's end.

28 Then they cry to the Lord in their trouble, and He saves them!

29 He calms the storm and stills the waves.

30 What a blessing is that stillness, as He brings them safely into harbor!

31 Oh, that these men would praise the Lord for His loving-kindness and all of His wonderful deeds!

STUDIES IN PSALMS

32 Let them praise Him publicly before the congregation,
and before the leaders of the nation.

* * * * *

33 He dries up rivers,

34 And turns the good land of the wicked into deserts of
salt.

35 Again, He turns deserts into fertile, watered valleys!

36 He brings the hungry to settle there and build their cities,

37 To sow their fields and plant their vineyards, and reap
their bumper crops!

38 How He blesses them! They raise big families there,
and many cattle!

39 But others become poor through oppression, trouble and
sorrow.

40 For God pours contempt upon the haughty and causes
princes to wander among ruins;

41 But He rescues the poor who are godly and gives them
many children and much prosperity.

42 Good men everywhere will see it and be glad, while evil
men are stricken silent.

43 Listen, if you are wise, to what I am saying. Think
about the lovingkindness of the Lord!

EXPOSITION

This psalm stands high for its artistic beauty and for its broad applicability to the experiences of men, as well as for the same lofty devotion as that by which most of the psalms are distinguished. Its artistic beauty is greatly owing to the two refrains which adorn each of its four principal stanzas, one refrain shewing how trouble leads to prayer, and the other suggesting that answered prayer calls for praise; and, though this feature is missing from the concluding strains of the psalm (vers. 33-42), yet this absence ceases to appear as a blemish, when once it is apprehended that the lack was intentional, and that the supernumerary lines were merely intended to shew, by two further examples, in how many other ways than those above wrought out, the prayers of men might be called for and their praises evoked. Such an apprehension enriches us by revealing *psalmody in the making* as well as psalmody fully prepared for public use. We first think we can see whereabouts amidst the supplementary lines the refrains might have been inserted, and then reflect on the numberless other ways in which the ever-varying experiences

PSALM 107

of life may with equal fitness fan the flames of petition and adoration. Let *the redeemed* from every other conceivable *distress say* whether it is not still true of *Jehovah*, that *he is good, For to the ages is his kindness.*

By this very suggestiveness—of other like experiences—is the *breadth* of this psalm discovered; as also by the typical character of the instances actually given. In the first and fourth refrained stanzas, we have instances of men in distress through no apparent sin or fault of their own: in the second and third finished stanzas, are given examples in which it was sin that brought on the suffering. We can choose between them, according as we apprehend our own troubles to be punitive as well as disciplinary, or the latter only. We may be passing through trouble—not because we are bad, but that we may be better. Besides this, some troubles read like parables of others to which they bear a striking resemblance. Many a man seems to himself to be like a prisoner with no imaginable way of escape; and many another, like the mariner whose *soul by trouble dissolveth, And all his wisdom is engulfed.* Courage, brother! He still liveth who can *still the storm to a whisper.* Sooner than thou thinkest, thou mayest have cast anchor in thy *desired haven!*

Among other manifestations of the devotional spirit which pervades the psalms in general, this psalm is delightfully conspicuous in that, instead of employing inferior deities, one to send a trouble and another to remove it, all the vicissitudes of life are traced ultimately to Jehovah's holy will. He mercifully overrules the troubles which he inscrutably permits: he raises the storm which he abates. In no case are we debarred from recognising his hand in the controlling and moulding of our lives. *Who is wise? let him observe these things, And diligently consider the kindness of Jehovah.*

There is not a word in the body of this psalm to suggest a late date for its composition; and though the Sopherim may very well have adapted it for a post-exilic time by the prelude which amplifies the gathering of scattered Israel, yet it should not be forgotten that Israel suffered extensive deportations even before Hezekiah's day. Those readers who will be at the trouble of looking up the numerous references to Job and Isaiah here supplied will of course be struck with the coincidences thereby brought to light. At the same time there are two weighty considerations to be borne in mind: the one is the brightening evidence that the latter part of Isaiah was after all mainly written

STUDIES IN PSALMS

by the man whose name it bears; and the other the much forgotten circumstance that the Great Return from Exile from the four quarters of the earth is manifestly an event which has yet to be fulfilled.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How is the artistic beauty of this psalm shown?
2. In what way can we see "psalmody in the making"?
3. There are lessons to learn from distress. Examples are given—how do these two examples fit all men?
4. These distresses can be read like parables—how?
5. Is it true that all natural phenomena is to be attributed to Jehovah? Can we make Him immediately and personally responsible for the millions who have died in famine and flood?
6. How is the problem of the late date of this psalm answered?

PSALM 108

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Two Fragments of Earlier Psalms.

ANALYSIS

Vers. 1-6 are taken from Ps. 57:7-11: and vers. 6-9 from Ps. 60:5-8. For Exposition, see those psalms. Probable Occasion for this Composite Psalm: Danger from Edom, Not so Accute as in Ps. 60.

(Lm.)—Song—Psalm—By David.

- 1 Steadfast is my heart O God!¹
I would fain sing and would play,—yea my glory!²
- 2 Oh awake lute and lyre!
I would fain waken the dawn:
- 3 I would thank thee among the peoples O Jehovah,
I would celebrate thee in psalm³ among the races of men.

1. Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.) repeat the clause: "steadfast is my heart." Cp. 57:7—Gn.

2. See Ps. 16:9 note.

3. Or: "make melody unto thee."

PSALM 108

- 4 For great above the heavens is thy kindness,
and as far as the skies⁴ thy truth.
- 5 Be exalted above the heavens O god,
and above all the earth be thy glory,
- 6 To the end thy beloved may be rescued
oh save with thy right hand and answer me.⁵
- 7 God spake in his holiness:—
“Let me exult let me apportion Shechem,
And the Vale of Succoth will I measure out:
- 8 Mine is Gilead and mine Manasseh;
But Ephraim is the defence of my head,
Judah is my commander’s staff:
- 9 Moab is my wash-bowl,
Unto Edom will I cast my sandal,
Over Philistia raise a shout of triumph.”
- 10 Who will conduct me to the fortified city?⁶
Who will lead me as far as Edom?
- 11 Hast not thou⁷ O God rejected us?
and thou wilt not O God go forth with our hosts?
- 12 O grant to us help out of distress,
since unreal is a victory⁸ by man:
- 13 In God we shall do valiantly,
he himself therefore shall⁹ tread down our adversaries!
- (Lm.) To the Chief Musician.

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 108

O God, my heart is ready to praise You! I will sing and rejoice before You.

2 Wake up, O harp and lyre! We will meet the dawn with song.

3 I will praise You everywhere around the world, in every nation.

4 For Your lovingkindness is great beyond measure, high as the heavens! Your faithfulness reaches the skies!

4. Or: “fleecy clouds.”

5. Written “us,” but read “me;” and so most authorities.

6. Some cod: “city entrenched,” exactly as Ps. 60:9.

7. Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.): “thou” emphatic as 60:10.

8 Or: “deliverance,” “salvation.”

9. Cp. on 60:12.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

5 His glory is far more vast than the heavens! It towers above the earth.

6 Hear the cry of Your beloved child—come with mighty power and rescue me.

7 God has given sacred promises; no wonder I exult! He has promised to give us all the land of Shechem, and also Succoth Valley!

8 "Gilead is Mine to give to you," He says, "and Manasseh as well; the land of Ephraim is the helmet on My head. Judah is My scepter.

9 But Moab and Edom are despised;¹ and I will shout in triumph over the Philistines."

10 Who but God can give me strength to conquer these fortified cities? Who else can lead me into Edom?

11 Lord, have You thrown us away? Have You deserted our army?

12 Oh, help us fight against our enemies, for men are useless allies.

13 But with the help of God we shall do mighty acts of valor! For He treads down our foes.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why is this psalm a composite of two earlier ones? i.e. what is the occasion for its composition?
2. Is there any danger here of "vain repetition"? Discuss. Read: Phil. 4:4; Gal. 1-9; Phil. 3:1.

PSALM 109

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

David, Rehearsing how His Enemies have Cursed him,
Refers his Cause to Jehovah.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-5, The Psalmist Entreats Jehovah to speak up for him against his Accusers, of whose Groundless Hatred he Complains. Stanzas II.-VI., vers. 6-15, He Records, at length, his Enemies' Imprecations; and, Stanza VII., vers. 16-19, Their False Accusations, regarding these as Permitted

1. Literally, "Moab is my washbasin; upon Edom I cast My shoe."

PSALM 109

by Jehovah. In Stanzas VIII-XII., vers. 21-31, the Psalmist prays for rescue from Troubles inflicted by Jehovah's Own Hand, for which he Promises to Render Public Thanks.

(Lm.) By David—Psalm.

- 1 O God of my praise do not be silent:
- 2 For the mouth of a lawless one and a mouth of deceit
against me are open,
They have spoken with me with a tongue that is false;
- 3 And with words of hatred have they compassed me about,
and have made war upon me without cause:
- 4 For my love they accuse me though I am all prayer,¹
- 5 Yea they have returned² unto me evil for good, and hatred
for my love [saying:—]
- 6 "Set in charge over him a lawless one,
and let an accuser take his stand at his right hand:
- 7 When he judged let him go forth condemned,
and his prayer become sin.³
- 8 "Let his days become few,
His oversight let another take:
- 9 Let his children become fatherless,
and his wife a widow.
- 10 "And let his children wander and beg,
and be driven out⁴ of their desolate homes:
- 11 Let the creditor strike in at all that he hath,
and strangers prey upon his toil.
- 12 "Let him have none to prolong kindness,
and be there none to be gracious unto his fatherless children:
- 13 Let his posterity⁵ be for cutting off,
In a⁶ generation let his⁷ name be wiped out.
- 14 "Remembered be the iniquity of his fathers unto Jehovah,
and the sin of his mother—let it not be wiped out:
- 15 Let them be in the sight of Jehovah continually,
that he may cut off out of the earth their memory.
- 16 "Because he remembered not to do a kindness,

1. So Del. "But I am (given unto) prayer"—Dr. "But I (give myself unto) prayer"—Per. And cp. ver. 7.

2. So it shd. be (w. Syr.)—Gn.

3. "And let the decision of his case be his guilt."—Br.

4. So it shd be. (w. Sep. and Vul.)—Gn. And so O.G., Br.

5. Or: "latter end."

6. M.T.: "another." Sep. and Vul.: "one."

7. Some cod. (w. Sep. and Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "their."

STUDIES IN PSALMS

- but pursued the man who was humbled and needy,
and the downhearted was ready to slay outright,—
- 17 And loved cursing and so it hath come upon him,
and delighted not in blessing, and so it hath gone far from
him,
- 18 And clothed himself with cursing as his outer garment
and so it hath entered like water into his inward parts,
and like oil into his bones
- 19 Be it his, as a garment he wrappeth around him,
and for the girdle he at all times girdeth on.”
- 20 This is the recompense of mine accusers from Jehovah,
and of them who are bespeaking calamity upon my soul.⁸
- 21 But thou Jehovah Sovereign Lord deal effectually with me
for the sake of thy name;
because good is thy kindness O rescue me;
- 22 For humbled and needy am I,
and my heart is wounded within me.
- 23 As a shadow when it stretcheth out have I vanished,
I am shaken out like a locust.⁹
- 24 My knees totter from fasting,
and my flesh hath become lean after fatness;¹⁰
- 25 And I have become a reproach to them,
they see me they shake their head.
- 26 Help me Jehovah my God,
save me according to thy kindness:
- 27 That they may know that thine own hand is this,—
Thou Jehovah hast done it.
- 28 They will curse but thou wilt bless,
mine assailants will be put to shame but thy servant will
rejoice:
- 29 Mine accusers will be clothed with confusion,
and will wrap about them as a cloak their own shame.
- 30 I will give great thanks¹¹ unto Jehovah with my mouth,
Yea amidst multitudes will I praise him;
- 31 Because he taketh his stand at the right hand of the needy,
to save [him] from them who would judge his soul.

(Nm.)

8. Cp. 105:18 (note).

9. “I am shaken when the light grows stronger”—Br.

10. “And my flesh without oil is as one hasting away.”—Br.

11. So Dr., after P.B.V.

PSALM 109
PARAPHRASE
PSALM 109

0 God of my praise, don't stand silent and aloof

2 While the wicked slander me and tell their lies.

3 They have no reason to hate and fight me, yet they do!

4 I love them, but even while I am praying for them, they
are trying to destroy me.

5 They return evil for good, and hatred for love!

* * * * *

6 Show him how it feels!¹ Let lies be told about him, and
bring him to court before an unfair judge.

7 When his case is called for judgment, let him be pro-
nounced guilty! Count his prayers as sins!

8 Let his years be few and brief; let others step forward
to replace him.

9, 10 May his children become fatherless and his wife a
widow, and be evicted from the ruins of their home.

11 May creditors seize his entire estate and strangers take
all he has earned.

12, 13 Let no one be kind to him; let no one pity his
fatherless children. May they die. May his family name be
blotted out in a single generation.

14 Punish the sins of his father and mother. Don't over-
look them.

15 Think constantly about the evil things he has done, and
cut off his name from the memory of man.

16 For he refused all kindness to others, and persecuted
those in need, and hounded brokenhearted ones to death.

17 He loved to curse others; now You curse him. He never
blessed others; now don't You bless him.

18 Cursing is as much a part of him as his clothing, or
as the water he drinks, or the rich food he eats!

19 Now may those curses return and cling to him like his
clothing or his belt.

20 This is the Lord's punishment upon my enemies who
tell lies about me and threaten me with death.

* * * * *

21 But as for me, O Lord, deal with me as Your child, as
one who bears Your name! Because You are so kind, O Lord,
deliver me.

1. Implied.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

22, 23 I am slipping down the hill to death; I am shaken off from life as easily as a man brushes a grasshopper from his arm.

24 My knees are weak from fasting and I am skin and bones.

25 I am a symbol of failure to all mankind; when they see me they shake their heads.

26 Help me, O Lord my God! Save me because You are loving and kind.

27 Do it publicly, so all will see that You Yourself have done it.

28 Then let them curse me if they like—I won't mind that if You are blessing me! For then all their efforts to destroy me will fail, and I shall go right on rejoicing!

29 Make them fail in everything they do. Clothe them with disgrace.

30 But I will give repeated thanks to the Lord, praising Him to everyone.

31 For He stands beside the poor and hungry to save them from their enemies.

EXPOSITION

The key which opens this psalm to general edification is the perception that its long string of curses are those of David's enemies and not his own. The considerations which lead to this conclusion are the following:—(1) The sudden and sustained change from the plural of vers. 1-5 (*they*) to the singular of vers. 6-19 (*he, his, him*); the former referring to David's enemies, the latter referring to David himself on his accusers' *false tongue*. (2) The fierce and sweeping vindictiveness which piles up imprecations against father, mother, wife, children, possessions and memory in a manner unexampled in any other utterance attributable to David. (3) The similarity of tone between the verses which lead up to the cursing and those which follow after it — a tone of humble and prayerful trust in Jehovah, whose *effectual working* is not only strongly urged but patiently awaited: suggesting how unlikely it is that the cursing of the middle of the psalm proceeds from the same mind as the dignified predictions of its close. (4) The devotion to *prayer* claimed by the psalmist in ver. 4 as making his enemies' hatred without excuse, seems to be hurled back by his enemies in mockery in ver. 7. (5) The *recompense* of ver. 20 seems like a resumption of the *return of evil for good* mentioned in

PSALMS 109 AND 110

ver. 5; as much as to say: *This—the long string of curses*—is how they *recompense* me for my past kindness; the allusion taking on a striking verisimilitude when the known kindness of David for the house of Saul is recalled, and when we think how easily Shimei the Benjamite might in his bitterness have exaggerated some oversight on David's part to shew his wonted kindness to some member of Saul's family: the addition *from Jehovah* in ver. 20, being a recognition such as we have in 2 Sam. 16:5-13, that David's enemies had been permitted by Jehovah to do him this wrong, leaving the wrong remaining as wrong, the cursing being still theirs and not his. (6) On the background of his enemies' cursing there is something peculiarly lifelike and pathetic in the unrestrained prayer which he pours out before Jehovah as to his whole position: his position, as he is driven from Jerusalem, is indeed desperate, and he may well pray for *rescue*; he is *poor and needy*, and will soon be glad to accept of hospitality from one of his subjects; his *heart* was *wounded within him*, as well it might, with memories of Uriah and Bathsheba recalled, the revolt of Absalom staring him in the face, and now the cursing of Shimei to add bitterness to his cup. These verses, 20-25, compel us to think of David's journey up the slope of Mt. Olivet. Then there is the distinct recognition of Divine chastisement, lying behind the cursing (ver. 27) and as we read on, *They will curse, but thou wilt bless*, we feel certain that the lips that utter these words of resignation are not the same as those which have just been cursing so very fiercely.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. There is a "key which opens this psalm to general edification". What is it?
2. Give and discuss at least two of the reasons given for attributing the curses to David's enemies.
3. What circumstance in David's life best fits this psalm?

PSALM 110

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

A Revelation, THROUGH DAVID TO his "lord," the Messiah.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

ANALYSIS

(See the lines prefixed to the Stanzas of the Psalm.)

(Lm.) By David—Psalm.

(1. David records a Revelation concerning his lord.)

- 1 The revelation¹ of Jehovah to my lord²:—
 "Sit thou at my right hand
 until I make thy foes a stool for thy feet."

(2. Foretells that a Commission will be given to his lord.)

- 2 Thy sceptre of strength³ will Jehovah stretch forth out of
 Zion:—
 "Rule thou in the midst of thy foes."

(3. Describes the Appearance of the Army of his lord.)

- 3 Thy people are most willing⁴ in thy day of warfare:⁵
 in holy adorning⁶ out of the womb of the dawn
 to thee [cometh forth] the dew of thy young men.

(4. Proclaims an Oath addressed by Jehovah to his lord.)

- 4 Sworn hath Jehovah and will not regret:—
 "Thou art a priest to the ages
 after the manner of Melchizedek."

(5. Portrays the Overthrow of the Foes of his lord,
 and his lord's consequent Exaltation.)

- 5 The Sovereign Lord⁷ at thy right hand
 hath crushed⁸ in the day of his anger kings,
 6 He judgeth⁹ among the nations—full of dead bodies!
 hath crushed the head over a wide land:

1. "Utterance, declaration, revelation"—O.G. "Oracle"—Del., Per. "Utterance"—Br. For use and misuse of the formula, cp. Jer. 23:31-33.

2. Heb.: 'adoni.

3. ="Thy strong sceptre:" cp. Ps. 2:9.

4. Heb. pl. abstract of intensification: "willingnesses."

5. "Of thy power. Or, *of thy host*; in either case the meaning being, on the day when thy forces muster for battle"—Dr. "Of thy host"—Br. "In the day that thou warrest"—Per. "In the day of thy warfare"—Del.

6. Ml.: "In stateliness of holiness."

7. Heb. (M.T.): 'adonai. In some cod. "Jehovah"—Gn.

8. Or: "shattered."

9. Or: "will judge."

PSALM 110

7 An inheritance on the way he maketh it,¹⁰
therefore he exalteth the¹¹ Head.

(Nm.)¹²

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 110

Jehovah said to my Lord the Messiah,¹ "Rule as My regent—I will subdue Your enemies and make them bow low before You."

2 Jehovah has established Your throne² in Jerusalem³ to rule over Your enemies.

3 In that day of Your power Your people shall come to You willingly, dressed in holy altar robes.⁴ And Your strength shall be renewed day by day like morning dew.

4 Jehovah has taken oath, and will not rescind His vow, that You are a priest forever like⁵ Melchizedek.

5 God stands beside You to protect You. He will strike down many kings in the day of His anger.

6 He will punish the nations, and fill them with their dead. He will crush many heads.

7 But He Himself shall be refreshed from springs along the way.

EXPOSITION

This psalm being ascribed to *David*, we have a prescriptive right to endeavour to interpret it accordingly; and the measure of our success may be regarded as confirming or discrediting this superscription.

Ver. 1. *The Revelation of Jehovah to my lord.*—As a *revelation*, the psalm as a whole and its leading announcement in particular may be expected to make a disclosure unknown before. We already know of the choice of David in preference to Saul; of his anointing and ascension to the throne of Israel; of his prophetic gifts; of the covenant made with him, through

10. So Br. (with very slight emendations).

11. Or: "a."

12. See Ps. 111 (beginning).

1. Implied. In Matthew 22:41-45, Jesus applies the words to Himself.

2. Literally, "The Lord will send forth the rod of your strength out of Zion."

3. Literally, "from Zion."

4. Literally, "in holy array."

5. Literally, "after the manner of."

STUDIES IN PSALMS

Nathan the prophet, touching his sons as destined heirs to his kingship: which covenant, therefore, must have made him aware of the continuance of his kingdom under other rulers than himself. It was not to be his privilege to carry the Representative Kingship with which he was invested to its climax, by bearing it for ever, or by himself bringing all nations into perfect obedience to Jehovah. He would have to bequeath his throne to his sons, some of whom, Nathan suggested to him, would probably prove unworthy of that honour. He himself, in any case, was not the Messiah. So much we knew from previous Divine communications to David. But we did not know—however naturally we might have conjectured it—that David's royal line would at length be consummated in the person of one of his race to whom he himself would own allegiance and whom he would willingly call his "lord." But this is implied in the first line of the psalm. David shall have such an heir—an heir whom he can call his "lord"; and inasmuch as a living son can exercise no lordship over a dead father,—even as, on the other hand, a dead father cannot give allegiance to an as yet unborn son,—we are irresistibly carried forward to Resurrection days; unless, indeed, David is not to die until this his Greater Son appears. We find ourselves, therefore, to say the least, well within the scope of a revelation—a disclosure—a discovery.

But this discovery, though made *through* David, directly concerns David's *lord*—his Messianic Son. This, precisely, is what David here tells us. He does not say: *The revelation of Jehovah UNTO ME*, but *The Revelation of Jehovah to MY LORD*; that is, to MY SON, THE MESSIAH. In short, then, we have here a revelation *to* the Messiah; and being a revelation written down and preserved until the Messiah's days, will it not, in the event of his reading it, become at once a revelation *for* him and a revelation *to* him? Jesus of Nazareth believes himself to be David's Messianic Son: his nation are about to reject him, meantime this revelation comes to him—to his notice, to his reflection, to his need. All who truly believe in the *kenosis*—the self-emptying—of which the Apostle Paul (Phil. 2) speaks, cannot fail to become aware that already the atmosphere of the psalm has become charged with intense spiritual emotion. No wonder that, on receiving this revelation, Jesus is so profoundly moved that, to the Pharisees, he can only put questions!

So far we are assured that a revelation to the Messiah is coming, but are not told what it is. Of this the next words inform

PSALM 110

us: *Sit thou at my right hand until I make thy foes a stool for thy feet.* This informs us that the Messiah will have foes; but, that instead of at once contending with them and overcoming them, he is to be taken out of their midst; to be so taken, by being invited to a post of highest honour; in short, to be exalted to the right hand of Jehovah in heaven. We say, advisedly, "in heaven,"—first, because we know that heaven is the place of Jehovah's fixed abode (1 K. 8:30, etc.); and, secondly, because it is not easy to see how a mere elevation to the right hand of the sacred *ark in Jerusalem* could have the effect of removing the Messiah from the midst of his enemies. Here, again, it is not without emotion that we conceive of Jesus of Nazareth receiving such an invitation from Jehovah. For him to take in its purport, could fall nothing short of his discovering something of "the joy set before him," fitted to embolden him "to endure the cross, its shame despising."

But this elevation is not to be for ever: it is for a definite object; and, therefore, for such time as the accomplishment of that object shall require: *Until I make thy foes a stool for thy feet.* It is JEHOVAH who undertakes to reduce Messiah's foes to such a humiliating condition. The foes are spoken of collectively and as a complete class. And the subjugation is to be thorough. Jehovah promises that he will bring down the Messiah's enemies to *abject submission* to his, the Messiah's, will. They shall be publicly humiliated—totally crushed. They shall be able to rise in rebellion no more. Their being made *a stool for the Messiah's feet* cannot mean less than this.

Ver. 2. *Thy sceptre of strength will Jehovah stretch forth out of Zion.* It is Jehovah who will place the Messiah's enemies under his feet; but, not necessarily and to the end of the process, without the Messiah's participation. *Thy sceptre of strength* is, naturally, the Messiah's sceptre; although, still, it is Jehovah who stretches it forth out of Zion, the which continued activity of Jehovah is to be carefully borne in mind. *What sceptre, then, is this? And whence* is it to be wielded? The phrase *Thy sceptre of strength* is of the same meaning as "Thy strong sceptre;" for the Hebrew tongue delights in using abstract nouns of quality where we mostly use adjectives. Messiah, then, is to wield "a strong sceptre;" that is, to exercise a strong rule, to enforce obedience, to compel submission. We are entitled to say: Messiah's "strong sceptre" is the "iron sceptre" of Psalm the Second, otherwise the practice of comparing scripture with

STUDIES IN PSALMS

scripture might as well cease. Now, an "iron sceptre" is the fit emblem of PHYSICAL FORCE. This, therefore, the Messiah will have at command, and will employ. Yet will he do this strictly under Jehovah's direction, pushing his dominion through openings which Jehovah has made, and forcing submission by means which Jehovah will supply. It is Jehovah who is to *stretch forth* Messiah's "strong sceptre." Moreover, also, that sceptre is to be stretched forth *out of Zion*. And therefore its enforcing activity is to start from Zion. Its holder and wielder is to be located in Zion. But *what* "Zion" is this? It is the earthly Zion. And is this movement, by consequence, a descent of enforcing power from heaven, and its centralisation on earth? It can be nothing else;—for this sufficient reason, that never once in the Old Testament does "Zion" mean heaven, or is "Zion" located in heaven. No real or imaginary figurative use of "Zion" or "Jerusalem" in the New Testament can control us here. We are, in this psalm, on Old Testament ground, and must therefore keep to the Old Testament use of words. Hence the legitimate inference is, that, in the meantime, the centre of Messianic activity has been transferred from heaven to earth. The Messiah is now again "in the midst of his enemies;" which agrees with the commission here given him: *Rule thou in the midst of thy foes*. It would be more like a parody than a fair exegesis of these words to make them equivalent to—"From thy safe retreat in heaven, at the right hand of Jehovah, where thine enemies cannot reach thee, nor for a moment suppose they can reach thee, rule thou in the midst of thy foes." The *power* might be in the midst of the foes, but the *Presence* would not be—the *Manifested Presence*; without which—how are the unbelieving enemies,—who, as such, do not believe that there is a Messiah concealed in the skies,—to connect the power on the earth with the Presence in heaven? No: plainly, the Messiah's special *refuge-and-waiting* session at the right hand of Jehovah, in heaven, IS AT AN END, and he is once more "in the midst of his foes" on earth: in Zion, the historical Zion, the only Zion of which the Old Testament knows anything, the very Zion in which long ago the Father declared he would enthrone him (Ps. 2). Being in Zion, in the midst of his foes, he there wields his iron sceptre; and Jehovah will see to it that its enforcing activity shall be *extended*, at least over *a wide land*; and undoubtedly, ere its triumphs cease, be stretched forth "from the River unto the Ends of the earth" (Zech. 9:10).

PSALM 110

Ver. 3. But the Messiah, now seated in Zion, has a *people*, who are here described in strikingly beautiful and suggestive terms. They are *most willing*: they are *volunteers* in the service of Zion's king; for, by general consent, this is the force of the abstract plural of intensification (*willingness*), here employed. They are not mercenaries; they spring to their feet with alacrity when the time comes for them to offer their services. The seasonableness of their volunteering is expressly noted; for they thus come forth for service just when their services are needed, or when at least the offer of them seems fitting to the time: *in thy day of warfare*—"the meaning being, on the day when thy forces muster for battle" (Dr.). David's lord, the Messiah, therefore, *has* a "people," who with alacrity press into his service "on his day of warfare"; i.e., the day when his warfare breaks out "in the midst of his foes." How long they have been his "people" is not stated: they are his people now when his "forces muster for battle," and they act in character *as* his people by volunteering for service now that the time for warring has come.

Their appearance is next described: that is, if we follow the Massoretic text—they appear *in holy adorning*, as it were in priestly robes. If, however, with some able critics we prefer the various reading which (substituting an "r" for a "d," the difference in Hebrew being very small) yields the very dissimilar clause *On the holy mountains* instead of "In holy adorning," then we find in this phrase a notification of the *place where* these volunteers gather: they gather on the holy mountains—about Jerusalem, naturally—for we know of no other "holy mountains"; and this seems strikingly agreeable with the circumstance that the Messiah has now fixed his headquarters in Jerusalem, since it is *from thence* that his strong rule is to be "extended." Still, it is not certain that this various reading is to be preferred, for a reason to be given in a few moments. Hence, for the present, we leave that an open question, by saying: If the word is *harre*, then the rendering must be—*On the holy mountains*; but if *hadre*, then the proper English is—*in holy adorning*. We wish to find out precisely—if we may—who these "people," these Messianic "volunteers," are: does this clause say they are a priestly people; or does it indicate the place of their gathering? Let us follow on with the text, in the hope of coming near to an answer.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

Out of the womb of the dawn, Thou hast (or to thee cometh forth) the dew of thy young men. Sudden and striking, bright and beautiful, and wholly unexpected, as a revelation of innumerable dew-drops in the morning when the sun rises, is the appearance of this army of volunteers. They are born out of the foregoing night. They suddenly start forth as the Messiah's allies "on the day of his warfare," when his "strong sceptre" is about to be "stretched forth out of Zion" by Jehovah. So far our text leads us. Still it does not define, beyond doubt, who this "people" are.

But just here comes in a remarkable text from the prophet Micah (5:7) which looks as if it might have been written as a commentary on this verse of our psalm. The reference is to "the Shepherd of Israel." That this Shepherd should appear as a deliverer from ASSYRIA, will not hinder students of prophecy from associating him with the final deliverance of Israel from the Gentile world-power, first represented by Assyria. But here is the language in question:—"And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples, As dew from Jehovah, As myriad drops on plants, Which tarrieth not for man, Nor waiteth for the sons of Adam." Even so far, the parallel is very striking; and already begins to make us question whether the "volunteers" of our psalm are not this very "remnant of Jacob in the midst of many peoples," quietly awaiting the auspicious morning of Messiah's manifestation in Jerusalem. How greatly the quiet deposit of them "among many peoples" seems to add to the formidableness of their presence, provided they are destined to be *more aggressive than "dew"*: the very thing of which the prophet immediately proceeds to assure us: "And the remnant of Jacob"—the same remnant—"shall be among the nations"—the same position, stated in duplicate: "among the nations, in the midst of many peoples:" in what character? as gentle "dew" merely? nay! "as a lion among the beasts of the jungle, As a young lion among flocks of sheep, Who if he passeth by, both treadeth down—and teareth in pieces—and none can deliver." How wonderfully, though poetically, do those features of the psalmist's description here reappear, which intimate that in spite of their "holy adorning" and their fresh and brilliant beauty, the newly revealed army of volunteers are volunteers of a king whose iron sceptre is now, on this "his day of warfare," to be "stretched forth" by Jehovah "out of Zion"! We tenaciously adhered, a little way back, to the fact

PSALM 110

that, although the "iron sceptre" was the Messiah's, yet it was JEHOVAH who would stretch it forth from Zion to the ends of the earth. And is not this our reward—namely, to discover in this "remnant of Jacob" the very means by which Jehovah will extend that resistless sway of which the psalmist had spoken?

Thus, then, we appear to be absolved from any need to push further our quest after the Messiah's volunteering people as referred to in the third verse of our psalm. They are the "remnant of Jacob" "among the nations," "in the midst of many peoples," sustaining the well-known characteristics of "dew"—"that tarrieth not for man," and of "lions" from whose downtreading and tearing prowess the sheep cannot escape. If the provision of such a people for the crisis is not a stretching forth of Messiah's strong sceptre out of Zion to the ends of the earth, we should like to know by what more striking and powerful metaphor such an idea could be conveyed. For the present, then, we are well content with the Massoretic text, which spells with a "d" and not with an "r"; and so are prepared to rest in the descriptive clause "In holy adorning" as applied to the "remnant of Jacob"; rather than "On the holy mountains," which would have confined their gathering to a single spot. Such volunteers are a thousand times more formidable where they are, scattered among the nations; unnoticed, forgotten, trampled under foot; and yet able,—in the strength of Jehovah their God and in their newborn enthusiasm for their Anointed King newly seated in Zion,—to utter a roar which shall make all the continents of the world tremble. By what means Jehovah will clothe this scattered "remnant of Jacob" with garments of "holy adorning," so that like Jehoshaphat's Levites of old (2 Ch. 20:19-22) they shall go forth singing to the battlefield, perchance to find the foe already demolished, we know not; but if Jehovah here declares that he will so stretch forth his Messiah's strong sceptre to the ends of the earth, we can calmly await the fulfilment. The morning which shall witness that army's birth has not yet dawned. We are the more content to abide by the "holy adorning" clause of the Massoretic Hebrew text, in that, besides its immediate application to the Messiah's volunteers, it gives forth in advance something of the fragrance of the Messiah's own Kingly priesthood, with the revelation of which a march has now to be stolen upon us. The Volunteer Army is ready, so far as the psalm itself is concerned: ready, in that with more or less of vividness it now stands before the mental eye of the sympathetic reader.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

But meanwhile a promotion has come to the Messiah during his absence in heaven at Jehovah's right hand. An immeasurable honour has been conferred upon him.

Ver. 4. *Sworn hath Jehovah, and will not regret: THOU art a priest to the ages After the manner of Melchizedek.* Note that this statement is not made in terms which describe a proceeding now to take place, but in terms which express accomplishment already completed. The words are not—"Jehovah sweareth," or "now proceedeth to swear"; but *Jehovah hath sworn*. The constituting mandate (or *oath*), making the Messiah priest, has already been uttered; and, having regard to the place occupied by this report of that mandate, we may reasonably conclude that the priestly instalment took place in heaven, when the Messiah sat down at Jehovah's right hand. Of this instalment, however, no details are given. They are left over for a Christian Writer to supply; and right worthily has the Writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews supplied all necessary details; as to the grounds on which this honour was conferred on the Messiah—how he who now is made priest had previously offered himself as a sacrifice,—and as to the abolishing effect of this decree on the Levitical priesthood. No such details, be it well observed, are here given. The installing announcement alone is here made, in briefest terms, and as of an event already accomplished. This last point is the matter to be emphasised here. The new King has come to Zion; has received his commission to subdue and humiliate his foes; and his army of volunteers is ready. At this juncture the action of the poem is stayed, to make way for this brief and authoritative announcement of the accomplished fact of the installation of David's "lord" into a Kingly Priesthood resembling that of Melchizedek. Now, as the action of the psalm is immediately resumed as soon as ever this heavenly event is proclaimed; as the strong sceptre of the Messiah is immediately stretched forth out of Zion; and as the foes are immediately put beneath the Messiah's feet,—the proper effect of the interpolated priestly announcement is to call attention to *the kind of King* which earth receives in now submitting to the all-subduing Messiah. In sitting on David's throne, which is his own earthly throne in Zion, David's "lord" sits there as a priest upon his throne: as at once priest and king, exercising simultaneously and harmoniously the functions of both offices,—perfectly representing and effectuating Jehovah's rule over men, and as perfectly representing and presenting men's need to Je-

PSALM 110

hovah. He will thus, in his own person, give a strong lead to Israel in becoming, according to her original mission (Exo. 19), "a kingdom of priests" to all nations. He will thus become the Antitype of the "Sign-men," Joshua and his friends in the prophecies of Zechariah, by permanently bearing both offices (Zech. 3:8, 6:9-15). He will thus, far surpass his father David, who once or twice in a passing way, served as a High Priest to the priests of Israel (2 S. 6:5, 14, 1 Ch. 15, 16). Especially will he thus become, to the whole earth and for ever, what Melchizedek was for a short while to a small area around Salem of old (Gen. 14).

Vers. 5-7. The climax of the whole psalm comes at last. The climax is a crisis. The crisis is a battle which decides the fate of the world by subduing it to the final reign on earth of its Priestly King. The whole psalm leads up to this terrible crisis. The first verse characterises it as the time of bringing Messiah's enemies beneath his feet, until which the invitation extends to sit down at Jehovah's right hand in heaven. The second verse centralises the crisis in Zion. The third verse definitely names it Messiah's "day of warfare." The fourth verse, as we have said, stays the action of the psalm for the purpose of announcing an already accomplished heavenly fact. Having done this, the fifth verse unmistakably resumes the action of the psalm by further naming the coming day as Jehovah's *day of anger* and by plunging into the actual crushing of the foes, giving us to witness STROKE AFTER STROKE of Jehovah's activity in fulfilling the promise made at the outset to David's "lord." The first stroke is the crushing of kings. The second stroke is the filling of the nations, or of the battle-field of the nations, with dead bodies. The third stroke is the crushing of an individual *head*, who, however, is head *over a wide land*. These three strokes complete the down-treading action of the psalm—complete the overthrow and trampling underfoot of Messiah's foes—complete the rescue of Messiah's inheritance. The single remaining verse celebrates the victory.

We have characterised this as a "terrible" crisis, and so it is. But, unless words are to be tortured, it is THE CRISIS OF THE PSALM; moreover, it is the crisis of the Bible—of other psalms, as the second with its dashing in pieces, the forty-fifth with its sharp arrows in the heart of the king's enemies whereby peoples fall under him, the seventy-second where the king's enemies are made to lick the dust; and of the prophecies generally, such as

STUDIES IN PSALMS

Isaiah Second, Twenty-fourth, Sixty-third, Sixty-sixth, and others too numerous to be mentioned; of several significant places in the Gospels and the Epistles, reappearing with an accession of heavenly terror in the Apocalypse. It is a "terrible" crisis, but no daring criticism can root it out of the Bible. And, though "terrible," it seems to be a *needful* crisis. For, truly, the witness of nineteen centuries seems to declare that it may be absolutely needful that Jehovah's PHYSICAL FORCE through means of Messiah's *iron sceptre* should maintain and enforce the moral suasion of many foregoing centuries. And, once more, though "terrible," thank God it will be *final and efficacious*. For, thereby, the Messiah will "speak peace to the nations" in terms which will compel war to cease and clear the way for gentler forces to operate to the ages.

Ver. 5. Before noticing, in a little detail, the three strokes of displeasure with which the foes of the Messiah are actually made his footstool, it is desirable to assure ourselves that those three strokes are here attributed to JEHOVAH HIMSELF rather than to the Messiah. Whether this is the case, turns upon the nice and rather critical question—Who is intended by "*The Lord at thy right hand*" of ver. 5? Is it Messiah on Jehovah's right hand, or is it Jehovah on the Messiah's right hand? And, as involved in this broader question, is the narrower one—Who is the person whose *right hand* is here spoken of? In other words, to whom is this line (with the following lines) addressed? If Jehovah is addressed, then "the Lord at his right hand" will be the Messiah—"The Messiah hath crushed kings," &c.; whereas, if the Messiah is addressed, then it will be Jehovah who crusheth kings, &c. Now, notwithstanding the plausibility of the contention that the word A-D-N-I should be pronounced *adhoni* ("my lord"), and so be regarded as a repetition of the word standing at the end of the first line of the psalm, yet as this would probably necessitate another change, which neither the Hebrew text nor the ancient versions sustain, "My lord at HIS right hand"; we shall do well to pause and look well to the context, before we decide this nice point. Now the opinion is here submitted, that the better conclusion is: That the Messiah is here directly addressed, and therefore that "the Lord at Messiah's right hand" is Jehovah. And, though this may be said to involve a change of their relative position—so that, in ver. 1, Messiah is seen on Jehovah's right hand; and, in ver. 5, Jehovah is discovered on the Messiah's right hand,—yet there can be no valid

PSALM 110

objection to this. The scene has changed, and with it the relative positions; and there is nothing whatever incongruous, but rather everything befitting, that in heaven the Messiah should be on Jehovah's right hand, and on earth Jehovah should be on the Messiah's right hand; especially as this very representation has already and so lately been made as in vers. 30, 31 of the next preceding psalm: "I will thank Jehovah . . . because he taketh his stand at the right hand of the needy." There is therefore plainly nothing incongruous, if in this place, the representation is, that Jehovah, here, on earth, on "*the day of Messiah's warfare*," takes his stand at the Messiah's right hand to direct and aid him in overthrowing his foes, and letting the world and all future generations see that it was JEHOVAH's hand that did it. And as, on the one hand, there is nothing incongruous to be alleged against this conclusion, so on the other there are these reasons to be urged in its favour: (1) that the vowel-pointing of the Massoretic text can stand—*Adonai—Sovereign Lord*, equivalent to Jehovah; (2) that those codices which actually have Jehovah (see *Gn.* under text) will be substantially correct; (3) that no change further on in the line, from "thy" to "his" will be required; and (4)—most weighty reason of all—that continued prominence will thereby be given to the feature made prominent at the beginning of the psalm, That it is emphatically JEHOVAH who places the Messiah's enemies beneath his feet. *He* does this, because he it is who provides the Messiah with his wonderful army of volunteers, he it is who crushes kings, judges nations, crushes the head over a wide land. This then may be regarded as provisionally settled, that the fifth verse opens by declaring that Jehovah, on the Messiah's right hand, does the things that follow, to each of which we may now devote a moment's attention.

Jehovah, at the Messiah's right hand, *crushes Kings*—literally *hath crushed*, the well-known perfect tense of prophetic certainty. Then there are "kings" in the final opposition raised against the Messiah's wielding his strong sceptre out of Zion. There are "kings" who have not shewn the "prudence" urged upon them in the Second Psalm. They will have dared an impious, desperate thing; and for it they will be "crushed."

Jehovah, at the Messiah's right hand, *judgeth* (*proceedeth to judge, will judge*) among the nations,—the tense being here changed to the so-called "imperfect," more exactly, the initiative, incipient or incomplete, precisely suited to indicate a further

STUDIES IN PSALMS

and perhaps prolonged process. No details, saving one, are here supplied as to the nature of this judging among the nations. The one which is supplied is sufficiently startling: throughout the nations which are being judged, or on the battlefield to which the nations gather, there is a filling of the places of conflict (or the one battlefield) with the slain—the dead bodies—the corpses—the *g'wioth*. Let him who dares, attempt to spiritualise and thereby evaporise this! Beware how you minimise the Divine wielding of Messiah's "iron sceptre"! This is the second stroke. The third follows.

Jehovah, at the Messiah's right hand, *hath crushed* (again the perfect of certainty) *the head over a wide land*. The rebellious *kings* have a "head": the infatuated *nations* have a head. That "head" has become "head"—"over a wide land," or has gone up to do battle, "over a wide country." The student of prophecy does not need to inquire who that head is. Even the thoughtful reader who has got no further than this psalm may surmise that here at last is the key that unlocks the secret of that "throne of iniquity" which so unaccountably started out into prominence in Ps. 94: "Can the throne of engulfing ruin be allied to thee, which frameth mischief by statute?" It would not be surprising if the instructed Bible student were to exclaim without more delay: "Yes! I see: this other *head* that is to be crushed is none else than Antichrist or the Man of Sin or the Lawless One whom 'the Lord Jesus is to destroy by the breath of his lips and to paralyse with the brightness of his coming.'" Nor would he be wrong. Nevertheless, it may be a useful throwing of ourselves upon Old Testament testimony, if we simply confirm our apprehension by yet another reference to it as set forth by the prophet Isaiah (30:29-33):—"A song shall ye have, As in the night of hallowing a festival, And gladness of heart as when one goeth with the flute To enter the mountain of Jehovah Unto the Rock of Israel." Language, this, which appears as if expressly framed to suit those "Volunteers," coming forth "out of the womb of the dawn," "robed in holy adorning" of which we read in the third verse of this psalm. "Then will Jehovah cause to be heard the resounding of his voice, And the bringing down of his arm shall be seen, In a rage of anger, And with the flame of a devouring fire, A burst, and downpour and a hailstone! And at the voice of Jehovah shall Assyria be crushed, With his rod will he smite, And it shall come to pass that every stroke of the staff of doom which Jehovah shall lay

PSALM 110

upon him shall be with timbrels and with lyres, when with battles of brandished weapons he hath fought against them. For there hath been set in order beforehand a Tophet, yea the same for the king hath been prepared, He hath made it deep, made it large,—The circumference thereof is for fire and wood in abundance, The breath of Jehovah like a torrent of brimstone is ready to kindle it.” Assyria first—Assyria last: that came out in the quotation from Micah. The overthrow of Sennacherib a type—the overthrow of Antichrist the antitype. But note, as the supreme thing in relation to our psalm, the activity of Jehovah: Jehovah’s voice—Jehovah’s arm—Jehovah’s rage—Jehovah’s rod Jehovah’s strokes of doom—Jehovah’s enkindling breath; and say whether it does not read as if expressly intended to be a commentary on our Psalm—on Jehovah’s opening revelation to David’s “lord” our Messiah. Here is the king—the “head” king of iniquity; here is the day of anger; here, the making of the Messiah’s foes a stool for his feet. Ye forthcoming army of volunteers, yet to spring sparkingly forth from the womb of the dawn! get ready your flutes and timbrels and lyres; for although the slaughter will be terrible, yet the joy will be great, and the songs that will be evoked will continue to resound through the after ages.

Ver. 7. After the battle, the restoration of the inheritance! And so, by the help of Dr. Briggs, we read from a critically emended text: *An inheritance on the way he maketh it, Therefore he* (Jehovah still, as all along so far in these concluding verses) *exalteth the Head*—the true Head, the Messiah, the rightful Head of a ransomed and delivered world. Of course, if anyone choose to abide still by the Massoretic Hebrew text,—down to the last verse and to the minutest letter, including the editorially supplied vowel points, he can do so with very little disturbance to the general effect; and, bringing the Messiah to the front as an exhausted warrior, snatching a refreshing drink of the book by the way, and then lifting up his head to pursue the flying foe and so completing his conquest—to which he will naturally give a fitting explanation. But probably a goodly contingent even of conservative critics will prefer the more dignified and commensurate ending suggested above, especially when they discover the minuteness of the changes involved, probably imperilling not more than a single consonant in the original text, in the process of copying which such an error might easily be made. An excellent, dignified, and adequate

STUDIES IN PSALMS

conclusion to the psalm, will certainly be realised if we thus read and expound the seventh verse. *An inheritance on the way* (at once) *he* (Jehovah) *maketh it*, (namely) *the wide land* rescued from Antichrist, or even the whole earth occupied by the nations previously mentioned as having to pass through Jehovah's refining judgment; handing it over to him, the Messiah, in pursuance of the offer of the Second Psalm—"Ask of me, and I will give nations as thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth as thy possession." Thus will Jehovah make good the very last line of the psalm also: *Therefore* (and thus) *he* (Jehovah) *exalteth* the (rightful and all worldly) *Head* (of the world redeemed by him, even the Messiah, David's long-looked-for *lord*: to whom and for whom this sublime and significant revelation was made by the Holy Spirit speaking by David).

The references to this psalm in the N.T. demand a brief notice. "No psalm is more frequently quoted and alluded to in the N.T. It was, as we have seen, quoted by our Lord (Mat. 22:44, Mk. 12:36, Lk. 20:42, 43); and His use of its language as recorded in 26:64 (=Mk. 14:62, Lk. 22:69) clearly involved (since its Messianic significance was acknowledged) and assertion of His Messiahship in answer to the High-priest's adjuration. Ver. 1 is applied by St. Peter to the exaltation of Christ in his Resurrection and Ascension (Acts 2:34, 35) and is quoted in Heb. 1:13 to illustrate the superiority of the Son to Angels. Cp. also Mk. 16:19, Acts 5:31, 7:55, 56, Rom. 8:34, I Cor. 15:24ff, Eph. 1:20, Col. 3:1, Heb. 1:3, 8:1, 10:12, 13, 12:2, I Peter 3:22, Rev. 3:21. Ver. 4 serves as the basis of the argument in Heb. 5:5ff, 6:20, 7:17ff concerning the superiority of Christ's priesthood to the Levitical priesthood"—Kp. in "Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges." In accordance with the lofty outlook of some of these references, it would not have been improper to render the second line of this psalm—"Sit thou enthroned at my right hand," only that such a prominence given to heavenly kingship would have been a little beyond the scope of the psalm, and was by no means demanded by the Hebrew word employed. Carefully followed, the context suggests no more than honour, rest, and waiting; in exact accordance with Heb. 10:13 ("waiting henceforth"). In point of fact, the Son of David is also the Son of God; and the heavenly honour, rest, and waiting secured by his session at the right hand of God, are coincident with heavenly activity, in other

PSALM 110

capacities and for other ends than those brought into view by the psalm. In like manner, it would probably have been premature, had we, in seeking for the "volunteers" of ver. 3, referred to the army seen in heaven in Rev. 19. The coincidence is indeed striking, especially as between the "holy adorning" seen by the psalmist and the "fine linen, white and pure" described by the seer in Patmos. The happy medium to be desired in adjusting the revelations of the Old and New Testaments is to make haste slowly; not to hurry the elder scriptures into disclosures quite beyond their scope, nor yet to overrule, and far less to suppress or make of no effect their communications.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. This psalm is to be a "revelation". Just what is involved in the use of this word?
2. This revelation consists in what fact?
3. To whom is this revelation to be given? When? Under what conditions? With what result?
4. The phrase "sit thou at my right hand until I make thy foes a stool for thy feet" moves the Messiah from earth to heaven. How?
5. Who is to conquer the enemies of the Messiah? How?
6. What is meant by the phrase "Thy sceptre of strength"?
7. Are we now moved from heaven back to earth? There can be no spiritual meaning to the "Zion" here mentioned. Do you agree? Discuss.
8. King Jesus is ruling with a rod of iron out of Jerusalem in the midst of His foes. Is this to be a real circumstance? Discuss.
9. Who are "his people" as in vs. 3? Before you attempt an answer discuss the three characteristics of "his people." These qualities should characterize "his people" today.
10. What a beautiful figure of speech: "out of the womb of the dawn, Thou hast the dew of thy young men." How do Christians well compare with dew? i.e. real "new creatures in Christ Jesus".
11. A reference in Micah (5:7) is used by the writer to interpret this part of verse three. Does it fit? Discuss.
12. "The people of God"—indeed the "army of God" according to Rotherham is "the remnant of Jacob". These are scattered "among the nations"—plainly put—: are these Christian Jews who are scattered among the nations and

STUDIES IN PSALMS

who will one day be called (or caught up) to Jerusalem to fight in the bloody battle of God? Discuss.

13. In verse five we are asked to believe that God is moved to the Messiah's right hand. Do you accept this thought? Please, please, read some other commentary in addition to this one on this point.
14. "The climax is a crisis" in this psalm. What is it? The crisis of this psalm is the crisis of the Bible i.e., according to the writer. Discuss.
15. The three strokes of displeasure by which the Messiah's foes are made the footstool of His feet are here described (in vs. 5). What are they?
16. The "crushing of head" refers to the "man of sin". Do you agree? Discuss.
17. What happens after this great battle? Discuss.

PSALM 111

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Alphabetical Psalm in Praise of Jehovah.

ANALYSIS

The Psalm is composed of Ten Verses: vers. 1-8 have Two Clauses each, Initialled by 16 successive letters of the Hebrew Alphabet; and vers. 9 and 10 have Three Clauses each, Initialled by the 6 remaining letters of the Alphabet: thus making, in all, 22 lines; and employing the entire alphabet as initials. The First Verse states the **THEME** of the psalm, and the Last Verse supplies the **THEME** for the Next Psalm; so that the Second of the pair Begins where the First Ends.

(P.R.I.) Praise ye Yah!

- 1 I will thank Jehovah with a whole heart,
In the council¹ of the upright and the congregation.
- 2 Great are the works² of Jehovah,
Studied by all who take pleasure therein.
- 3 Majestic and stately³ is his work,
And his righteousness standeth fast for aye.

1. Or: "confidential gathering"—Dr.

2. Or: "doings."

3. MI. or: "majesty and stateliness."

PSALM 111

- 4 A memorial hath he made for his wondrous works,
*Gracious and compassionate*⁴ is Jehovah.
- 5 Prey⁵ hath he given to them who revere him,
He remembereth to the ages his covenant.
- 6 The might of his works⁶ declared he to his people,
In giving them the inheritance of the nations.
- 7 The works of his hands are truth and justice,
Trustworthy are all his precepts.
- 8 Sustained are they to futurity to the ages,
Wrought out in truth and uprightness.
- 9 Ransom sent he unto his people,
He commanded to the ages his covenant;
Holy and to be revered is his name.
- 10 The beginning of wisdom is the reverence of Jehovah,
Excellent insight have all they who do those things,⁷
His praise standeth fast for aye.

(Nm.)⁸

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 111

Hallelujah! I want to express publicly before His people my heartfelt thanks to God for His mighty miracles! All who are thankful should ponder them with me.

3 For His miracles demonstrate His honor, majesty, and eternal goodness.

4 Who can forget the wonders He performs—deeds of mercy and of grace?

5 He gives food to those who trust Him; He never forgets His promises!

6 He has shown His great power to His people by giving them the land of Israel, though it was the home of many nations living there.

7 All He does is just and good, and all His laws are right,

8 For they are formed from truth and goodness, and stand firm forever.

9 He has paid a full ransom for His people; now they are

4. Cp. Exo. 34:6.

5. Or (mf.): "food."

6. Or: "doings."

7. Heb.: "them."

8. See 112 (beginning).

STUDIES IN PSALMS

always free to come to God (what a holy, awe-inspiring name that is).

10 How can men be wise? The only way to begin is by reverence for God. For growth in wisdom comes from obeying His laws. His name forever.

EXPOSITION

Considering how artificial is the structure of these twin psalms, it is remarkable how little sense has been sacrificed to form: perhaps *prey* (ver. 5) is the only instance in this psalm in which a less happy word seems to have been used owing to acrostic exigencies. It is further observable that notwithstanding the proverbial style of sentiment which prevails, the striking history of Israel has, in this psalm in particular, furnished several couplets: as probably the "passover" memorial of ver. 4; the grant of Canaan in ver. 6; and again the deliverance out of Egypt and covenant at Sinai in ver. 9. An allusion to Exo. 34 ("the Refrain of the Bible") may be detected in ver. 4. The subtle difference between *deed*—thing done—and *work*—"thing made"—may also repay reflection. Jehovah is worthy to be praised both for his "deeds" and his "works." The practical trend of both psalms, and the especial link between the two, clearly proclaim: "I am holy, therefore be ye holy." It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the character of the God whom we worship.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. This is a grand psalm of praise. Please find in it present-day reasons for praise.
2. Why use an acrostic?
3. How does our consideration of the character of God aid our worship?

PSALM 112

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Alphabetical Psalm in Praise of the Man who Revereth Jehovah.

PSALM 112

ANALYSIS

The structure of this Psalm exactly corresponds with that of the foregoing (of which see the "Analysis").

(P.R.I.) Praise ye Yah!

- 1 How happy the man who revereth Jehovah,
In his commandments he delighteth greatly:
- 2 Mighty in the earth shall be his seed,
The generation of the upright shall be blessed:
- 3 Comfort and riches are in his house,
And his righteousness standeth fast for aye:
- 4 He hath arisen in darkness a light to the upright,
*Gracious and compassionate*¹ and righteous:
- 5 Well is it with the man who is gracious and lendeth,
He shall maintain his words in the judgment:
- 6 For to the ages shall he not be shaken,
An age-abiding remembrance shall the righteous man
become:
- 7 Of evil tidings will he not be afraid,
Steadfast is his heart led to trust in Jehovah.
- 8 Sustained in his heart he is not afraid,
Until that he gazeth on his adversaries:
- 9 He hath scattered abroad he hath given to the needy,
His righteousness standeth fast for aye:
His horn shall be exalted with honour:
- 10 A lawless one shall see and be vexed,
His teeth shall he gnash and shall melt away;
The desire² of lawless ones shall vanish.³

(Nm)⁴

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 112

Praise the Lord! For all who fear God and trust in Him are blessed beyond expression. Yes, happy is the man who delights in doing His commands.

2 His children shall be honored everywhere, for good men's sons have a special heritage.

1. Cp. Exo. 34:6 and Ps. 111:4.

2. *Gt.*: "The hope." Cp. 9:18, Prov. 10:28—*Gn.*

3. Cp. 1:6.

4. See 113 (beginning.)

STUDIES IN PSALMS

3 He himself shall be wealthy, and his good deeds will never be forgotten.¹

4 When darkness overtakes him, light will come bursting in. He is kind and merciful—

5 And all goes well for the generous man who conducts his business fairly.

6 Such a man will not be overthrown by evil circumstances. God's constant care of him will make a deep impression on all who see it.

7 He does not fear bad news, nor live in dread of what may happen. For he is settled in his mind that Jehovah will take care of him.

8 That is why he is not afraid, but can calmly face his foes.

9 He gives generously to those in need. His deeds will never be forgotten.¹ He shall have influence and honor.

10 Evil-minded men will be infuriated when they see all this; they will gnash their teeth in anger and slink away, their hopes thwarted.

EXPOSITION

Although the course run by this psalm naturally differs from that of its predecessor, yet the correspondences between the two, both in thought and language, are numerous. Note the identity of line ver. 3b in the two psalms; also the recurrence of the "refrain" snatch in ver. 4b of this psalm as well as that; which, in this second case, is the more remarkable, because it probably applies to MAN that which was originally spoken by Jehovah concerning HIMSELF: as much as to say—"I am *gracious and compassionate*, be ye the same." Then comes the question whether, if line *b* of this verse is transferred to man, line *a* also should not be applied in like manner. If so, we reach the rather startling comparison of the Jehovah-revering MAN to a *light arising in the darkness* enshrouding his afflicted but *upright* brother. This is a by-no-means incredible result; and the strong current man-ward of this whole psalm appears to warrant our resting in it. The quotation of ver. 9 in 2 Cor. 9:9 may usefully remind us how strongly the great exponent of justification by faith teaches Christians, that they have been "created in Christ Jesus upon a footing of good (and noble) works, which God prepared beforehand, that therein we might walk" (Eph. 2:10).

1. Literally, "his righteousness endures forever."

PSALMS 112 AND 113

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. We can learn much from psalms 111 and 112 by a comparison and contrast. Graham Scroggie gave a very helpful chart on this which we reproduce here:

PSALM CXI

1. Praise ye the Lord.
1. The upright.
10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
2. Them that delight therein.
3. His righteousness endureth for ever.
4. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.
4. He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered.
5. Them that fear Him.
7. His commandments.
8. Established (stand fast).

PSALM CXII

1. Praise ye the Lord.
2. The upright.
1. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord.
1. Delighteth greatly in His commandments.
- 3, 9. His righteousness endureth for ever.
4. He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.
6. The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.
8. He shall not be afraid.
1. His commandments.
8. Established.

2. To whom do the words: "gracious and compassionate" in vs. 4b refer? This becomes a startling thought. Why?

P S A L M 1 1 3

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

A Song of Sublime Simplicity: reaching its Climax
by Rejoicing with a Glad Mother!

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-3, Praise Invited from Jehovah's Servants, for All Time, through All the World. Stanza II., vers. 4-6, Jehovah's Incomparable Loftiness and Condescension in Contrast. Stanza III., vers. 7-9, The Lowly are Exalted and the Barren Wife made Glad.

(P.R.I.) Praise ye Yah!

- 1 Praise O ye servants of Jehovah,
praise the name of Jehovah:

STUDIES IN PSALMS

- 2 Let the name of Jehovah be blessed
from this time forth and to the ages:
- 3 From the rising of the sun unto the going in thereof
worthy to be praised is the name of Jehovah.
- 4 High above all nations is Jehovah,
above the heavens is his glory
- 5 Who is like unto Jehovah our God,—
that on high sitteth,
- 6 that down low looketh,—
In the heavens and on the earth?
- 7 Who raiseth out of the dust the poor,
from the dunghill¹ uplifteth the needy:
- 8 To seat [him] with nobles,
with the nobles of his people.
- 9 Who giveth an abiding home to the barren of the house,
[now] mother of the sons to her joy!

(Nm.)²

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 113

Hallelujah! O servants of Jehovah, praise His name.

2 Blessed is His name forever and forever.

3 Praise Him from sunrise to sunset!

4 For He is high above the nations; His glory is far greater
than the heavens.

5 Who can be compared with God enthroned on high?

6 Far below Him are the heavens and the earth; He stoops
to look,

7 And lifts the poor from the dirt, and the hungry from
the garbage dump,

8 And sets them among princes!

9 He gives children to the childless wife, so that she becomes
a happy mother. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord.

EXPOSITION

This is a Song of exquisite simplicity and grace. The momentary feeling that it starts with mincing steps, quickly gives place to the perception that its stairlike advances soon mount from the simple to the sublime. The *servants of Jehovah*

1. Or: "ash-heap."

2. See 114 (beginning).

PSALM 113

are the only safe custodians of his *praise*. But, instead of keeping his praise to themselves, they are called upon to give it wing through all time and to the ends of the earth. So much already the first stanza embraces.

Jehovah is related to *all nations*, but *high above* them all: indeed, *above the heavens is his glory*—his Messengers and Ministers are far beneath him—his throne is ever above them. Even in heaven, although *he goeth high to sit*, yet he *bendeth low to look*,—which appears to settle a nice point as to the construction of the second stanza, and to intimate that even in heaven the condescension of Jehovah is recognised, and not merely here on earth. He is therefore incomparable both *in the heavens and on the earth*.

But *the dust and the dunghill* especially savour of earth. It is here that patience and hope especially need to be nursed; and silent sorrow most strongly commands our sympathy. "Depressed in spirit" was Hannah, before she became the mother of Samuel; and, in another way, more sorely tried, still, was Mary the mother of Jesus. The praises of Israel have been composed to help out the sorrows of sufferers into soothing and helpful expression; and the language of both Hannah and Mary is reflected or anticipated here, where, with striking significance, the last word is *joy!* (Cp., for the Mother City, Isaiah 60:14-22; 66:7-14).

This psalm is the first of the series called "The Hallel"—sometimes "The Egyptian Hallel"—sung on occasion of the three great national festivals, the new moons and (portions of it) at the commencement of the New Year. At the Passover, this psalm and the next were sung at the beginning of the celebration, and the remaining four psalms (115-118) after the pouring out of the "fourth" cup. That such a psalm as this should have been made the first of such a series is profoundly significant. Only to think it possible that a King wrote this psalm while waiting in patience for the birth of his Firstborn, is to catch a glimpse of Sacred Romance.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the purpose and use of this psalm?
2. There must be great benefit in praise or adoration to Jehovah. Why isn't it more prominent today?
3. Our God is both high and low. In what sense?

STUDIES IN PSALMS

4. This is a psalm for the expectant mother. It is referred to Mary and Hannah—just how related?
5. Sacred Romance might be involved. How?

PSALM 114

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

A Passover Song.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1, 2, The Deliverance out of Egypt set forth as the Basis of Jehovah's Worship and Reign in Israel. Stanza II., vers. 3, 4, Nature's Excitement over the Birth of the Nation. Stanza III., vers. 5, 6, Nature Interrogated as to the Cause of her Excitement. Stanza IV., vers. 7, 8, The Psalmist Answers for Nature: Jacob's God is Nature's Lord.

(P.R.I.) Praise ye Yah!

- 1 When Israel came forth out of Egypt,
the house of Jacob from a people of unintelligible speech
- 2 Judah became his sanctuary,
Israel his realm.
- 3 The sea saw and fled,
the Jordan turned backward;
- 4 The mountains skipped like rams,
the hills like the young of the flock.
- 5 What aileth thee O thou sea that thou fleest?
thou Jordan that thou turnest backward?
- 6 Ye mountains that ye skip like rams?
ye hills like the young of the flock?
- 7 At the presence of the Lord be in birth-throes O earth!
at the presence of the God of Jacob:
- 8 Who turneth the rock into a pool of water,
flint into a fountain of water.

(Nm.)

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 114

Long ago when the Israeli escaped from Egypt, from that land of foreign tongue,

PSALM 114

2 Then the lands of Judah and of Israel became God's new home and kingdom.

3 The Red Sea saw them coming and quickly broke apart before them! The Jordan River opened up a path for them to cross!

4 The mountains skipped like rams, the little hills like lambs!

5 What's wrong, Red Sea, that made you cut yourself in two? What happened, Jordan River, to your waters? Why were they held back?

6 Why, mountains, did you skip like rams? Why, little hills, like lambs?

7 Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, the God of Jacob.

8 For He caused gushing streams to burst from flinty rock.

EXPOSITION

The exceeding beauty of this psalm must be confessed by all who, being able to appreciate poetry as such, at the same time possess an historical imagination. The moment this little poem is regarded as written for a passover celebration, and therefore as one of a series let into the midst of historical readings and accompanied by ceremonial actions,—not only is its beauty seen, but its brevity is saved from all suspicion of baldness. Each stanza says so little; and yet, for such an occasion, there is in that little so much that is to the point. The first stanza covers at once the birth of the nation, and its orderly establishment in the Holy Land under David and Solomon. The second stanza comprehends the miracles at the Red Sea and the Jordan, and the agitations of Sinai which attended the bringing of the nation into Covenant. In the third stanza, the poet interrogates the Sea, the River, the Mountains and Hills, as though he were there on the spot as a witness of their actions. In the fourth stanza, he justifies their excitement, by charging them to do the very things of which he has been witnessing; only with the understanding that these things are the legitimate concomitants of such a nation's birth. Even this he says in suchwise as to convey two further truths: namely, that he *Lord (Adon)* of nature is the *God (Eloah)* of Jacob, and no mere tribal Deity,—as moderns too hastily assume; and, by expressing the action of Omnipotence on *rock* and *flint* by means of a timeless participle (*who turneth*) further intimates

STUDIES IN PSALMS

that such manifest control over nature's laws merely awaits Jehovah's sovereign will.

This psalm being anonymous and the immediate occasion of its composition being unknown, dogmatism is precluded; but, if conjecture may sometimes serve useful ends, it may be asked, —Could any author more likely than ISAIAH be named? or any occasion more probable be suggested than Hezekiah's Great Passover? Its position in "The Hallel" could have been assigned to it at a later date.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Show the beauty and purpose of this psalm.
2. Trace the progressive history of Israel in the psalm.
3. Who was the possible author? What was the possible occasion of its composition?

PSALM 115

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Not for Her Own Glory but for His, Israel moves herself to trust in Jehovah to Shew his Superiority over Idols.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-3, Introductory appeal to Jehovah. Stanza II., vers. 4-8, Idols Disparaged. Stanza III., vers. 9-11, With Alternate Voices, the Choir encourages Israel to Trust. Stanza IV., vers. 12, 13, The Congregation Proclaims its Confidence. Stanza V., vers. 14, 15, A Priest Blesses the Congregation. Stanza VI., vers. 16-18, A United Chorus of Praise.

(No "P.R.I." here in M.T.)

- 1 Not unto us Jehovah not unto us
but unto thine own name give glory,
because of thy kindness because¹ of thy truth.
- 2 Wherefore should the nations say—
"Where pray is their God?"
- 3 When our God is in the heavens,
all that he pleased hath he done?

1. So M.T. (without "and"). Some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn., Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "and because"—Gn.

PSALM 115

- 4 Their idols are silver and gold,
the work² of the hands of men:—
- 5 A mouth have they but do not speak,
Eyes have they but do not see;
- 6 Ears have they but do not hear,
A nose have they but do not smell;
- 7 Their hands! but they do not feel,
Their feet! but they do not walk,
They make no murmuring sound with their throat.
- 8 Like them shall become they who make them,
every one³ who trusteth in them.
- 9 O Israel!⁴ trust thou in Jehovah,
Their⁵ help and their shield is he!
- 10 O house of Aaron! trust ye in Jehovah,
Their help and their shield is he!
- 11 Ye that revere Jehovah! trust in Jehovah,
Their help and their shield is he!
- 12 Jehovah hath remembered us he will bless—
will bless the house of Israel,
will bless the house of Aaron,
- 13 *will bless them who revere Jehovah,*
the small as well as the great.
- 14 Jehovah will add unto you—
unto you and unto your children.
- 15 Blessed are ye of Jehovah,
maker of heavens and earth.
- 16 The heavens are the heavens of⁶ Jehovah,
but the earth hath he given to the sons of men.
- 17 It is not the dead who praise Yah,
nor any that go down into Silence;
- 18 But we will bless Yah,
from this time forth and to the ages.⁷

(Nm.)⁸

2. Some cod. (w. Sep. and Vul.): "works" (pl.)—Gn.

3. Some cod (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.): "And every one"—Gn.

4. Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.): "O house of Israel"—Gn.

5. That "our" does not stand here, as in 33:20, "may be explained from the antiphonal singing; so far, however, as the psalm supplicates God's protection and help to a military expedition, the declaration of assured hope, *their Help and Shield is He*, may be referred with Hitzig to the army that has gone or is going forth"—Del.

6. "Are assigned to"—Br. (reading SiMiM instead of SHaMaiM).

7. Cp. Isa. 38:18, 19.

8. See 116 (beginning).

STUDIES IN PSALMS
PARAPHRASE
PSALM 115

Glorify Your name, not ours O Lord! Cause everyone to praise Your lovingkindness and Your truth.

2 Why let the nations say, "Their God is dead!"¹

3 For He is in the heavens, and does as He wishes.

4 Their gods are merely man-made things of silver and of gold.

5 They can't talk or see, despite their eyes and mouths!

6 Nor can they hear, nor smell,

7 Nor use their hands or feet! Nor speak!

8 And those who make and worship them are just as foolish as their idols are.

9 O Israel, trust the Lord! He is your helper. He is your shield.

10 O priests of Aaron, trust the Lord! He is your helper; He is your shield.

11 All of you His people, trust in Him. He is your helper; He is your shield.

12 Jehovah is constantly thinking about us and He will surely bless us! He will bless the people of Israel and the priests of Aaron,

13 And all, both great and small, who reverence Him.

14 May the Lord bless you richly both you and your children.

15 Yes, Jehovah who made heaven and earth will personally bless you!

16 The heavens belong to the Lord, but He has given the earth to all mankind.

17 The dead cannot sing praises to Jehovah here on earth.²

18 But we can! We praise Him forever! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

EXPOSITION

The fact that this psalm is without head-line to divide it from the foregoing, confirmed as it is in many ancient authorities by being run on as a continuation of that which has gone before, is of sufficient force to shew at what an early date this sequence was effected; but can scarcely prevail to over-ride internal evidence in favour of an independent origin. In its contents

1. Literally, "Where is their God?"

2. Implied.

PSALM 115

this psalm strongly asserts its individuality; and, indeed, points clearly to a situation so much like that formed by the league of surrounding nations against King Jehoshaphat (2 Ch. 20), as to throw any other theory of origin into the shade. That it came into further use with great acceptance at the time of the return from the Babylonish Exile in nowise conflicts with this theory of its original composition. It will be noted that the tone of the psalm is peculiar: it is neither despairing nor triumphant. Honour is anticipated, but rendered in advance to Jehovah himself. Idolatry presents itself forcibly enough to call forth elaborate sarcasm; yet it would seem as though the worshippers of Jehovah were not out of peril, hence they encourage each other to have confidence—*trust ye in Jehovah*; but they encourage each other in song—in responsive song! All the essential conditions for this peculiar state of things may be found in the critical condition of affairs when nations of idolaters were surrounding King Jehoshaphat; when his army in going forth against its enemies was assured it would not have to fight; and when bands of singing Levites were provided, well able to raise responsive song on what might have been a battlefield, for they went forth before the armed men! In point of fact, we can almost see the turning point of affairs on that memorable day reflected in the psalm itself at ver. 12. For if,—when the history records that “Judah came near the watch-tower of the wilderness (and) they turned towards the multitude, and lo! there they were, dead bodies fallen to the earth, with none to escape;”—if, just then, a priest had broken the silence by exclaiming in changed tense and in a tone of triumph,—*Jehovah hath remembered us!* could anything have been more appropriate or more dramatic? It is quite true that many able critics, who cannot see behind the return from the Exile, find another and a not unsuitable crisis of affairs, to fit in with that change of language in the psalm: they picture a public Temple service as in progress, and that when the sacrifice is laid on the altar and Jehovah as of old lights the flame of acceptance on the altar, the priest then exclaims—*Jehovah hath remembered us!* But surely it would have been all the more remarkable if the language to express that Divine manifestation had been provided some centuries earlier, when a wide land constituted the altar and holocaust of idolaters were the victims.

Possibly another link of connection is lying to our hand. Jehoshaphat lived before Hezekiah. Hezekiah, through means of

STUDIES IN PSALMS

his royal library, must have been acquainted with the songs of his predecessors. What if,—in providing for his Great Passover, to which he was so anxious to bring, in reunion, all Israel,—what if he discovered and brought into passover use this song of Jehoshaphat's days, weaving it into the service, with probably some of his own compositions,—would not such an appropriation of this psalm help to fix it in the "Hallel" for ever?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What evidence of independent origin is found in this psalm? Read II Chr. 20.
2. This psalm was used for a very special occasion—what was it?
3. Rotherham seems very confident as to the historical circumstances for the original use of this song. Where and when?
4. Hezekiah could have made special use of this psalm. How?

PSALM 116

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Individual Thanks for Deliverance from Peril of Death.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-4, With Profession of Love the Psalmist Describes his Peril and Prayer. Stanza II., vers. 5-9, In Glowing Terms describes Jehovah's Answer. Stanza III., vers. 10-14, Reviewing his Trial, he Desires to Return Public Thanks. Stanza IV., vers. 15-19, The Costliness of Death Intensifies his Desire for Publicity in Thanksgiving.

(P.R.I.) Praise ye Yah.

- 1 I love—
For Jehovah heareth my voice my supplications;
- 2 For he hath inclined his ear unto me,
and throughout my days will I call.¹
- 3 There encompassed me the meshes of death,
and the straits of hades overtook me;
distress and sorrow I found:

1. Or: "invoke."

PSALM 116

- 4 And with the name of Jehovah I called,²
"Ah now! Jehovah! oh rescue my soul!"
- 5 *Gracious*³ is Jehovah and righteous,
and our God is *compassionate*,³
- 6 Preserver of the simple-minded is Jehovah:
I was brought low and to me he brought salvation.
- 7 Turn in O my soul to thine abiding rest,⁴
for Jehovah hath dealt bountifully with thee
- 8 For he hath rescued my soul from death,
mine eyes from tears,
my foot from thrusts:⁵
- 9 I will walk to and fro⁶ before Jehovah,
in the broad land⁷ of the living.
- 10 I have kept my faith so I will speak:
I was humbled greatly,—
- 11 I said in mine alarm:
"All mankind are a delusion!"⁸
- 12 How can I repay Jehovah
all his benefits upon me?
- 13 The cup of deliverances⁹ will I lift,
and with the name of Jehovah will I call;
- 14 My vows to Jehovah will I pay,—
may it be before all his people!
- 15 Costly in the eyes of Jehovah
is death to his men of kindness:
- 16 Ah now! Jehovah for I am thy servant,
I am thy servant the son of thy handmaid,—
thou hast loosened my bonds.
- 17 To thee will I sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and with the name of Jehovah will I call.
- 18 My vows to Jehovah will I pay,
may it be before all his people!

2. Or: "invoked."

3. Exo. 34:6.

4. *ML*. "rests"—prob. pl. of intensification.

5. *Cp.* 56:13.

6. "The *Hithpa*, '*ethhalek* denotes a free and sprightly walking along"—

Del.

7. *ML*. "lands."

8. *Cp.* Isa. 58:6.

9. Or: "a great salvation" (pl. intensive).

STUDIES IN PSALMS

- 19 In the courts of the house of Jehovah,
in the midst of thee O Jerusalem!
(Nm.)¹⁰

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 116

I love the Lord because He hears my prayers and answers them.

2 Because He bends down and listens, I will pray as long as I breathe!

3 Death stared me in the face—I was frightened and sad.

4 Then I cried, "Lord, save me!"

5 How kind He is! How good He is! So merciful, this God of ours!

6 The Lord protects the simple and the childlike: I was facing death and then He saved me.

7 Now I can relax. For the Lord has done this wonderful miracle for me.

8 He has saved me from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.

9 I shall live! Yes, in His presence—here on earth!

10, 11 In my discouragement I thought, "They are lying when they say I will recover."¹

12 But now what can I offer Jehovah for all He has done for me?

13 I will bring Him an offering of wine² and praise His name.

14 I will publicly bring Him the sacrifice I vowed I would.

15 His loved ones are very precious to Him and He does not lightly let them die.³

16 O Lord, You have freed me from my bonds and I will serve you forever.

17 I will worship You and offer You a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

18, 19 Here in the courts of the Temple in Jerusalem,

10. See Ps. 117 (beginning).

1. Literally, "the cup of salvation" i.e., the thank-offering of wine for saving me.

2. Literally, "I said in my alarm, all men are liars."

3. Literally, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." See context for validity of the paraphrase.

PSALM 116

before all the people, I will pay everything I vowed to the Lord.
Praise the Lord.

EXPOSITION

The personal note running through this psalm is so clearly that of an individual as distinguished from the *people* (vers. 14, 18), and so vividly recalls the known experiences of King Hezekiah, that we may fairly be excused from going any further in quest of the probable author. The modernisation of the original language to suit a later time (to which critics call attention), is so well within the editorial freedoms known to have been taken by the ancient Sopherim, as not to raise an argument in favour of a later origin. Starting from the presumption that Hezekiah wrote this psalm, we soon meet with indications confirming this conclusion; and those indications afford help to the more complete understanding of this deeply experimental composition.

The opening line has greatly puzzled critics by reason of its abruptness. May not that abruptness,—probably amounting to a broken construction,—be best accounted for as a manifestation of overwhelming affection? *I love*, says the writer, and then as good as says—"How MUCH I love, let the following song reveal." The circumstance that he presently uses language closely akin to that which stands at the opening of Ps. 18, to which we have already seen cause to think Hezekiah prefixed a line expressive of tender affection, makes us the more persuaded that this psalm is his.

Then, too, there is a line further on (ver. 11) which, even as conceived in bitter disappointment, seems—as usually translated—to contribute very little to general edification. It is quite true that either Hezekiah, or any other tried saint, *might* by repeated betrayals have been tempted to conclude that "All men are false." But if we put this to the test, by asking whether it is *likely* that Hezekiah, either as prince or king, had ever been so utterly bankrupt of trusty friends as this utterance of despair seems to imply,—we are compelled to admit it to be very unlikely indeed. So, apprehending some error in translation, we hail from the pen of Aglen, in Ellicott's Commentary, the suggestion of quite a different turn to the passage: "In an ecstasy of despair, I said, 'The whole race of mankind is a delusion.'" And again—"Once in distrust I thought that God did not care for man, and that the whole of humanity was a

STUDIES IN PSALMS

failure." Well, take this hint, and transplant it into the circumstances of Hezekiah; and then say, whether it does not savour of a very possible temptation. Childless, facing death, the Davidic heirship and covenant in peril of extinction and dishonour; and if the promise to David fail, where will be that to Abraham; what will become of the promise to the Race? "Is not the whole race of mankind a delusion?" Diseased thought, illogical, gratuitous? Yes! but—as a *temptation*, to be afterwards recalled with shame, and only to be divulged when faith has consciously revived,—is it not possible, with a verisimilitude which remarkably well fits the extraordinary circumstances?

Once more: there are those singular lines—*Costly in the eyes of Jehovah Is death to his men of kindness* (ver. 15). A glimmer of their meaning has dawned on several commentators; but how that meaning is intensified when the lines are put into a Hezekian setting! "It is no light thing," says Perowne, "in the sight of God that his servants should perish." With clearer apprehension, Delitzsch observes: "The death of His saints is not cheap to God; He does not lightly suffer matters to come to such a pass; He does not suffer His own to be torn from Him by death." True, in no case, can it be said that his saints are "torn from him by death, since their spirits return to him, and remain in his safe-keeping; nevertheless, they are certainly "torn" from his kingdom here on earth; and the point is that he rightly estimates the sacrifice. It is a *costly* process to let them die as they do: their service is lost, their praises are hushed, their complete personalities are in abeyance until the Resurrection. To forget this would be to unlearn and practically contradict the close of the psalm (115) we so lately studied; and it would be prematurely, yea and violently, to cut ourselves adrift from the keen and clear perception possessed by Hezekiah himself, as seen in Isa. 38:18, 19, that it is the especial function of THE LIVING—not of the dead—to praise Jehovah. Reverting to the *costliness* of death in the eyes of Jehovah,—two reflections appeal to us forcibly: How incalculable is the price which Jehovah is paying by permitting so many generations of his saintly ones to die—must it not be with a view to some commensurate end? And, again, if Jehovah counts *costly* the death of his ordinary, imperfect *men of kindness*; how costly does he reckon the death of Him who was the perfect reflection of this love and who He raised from the dead?

PSALMS 116 AND 117

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. This is a very personal psalm. Who wrote it?
2. How has the apparent abruptness of the opening of the psalm been explained?
3. Rotherham seems to think verse eleven expresses a thought not compatible with the experience of Hezekiah (or anyone else). What is the thought? Do you agree?
4. There seems to be much indication of a lack (or at best fluctuating) of faith in the psalms. Why so? We either believe or we do not believe. Discuss.
5. Verse 15 offers a good proof-text for the death of some faithful, fruitful servant of the Lord. "The death of His saints is not cheap to God." Discuss this beautiful thought. Read Isa. 38:18, 19.

PSALM 117

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

All Nations Invited to Join in Israel's Tribute of Praise.

ANALYSIS

By Synonyms of Unmistakable Universality, All Nations are Invited to Praise Jehovah for his Kindness and Faithfulness to Israel.

(P.R.I.) Praise ye Yah!

- 1 Praise Jehovah all ye nations,
laud him all ye tribes of men:
- 2 For his kindness hath prevailed over us,
and the truth of Jehovah is to the ages.

(Nm.)¹

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 117

Praise the Lord, all nations everywhere. Laud Him, all the peoples of the earth.

2 For He loves us very dearly, and His truth endures. Praise the Lord.

1. See Ps. 118 (beginning).

STUDIES IN PSALMS

EXPOSITION

This is the shortest psalm, and it has frequently been described as the grandest: it certainly is very significant. On the one hand, its appeal for universal praise to Jehovah is unequivocal: in the other, the ground of that appeal is abundantly worthy, though perhaps not at once perceived to be so special as it really is. As soon, however, as due prominence is given to the undoubted facts—that Israel as a nation is the speaker giving this invitation to the other nations of the earth; that the invitation comes from the heart of a nation met in solemn festival especially to memorialise and celebrate the Divinely achieved triumphs of her own history; and then the precise terms are given their proper value by which the especial reason for universal praise is conveyed, then it must be admitted by the candid and trained reader—trained in the history of Israel and in the course of the psalms hitherto—that the pronoun *us* of the psalm means specifically ISRAEL. The speakers say—*His kindness hath prevailed over US*, and there is no reason to doubt that they mean exactly what they say; and though to some minds, this conclusion may occasion a feeling of momentary disappointment, that the basis of invited praise is not made wider, as by saying—*For His kindness hath prevailed over YOU*, yet a few moments' reflection may suffice to convert this feeling into one of admiration for the very precision of the reference to Israel. There need, of course, be no apprehension—that the nations whose mouths are to be opened to celebrate Israel's mercies will be closed to the joyful acknowledgement of their own. But the point of the psalm is,—and it is in every way a triumphant point—a note worthy to be resounded through all the earth,—that Israel belongs to the nations, that her triumph is their triumph and benediction; that in her national history more than in their own, the *kindness* and *faithfulness* of Jehovah will have been displayed in a manner worthy to occasion, not only universal, but never-ending, adoration. We of the nations to whom the privilege has been given to anticipate that coming triumph,—how can we enter into the spirit of this psalm unmoved? By all our grief over Israel's long-protracted obstinacy, and over the suffering judicially permitted for that obstinacy,—are we moved with joy to look forward to this coming Divine triumph: when Jehovah's kindness will—deep down in Israel's heart, and all abroad in unmistakable openness of national demonstration—PREVAIL OVER ISRAEL. To look forward to such a

PSALMS 117 AND 118

Victory of Love, is to know a feeling akin to ecstasy; and that we should receive an invitation to indulge in so unselfish an anticipation from Jewish lips, in Jewish homes and Jewish synagogues, is to be conscious of an additional satisfaction which will one day be appreciated by our brethren of the Twelve-tribed-nation. We heartily thank them for this their Passover Invitation preserved in their Hallel.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. This is the shortest psalm and in some way the grandest. In what way? Discuss.
2. Is there here a promise of the general turning of Israel to Jehovah in some future time? If so what effect is it to have on the rest of the nations?

PSALM 118

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

The Passover "Hosanna"-Song.

ANALYSIS

(See bracketed Headlines let into the Psalm).

(P.R.I.) Praise ye Yah!

(PART I.—INVITATIONS TO PRAISE.)

(First in Standing Refrain: then in Appeal to Three Classes.)

- 1 *Give ye thanks to Jehovah for he is good,
for to the ages is his kindness.*
- 2 Pray you let Israel' say—
For to the ages is his kindness.
- 3 Pray you let the house of Aaron' say—
For to the ages is his kindness.
- 4 Pray you let them who revere' Jehovah say—
For to the ages is his kindness.

(PART II.—THE PROCESSION SONG.)

(Answer to Prayer Acknowledged.)

- 5 Out of the strait called I on Yah,

STUDIES IN PSALMS

Yah answered me with a roomy place.¹
(Sentiments Occasioned.)

- 6 Jehovah is mine I will not fear,
what can man' do unto me?
- 7 Jehovah is mine as my great Helper,²
so I shall gaze on them who hate me.
- 8 It is better to take refuge in Jehovah,
than to put confidence in man:
- 9 It is better to take refuge in Jehovah
than to put confidence in nobles.

(Entangling Alliances Severed.)

- 10 All nations compassed me about,—
in the name of Jehovah verily I cut them off;³
- 11 They compassed me about yea they encompassed me about,—
in the name of Jehovah verily I cut them off:
- 12 They compassed me about as bees (encompass) wax,⁴
they blazed up⁵ as the fire of thorns,—
in the name of Jehovah verily I cut them off.

(An Unnamed Enemy Addressed.)

- 13 Thou didst thrust sore at me that I might fall,
but Jehovah was my helper.

(Snatch from the Song of the Exodus.)

- 14 *My might and melody is Yah,*
and he hath become mine by salvation.⁶

(Jubilation in the Homes of the Righteous.)

- 15 A voice! a ringing cry and salvation⁷ in the homes⁸ of the
righteous!

"The right hand of Jehovah is doing valiantly!"

- 16 "The right hand of Jehovah is exalting itself!"

"The right hand of Jehovah is doing valiantly!"

(A Nation's Inference.)

1. That is, "(by granting me) a roomy place." Cp. 18:19, 31:8. Or (metaph.): "with freedom."

2. *ML.*: "my helpers." Prob. pl. of intensification.

3. "Will cut them to pieces."—"Will mow them down"—*Dr.* "Will circumcise them"—*O.G.* Prob. better as above, and (*w. Kp.*) tense rendered as a "graphic imperfect" (*Cp. vers. 5, 13*).

4. So it shd. be (*w. Sep.*)—*Gn.*

5. So it shd. be (*w. Aram., Sep., Vul.*)—*Gn.*

6. *Cp. Exo. 15:2, Isa. 12:2.*

7. *Or.*: "victory."

8. *ML.*: "tents."

PSALM 118

- 17 I shall not die but live,
and tell of the works⁹ of Yah.
18 Yah chastened me sore,
But unto death did not give me over.

(PART III.—REQUEST FOR ADMISSION INTO THE TEMPLE.)

- 19 Open unto me the gates of righteousness,
I would enter by them I would thank Yah.

(PART IV.—REPLY FROM WITHIN.)

- 20 This is the gate of¹⁰ Jehovah:
Such as are righteous may enter thereby.

(PART V.—PRAISE IN THE TEMPLE.) (All Israel as One Man.)

- 21 I would thank thee, that thou hast answered me,
*and hast become mine by salvation.*¹¹

(A Voice Announces.)

- 22 A stone the builders' rejected
hath become head of the corner!

(The People respond.)

- 23 From Jehovah hath this' come to pass:
it is wonderful in our eyes!

(A Voice)

- 24 This is the day Jehovah' hath made!

(The People Respond.)

Let us rejoice and exult therein.¹²

(United "Hosanna"¹³-Prayer.)

- 25 Ah pray Jehovah! do save pray!
ah pray Jehovah! do send success pray!

(Priest, as if Noticing the Approach of a
Distinguished Worshipper.)

- 26 Blessed is he that entereth in the name of Jehovah!¹⁴
(Levites, as if Welcoming his Retinue.)

9. Or: "doings."

10. Or: "for."

11. Cp. ver 14.

12. Or: "in him."

13. "Hosanna" Heb. word, meaning *save now! save, we pray*—Liddell and Scott.

14. Matt. 23:39: "Until ye say," "Until that day, the subject of all prophecy, when your repentant people shall turn with true and loyal Hosannas and blessings to greet 'Him whom they have pierced': see Deut. 4:30, 31, Hosea 3:4, 5, Zech. 12:10, 14:8-11. Stier well remarks, 'He who reads not this in the prophets, reads not yet the prophets aright'"—Alford *in loco*.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

We have blessed you out of the house of Jehovah!

(Priest and Levites when Proceeding to Sacrifice.)

- 27 Jehovah is the Mighty One¹⁵ and he hath kindled a light¹⁶
for us,—

bind the festal sacrifice with cords!—

up to the horns of the altar.

(Doxology by the People as One Man.)

- 28 My Mighty One¹⁵ art thou and I will thank thee,
my Adorable One¹⁷ I will exalt thee.

(The Temple Refrain.)

- 29 *Give ye thanks to Jehovah for he is good,
for to the ages is his kindness.*

(Nm.)

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 118

Oh, thank the Lord, for He's so good! His lovingkindness
is forever.

2 Let the congregation of Israel praise Him with these
same words: "His lovingkindness is forever."

3 And let the priests of Aaron chant, "His lovingkindness
is forever."

4 Let the Gentile converts chant, "His lovingkindness is
forever."

* * * * *

5 In my distress I prayed to the Lord and He answered
me and rescued me.

6 He is for me! How can I be afraid? What can mere
man do to me?

7 The Lord is on my side, He will help me. Let those who
hate me beware.

8 It is better to trust the Lord than to put confidence in
men.

9 It is better to take refuge in Him than in the mightiest
king!

10 Though all the nations of the world attack me, I will
march out behind His banner and destroy them.

11 Yes, they surround and attack me; but with His flag
flying above me I will cut them off.

15. Heb.: 'El.

16. Mal. 1:10.

17. Heb.: 'Elohim.

PSALM 118

12 They swarm around me like bees; they blaze against me like a roaring flame. Yet beneath His flag I shall destroy them.

13 You did your best to kill me, O my enemy, but the Lord helped me.

14 He is my strength and song in the heat of battle, and now He has given me the victory.

15, 16 Songs of joy at the news of our rescue are sung in the homes of the godly. The strong arm of the Lord has done glorious things!

17 I shall not die, but live to tell of all His deeds.

18 The Lord has punished me, but not handed me over to Death.

19 Open the gates of the Temple¹—I will go in and give Him my thanks.

20 Those gates are the way into the presence of the Lord, and the godly enter there.

21 O Lord, thank you so much for answering my prayer and saving me.

22 The stone rejected by the builders has now become the capstone of the arch!²

23 This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous to see!

24 This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.

25 O Lord, please help us. Save us. Give us success.

26 Blessed is the One who is coming, the One sent³ by the Lord. We bless You from the Temple.

27, 28 Jehovah God is our light. I present to Him my sacrifice upon the altar, for You are my God, and I shall give You this thanks and this praise.

29 Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is so good! For His lovingkindness is forever.

EXPOSITION

This psalm forms a worthy climax to the Hallel. Its leading voice—the "I" of the psalm—appears to be that of the Restored Nation, since no known individual wholly answers to its use through this particular psalm. If any individual voice is heard in it, it is that of Nehemiah, and that only near the beginning.

1. Literally, "the gates of righteousness."

2. Literally, "the head of the corner."

3. Literally, "in the name of the Lord."

STUDIES IN PSALMS

As to the question of authorship,—whether or not Hezekiah or Isaiah began to write this psalm, as the conclusion of the Pass-over Hallel of their day,—this much is clear, that it was at least completed after the Exile and was expressly adapted for the consecration of the Second Temple. Zechariah, or Haggai, or both, may have composed it; or at least have given to it those exquisite finishing-touches which so admirably adapt it to that auspicious event.

It is obviously a *processional* psalm, and in the highest degree dramatic. The general course of it is clear; and the sound of several voices can be plainly heard, though precisely *who* speaks in the several divisions of the psalm is, naturally, to some extent, a matter of conjecture. Our headlines will therefore be accepted as exegetical suggestions, rather than as authoritative determinations—which, in no case, could they pretend to be.

Part I.—The standing “Refrain” of Temple psalmody which both opens and closes this psalm constitutes a remarkable testimony to the goodness of Jehovah, as a settled conviction in the heart of the Nation. However severely Jehovah had dealt with them, his abounding and abiding goodness to them was a fixed article of their faith.

The threefold appeal (vers. 2-4) which prolongs the national Refrain, is for several reasons interesting: partly because this is the second instance of its occurrence, the first being found at 115:9-11, and the third (amplified) at 135:19, 20; partly also because of its recognition of proselytes, as forming the third division, a class lying on the outside of Israel proper, and yet attached to them in the same general bonds of worship,—a recognition which reappears in the New Testament (Acts 13:16, 26, 16:14, 17:17, 18:7; cp. I K. 8:41, Isa. 56:6).

Part II.—It is not quite clear whether the *strait* and the *roomy place* of ver. 5 are anything more than picturesque phrases for expressing, in contrast, “distress” and “deliverance”; so that it may be needless to ask *what strait? what roomy place?* Deliverance from the irksome conditions of captivity would in any case justify the contrast; but, partly influenced by what has shortly to follow in the psalm, we can scarcely avoid reflecting how miserably hampered for want of elbow-room were the returned exiles, for carrying forward the work of restoration. How serious this difficulty was, and at how severe a cost it was overcome, the psalm itself will in a little vividly remind us.

PSALM 118

The circumstance that, for *two* lines announcing the *facts* of prayer and deliverance (ver. 5), our song devotes *eight* lines to the expression of *sentiments* thereby demanded (vers. 6-9) may usefully remind us of the need there is that the Divine facts of Redemption should find fruitful lodgment in appreciative hearts. Of Nehemiah, we are already reminded (in 9b). HE had occasion for putting only a very little confidence in *nobles* (Neh. 6:17).

Is it too much to say that by finding in the next stanza (vers. 10-12) rather "the severance of entangling alliances" than the raising of a fierce battle-cry, we avoid the rock on which many expositions have split; and are wholly left without excuse if we incontinently hurry down the centuries to the time of the Maccabees to discover an atmosphere of defiance in which these lines, as commonly understood, could have originated? In any case, it was not until we observed, with acquiescence, Kirkpatrick's suggestion, that the context is better consulted by taking the verb variously rendered "will cut to pieces," "will mow down," "will circumcise," rather as vividly descriptive *past* tenses than as threatening *futures*.—it was not till then that everything in the psalm seemed naturally to fall into its right place. "Cut off" and "circumcise" of course go hand in hand thus far: that there is "a cutting off" in "circumcising." Only instead of supposing this psalmist to threaten to "circumcise" Israel's enemies (or else, as the word may be otherwise rendered, to "cut them to pieces," or "mow them down" by the edge of the sword),—if, rejecting these applications of the word, we take the "circumcising"-knife as sternly turned, by penitent Israel, against herself, in the way of cutting herself free from the entangling alliances which nearly strangled her on her return from captivity,—in that case, we reach a result worthy of the best of Israel's psalmists; worthy of Israel herself as now, at last, profiting by the chastising hand of her God; and worthy of being embalmed in song as a morally heroic act to be ever afterwards imitated, especially at Passover times. Let anyone read through the book Nehemiah with this thought before him, and he must be rather wanting in discernment if the spectacle that most impresses him be not just this—the awful flashing of the Pasha's terrible circumcising-knife as he unsparingly cut off Israel from her entangling alliances: foreign traders, foreign wives, all must go, if Israel is to be saved! We have only to imagine a poet-scribe, aware of Nehemiah's resolute doings and

STUDIES IN PSALMS

in full sympathy with the spirit that actuated them, setting himself to memorialise them in Passover Song,—and what could be wished for more appropriate than the wonderful stanza before us? Those buzzing *bees* and lacerating *thorns* of would-be helpers, anxious only to thwart and hinder,—here we have them, photographed for all time, in this Passover Song!

It was a terrible ordeal for Israel! Nor is it at all incredible that the poet—in concentrating all the stinging of the bees and all the piercing of the thorns into the personification of one unnamed enemy—*Thou didst thrust sore at me that I might fall* (ver. 13)—was thinking of an enemy, not only unnamed, but also *invisible*! Zechariah, at all events, knew of an “Accuser” who durst present himself at the right hand of the Angel of Jehovah (Zech. 3:1); and the *sore thrust* at Israel’s fidelity, which Nehemiah resisted, was probably as determined as SATAN himself could make it.

The Song of Triumph, sung on Deliverance from Egypt, in its sublimest sentiment (ver. 14), well becomes this new Triumph for Israel. Jehovah (“the Becoming One”) having “become” the *might* of his people in trial, and the *melody* of his people in triumph, Israel more firmly than ever before, now becomes His in the strong ties of gratitude: *Mine by salvation!* It is all there.

The *jubilation* of vers. 15, 16 possesses quite a fascination, by reason of its highly dramatic record. It must be confessed, however, that it severely taxes the power of sober exegesis. In the first place, it is not clear whether the more literal meaning *tents* should be pressed: if it should, then the thought of the reader is carried away to an army camping out, to whom is brought news of victory, as if achieved by a relieving force in some other part of the field; since men actually engaged in fighting are not found in their “tents,” and yet it would seem that the battle is actually being waged somewhere when these outbursts of triumph are heard in the *tents* alluded to—if such be intended. It is so easy in Hebrew story to take “tents” as simply standing for “homes” that we are tempted to simplify in that direction. But then, again, why are the “tents” or “homes” termed those of *the righteous*? Are they *the homes of the righteous* “nation preserving fidelity,” of which we read in Isa. 26:1? It may be so; and it would not be very wild so to conclude, seeing that that phrase occurs in a song to be sung “in the land of Judah.” Of course, those who fly from the

PSALM 118

nation of Israel to the Church of Christ, for relief from every difficulty in Old Testament interpretation, need not feel any difficulty here. They could say: "Ah, yes! during the present dispensation, there have been rousing outbursts of jubilation *in the homes of the righteous* as news has arrived of the conversion to Christ of the South Sea Islanders, the Chinese, etc., etc. And the righteous dwellers in those homes have exclaimed—just like this in the psalm—*The right hand of Jehovah is doing valiantly!*" Now we have to confess that we could envy the facility with which many enliven Old Testament exegesis by such natural sallies of Evangelical fervour as this; but then we are sharply called to account by the context, here in this psalm, and are admonished that, after all, such imaginative applications *are not exegesis*. For what is it that follows? Is it, or is it not, "a Nation's Inference" (vers. 17, 18), drawn from the exploits of *Jehovah's right hand* of which they now hear, that they, the Nation, *shall not die but live, And recount the doings of Yah?* Besides: these extracts are taken from the Passover procession-song of Israel; and as the procession slowly moves up to the gate of the Temple to seek admission, is it not the obvious dictate of candour to enquire, WHOM the processionists represents: is it their own nation or is it not? At least, if we demur to this, let us in all consistency accept the peril of *national extinction* and *national chastening from hand of Yah*, of which the context here speaks, before we foist any Gentile nation or Church into Israel's place as pictured in this psalm. She has had her centuries of humiliation and shame and sore sorrow. Of *jubilation*, in the past, she confessedly has had but few and short-lived occasions. If, therefore, it be seemly that we should conclude that Israel as a nation will yet repent; and that thereupon the "set time" for Jehovah to make bare his arm on her behalf will come, let us reverently let be, and see whether, even yet, in the future, this bright vision of national joy shall not be filled to the full. We are not even sure that it may not be necessary to restore the "tents" in their literality; seeing that, according to the prophet Zechariah (12:7), Jehovah intends, *in the yet future siege of Jerusalem*, "to save the tents of Judah first," and what precisely that may mean, perhaps only fulfilment can shew. In spite of the outstanding grounds for suspending our judgments seen in this part of our psalm, let us note well that the loud note of jubilation has in it the following clear significance, namely: That at the very time that

STUDIES IN PSALMS

these shouts of triumph are being raised in the *tents* or *homes* of the righteous, Jehovah is glorifying his power on Israel's behalf. To that conclusion we are bound by the language employed.

Parts III. and IV. need but little comment. It is only dramatically that they come into great prominence. Still they are not without significance for exegesis. As, just now, the "tents" or "homes" through which victory resounded were described as those of "the righteous," so now the same moral quality is again brought into prominence. The gates into which the processionists desire to enter are frankly admitted to be *gates of righteousness*; and by giving them this designation, the applicants acknowledge that only in the character of "righteous" men can they expect to enter; as, on the other hand, they seem to protest that, conceding them this claim, admission cannot be denied them. This moral prerequisite is abundantly confirmed by the answer which comes from within. This particular gate is, for some reason, described as in an especial way belonging to *Jehovah* or as reserved for his use; and then it is added that *such as are righteous may enter thereby*, no doubt implying that none others may. All of which goes strongly to protest to Israel that her worship makes for righteousness; that Jehovah is a righteous God; that sin must be put away if the worshipper is to have any communion with Him. The interest of these verses, however, is mainly dramatic. Silence gives consent. No protest comes from within, to the effect that the applicants cannot be allowed to enter; and as (in Part V., ver 21) the *I* of the applying nation is resumed in the language of direct address to Jehovah, the inference is that the entrance has now been effected, and that it is *within the sacred precincts of the Temple* that this voice is raised. The language is that of thanksgiving: "*I would thank thee*—this is wherefore I have come into thy presence—that thou hast answered me; thou hast saved me—thou hast become mine by salvation." And thus again the climacteric language of the Exodus is used, now for a second time; and as no further words are added as following in sequence as part of Israel's praise, we are perhaps entitled to say that this Refrain from the song of the ancient Exodus is felt to be too expressive to need further addition. Such, at least, is our decipherment of these dramatic words. There can be nothing further for Israel than that Jehovah *should have become hers by salvation*: provided, always, that the salvation itself has at

PSALM 118

last answered to the ideal of Jehovah's own kindness and faithfulness as expressed in his promises. So that, until this goal is reached, every returning Passover should become another rung in the ladder of national advance.

We cannot doubt that we are justified in thus regarding ver. 21 of our psalm as leading us up to a *resting and breathing place*, if for no other reason than this: that the remainder of the psalm seems to be broken up into something like a rather fragmentary and conversational *retrospect*. Henceforth the building—whether the literal Second Temple, or Israel herself under the notion of a temple—is complete; and the assembled people give themselves up to the pleasure of admiring it. As they view the FINISHED EDIFICE, a voice breaks in,—we prefer to regard it as a *prophetic* voice, the voice of a Haggai or a Zechariah:

A stone the builders rejected
Hath become the head of the corner!

There it is, *in situ*, in its place in the building, before all eyes, challenging examination. Can any fail to note the present prominence of that *Stone*, or deny its past history of *rejection*? Can any word of excuse be offered to shield those mistaken *builders* who formerly set it aside? Silence leaves those builders to bear the blame of their mistake. But if the builders, whose province it was to know and act, set aside that most magnificent Corner Stone, Whose doing is it that it is now in its right place? The answer comes from the beholders, with firm conviction and undisguised admiration:

From Jehovah hath this come to pass:
It is wonderful in our eyes!

Is all this a parable? And, if so, what does it mean?

History records no such literal incident in connection with the building of the Second Temple. Surely then, the Temple must be Israel! Besides, if the insertion of this Rejected Stone in the Temple was effected by Jehovah's own hands, apparently without human instrumentality,—then again must we not conclude, for this reason also, that the Temple is the nation of Israel? And if, by the Temple, the Nation itself is here ultimately meant, then Who was this CORNER-STONE, first rejected then accepted?

STUDIES IN PSALMS

We have said that history records no such incident in connection with a literal Stone. It is easy, with Thrupp and Plumptre, to conjecture that such an incident may have happened; nor is it at all unwarranted to imagine such a thing, so long as the only object is to form clear conceptions of what ideas the language fairly conveys. But the point of importance just here is, to keep open the natural connection between the literal and the metaphorical in interpretation. It is right to cling to literal interpretations whenever they will fairly stand; but it is also right, and at times very important, to recognise that when the literal will not fairly stand, then the metaphorical conception should be frankly adopted. It is so here. The very form of the saying—so terse, so telling—almost reduces it to a proverb, convenient for conveying forcibly the familiar occurrence of the promotion to power of the person or party that had previously been set aside through prejudice or enmity. That it is proverbial here, and so also prophetic, we have already seen cause to conclude. The correctness of such conclusion is further confirmed by the fact that a celebrated prophet before the Exile (Isa. 28:16) had already familiarised the minds of the people with this very metaphor in a most impressive manner, and for most serious educational ends: "Therefore, thus saith the Sovereign Lord, Jehovah,—Behold me founding in Zion a stone, a stone of testing, a costly corner of a well-laid foundation: he that trusteth shall not make haste." This, be it remembered, is said long after Solomon's temple had been built: therefore the foundation here is metaphorical—one for men themselves to be builded upon. "He that trusteth" is plainly he that comes to rest on this foundation: therefore, again, this promised new foundation, spoken of by Isaiah, is metaphorical. The proposal to lay this foundation in Zion is plainly the fundamental part of a great moral testing, to which it is proposed that the "scoffing rulers of Jerusalem" (Isa. 28:14) shall be brought. With all this teaching, Israel had now for centuries been familiar: as also she had been made familiar—still under the figure of a sacred edifice, because an ASYLUM—with "a stone to strike against and a rock to stumble over" to the testing of "both houses of Israel" (Isa. 8:14). To which may be added that Zechariah, one of the post-exilic prophets (cp. Ezr. 5:1, 6:14), is manifestly quite familiar with this metaphorical style of teaching; since he knows not only of a Living foundation stone below, but of a Living Cope or Gable-stone above—one with seven

PSALM 118

eyes! (Zech. 3:9). To come back to our psalm, there can be no doubt that the builders who rejected the very Stone that Jehovah afterwards made head of the corner, were thereby themselves tested and proved incompetent builders of Israel.

Yes! it is a parable, here in the psalm; and, to the Christian Expositor, its meaning is as clear as day:—Israel, as a nation, first rejects her own Messiah; and then, by a series of providences which mark out the entire revolution as Jehovah's own doing, accepts him as the chief corner-stone of her national structure. But, such is the power of this same testing-stone, that, in the very process of reversal, Israel herself becomes a new, a regenerated, Nation.

Here again, as in expounding Ps. 110, we come upon an occasion of deep emotion, as we think of the mighty ministry of the already written word to the mind of Jesus of Nazareth in giving him solace as his Rejection drew near! (Mat. 21:42, Mk. 12:10, 11, Lu. 20:17).

This is the day Jehovah hath made! says another (or the same) prophetic voice (ver. 24); meaning thereby, naturally, the day when these things are fulfilled by the national regeneration of Israel: to which the people—being at length the entire nation—will respond: *Let us rejoice and exult therein!* as well they may!

But that day has not come yet; and until it does come, Israel is taught, at every passover celebration, to pray with an importunity of pleading touchingly expressed in the quaint words—

Ah pray Jehovah! do save, pray!

Ah pray Jehovah! do send success, pray!

That the three English words, *do save, pray*, in the above quotation, are an exact rendering of the Hebrew compound-word *hoshiah-na* which constitutes our adopted word "hosanna," may be news to more than a few English readers. At first, this may seem to be a mere curiosity of literature, and of no further importance. But further reflection will dispel this easy-going conclusion. As reappearing in the Gospels in connection with the story of what is called "the triumphal entry" of Jesus into Jerusalem (Mat. 21:9, Mk. 11:9, Lu. 19:38, Jn. 12:13), it may turn out to be something more than a curiosity of literature to be informed that *hosanna*, instead of being a mere flourishing banner-word of PRAISE, really constitutes a PRAYER of the most importunate significance. For who does not see, that to cry

STUDIES IN PSALMS

out to this Nazarene Claimant to the Messiahship, "Do save, pray!" constituted a far graver offence in the Jewish rulers' eyes than merely to flourish a comparatively unmeaning compliment of praise by way of welcoming him to the holy city? The jealous rulers of Jerusalem may very well think: This prophet of Galilee may be able to speak beautiful parables and even to heal a few sick folk,—but who is HE that he should be able to "save" Israel? No wonder that those rulers were vexed beyond measure. Not on this man, as a Corner Stone, do these "builders" desire Israel to build!

Even in this ancient literary museum of wonders, we now come upon a line or two of surpassing interest. We have presumed to place ver. 26 in a headline setting, which, if correct, may cause it to burst forth with a blaze of light, by bringing it into touch with the most thrilling biography of the world. Or rather, perhaps, it should be said that, with or without explanation, it already stands in vital connection with the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

It will be remembered that, according to the scenic plan of this Temple Procession, the main body of processionists have already come up to the Temple Gates—requested admission—been answered from within by the laying down of the great condition of entry—have gone triumphantly through those jealous gates—and, *within*, have raised their final Song of Triumph. And yet now, after this,—after the Retrospective Dialogues of prophet and people as to the admired *Corner Stone*, and as to the New Dispensation *Day* that has dawned, and after the united importunate "Hosanna" Prayer that all the Congregation of Israel have offered,—after all this, a strange incident happens! It would seem as though an unexpected arrival catches the High Priest's eye. Some distinguished Stranger has, thus late, presented Himself at the Temple Gate: to whom the observant priest cries out in holy ecstasy—

Blessed is he that entereth in the name of Jehovah!

And then the attendant Levites, observing further that the distinguished Stranger has with him a body of Attendants,—with a like inspiration, but changing the singular *he* to the plural *you*,—called for by the shifted application of the welcome,—exclaim:

We have blessed you out of the house of Jehovah!

PSALM 118

Do we dream? Or are we suddenly precipitated into the Spirit-land of the Unfulfilled? In any case, here are the words, in their precise significance. And here is the setting of scenic crisis in which the words fall upon our wondering ears. We have not invented these arresting conditions. The materials for thought have been lying, waiting, embedded, here for long centuries. Is it possible at last to wake up to their true significance?

We must be forgiven if we avow our overwhelming conviction, that we do here catch a glimpse of a thrilling incident yet, in the future, to be fulfilled; and to the certain fulfilment of which the four Gospels in our hands give us not only the clue but the positive assurance. The event which here casts its shadow before, is nothing less than this: The sudden arrival of the Lord (*ha-'adon*) whom Israel all along in her better moments has been "seeking," "even the Messenger of that (New) Covenant" which shall yet be solemnised with the house of Israel and the house of Judah (Mat. 3:1, Jer. 31:31).

How come we by the courage to say this? Where is our "gospel" evidence which furnishes the link which connects these things together? In reply, we simply point to the words of our Lord Jesus which he spoke to the Jewish rulers when he bade them officially his solemn farewell. "Henceforth," said he (Mat. 23:39), "ye shall not see me until ye say:—

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

using the very words by which the Septuagint translates the line in this psalm which is now engaging our attention; and which Westcott and Hort and Nestle in their Greek Testaments print in special O.T. quotation-type, the Ginsburg-Salkinson Hebrew New Testament giving the identical Hebrew words that stand in the psalm—*Baruk habba' beshem Yahweh*. So that, in point of fact, what Jesus here says amounts to this—"Ye reject me now: henceforth ye shall not see me until ye welcome me with especial and official Temple Greetings!" That glad day has yet to come; but when it does come this incident in our psalm, we may well believe, will be fulfilled with perfect precision and undoubtedly with an excitement which will thrill through all earth and heaven. We must not forget that, when Jesus used these words from the psalm (Mat. 23:39), they had already been employed (Mat. 21:9), some days before, by the multitude and the children, to give emphasis to their welcome of Jesus as the Messiah. While this fact goes to show plainly that our psalm

STUDIES IN PSALMS

had come by that time to be regarded as undoubtedly Messianic, —the two incidents, when set side by side, have a deeper lesson to convey. The welcome which the *multitude* gave to Jesus, the Jewish *rulers* took care *not* to extend to him. But could Jesus be satisfied without receiving such an official welcome? Could he pass the matter by as an incident of no importance? Could he be content with the welcome of the unlettered throng, and treat an official welcome as unnecessary? He could not. He knew that an official welcome was what the psalm had foretold; and he knew that what was denied him then should be accorded him thereafter. 'Tis as if he had on occasion of his finally leaving the temple said:—"Ye have not said these words; but you or your successors *will* say them. Till then, we part: you go your way—I go mine." That is the lesson which this second quotation of those words in the psalm by Jesus himself warrants us to learn. And therefore we confidently claim that our Master himself confirms our interpretation of this remarkable verse (26) in our psalm, as betokening nothing less than a national welcome to the Messiah, a national acceptance of Jesus of Nazareth as the once rejected Corner-stone.

The next section of the psalm (ver. 27) need not detain us, notwithstanding that endless conjectures have been offered by expositors as to its precise meaning. We have ventured to suggest the general conception of the verse by heading it, "Priests and Levites when proceeding to Sacrifice"; as good as to say, these words appear suitable for them to utter when about to offer the Chief Sacrifice of the day. The first line is not so very difficult; especially if we accept the suggestion of Thrupp, in which, by reference to Mal. 1:10, he obtains for the close of the line this allusion—"and he hath set alight the fire on our altar which is approvingly to consume our sacrifice." And then this turn of *line one* may help us to obtain a feasible sense for *line two*, which has been the most troublesome to interpreters—"Bind the festal sacrifice—which consists of many victims that have come crowding into the temple court about the altar ready to be slain—Bind these *with cords*, so as to have all ready. The Divine fire is even now alight in the wood; therefore, lose no time; proceed rapidly with the immolation. Pile up the sacrificial pieces up to the horns—and so to the complete circumference—of the altar." Or, throwing in the middle line of the verse as parenthetical, "The fire of approval which Jehovah the Mighty One hath kindled upon our altar hath already reached even to

PSALM 118

the horns; therefore pile up the victims on the altar without delay." To all appearance, it is a ceremonial allusion, to which some simple act on occasion of an ordinary passover might do sufficient justice, so as to prevent its seeming to be unmeaning. But, if we are right in throwing the chief fulfilment of it into the future; then, like the Corner-Stone, this Sacrificial part of the Great Ceremonial may prove to be wholly metaphorical, and its Lesson be evolved in a manner which no human eye has ever witnessed and which no imagination can conjecture. We need not be further anxious about this confessedly puzzling verse. Some day it may be that we shall simply smile at our dullness of perception.

The conclusion of the psalm is abundantly worthy of its main burden; and consists of a Special Doxology for the occasion, and then of the standing Temple Refrain. Respecting the former (ver. 28), our only regret is, that, owing to our not being accustomed to discriminate, in English, between the two Hebrew Divine names '*El*' and '*Elohim*', we are without the linguistic means, in strict verbal translation, to give effect to the probable climax which their parallelistic use here constitutes. Still, as there is a perceptible ascending force in the other members of the lines, by which *thank thee* is intensified into *exalt thee*; we may perhaps complete the discrimination between the two lines, if, for '*El*', we say *Mighty One*, and for '*Elohim*', *Adorable One*. The main thing to note is that now again, once more, the whole nation is speaking as one man in language of blissful appropriation:—

My Mighty One art thou and I will thank thee,
My Adorable One I will exalt thee.

When that Doxology is really and realisingly uttered in fulfilment of the prophecy of this Passover Psalm, Heaven and Earth will be nearer to each other than they have ever been before.

Give ye thanks to Jehovah for he is good,
For to the ages is his kindness.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. "This psalm forms a worthy climax to the Hallel"—what is meant?
2. What was the specific occasion and author of this psalm?

STUDIES IN PSALMS

3. The three-fold appeal of verses 2-4 is interesting for at least two reasons. What are they?
4. What was "the strait" and "the roomlyplace" of verse 5?
5. It is more important to express our adoration and praise than petitions. Why?
6. Rotherham's heading: "Entangling alliances severed" is an innovation. Why? Discuss.
7. Who is the enemy of vs. 13? How decided?
8. "Jubilation in the homes of the righteous" (vs. 15, 16) offers a real exegesis problem. What is it?
9. Rotherham firmly states "imaginative applications *are not exegesis*"—with this we agree. But, we wonder who exercises more imagination—the Evangelical writers or Rotherham? Discuss.
10. What are the "gates of righteousness" of verse 19? Is there any application for us in this? Discuss.
11. From vs. 21 to the end of the psalm we have a different literary form. What is it? What building is here involved?
- 12.. Who voices these words: "A stone the builders rejected hath become the head of the corner"?
13. When were the above words fulfilled?
14. The figure of the cornerstone and the foundation was very familiar to Israel. Give examples.
15. Are we to believe Jesus is the chief—once rejected—later accepted cornerstone of the Jewish nation—or regenerated Israel? Discuss.
16. The three English words: "do save, pray" are quite significant when studied in-depth. Discuss.
17. Verse 26 offers a beautiful thought for discussion—please take the time to understand the point and application here made.
18. Jesus twice fulfilled the words of vs. 26. Explain.
19. Verse 27 gives a problem. What is it? How answered?
20. This is indeed a magnificent psalm. How much of it did the Jewish nation understand?

PSALM 119

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Jehovah's Will in Relation to Human Character and Conduct,
celebrated in Twenty-two Alphabetical Stanzas, and by
the aid of Eight Comprehensive Synonyms.

PSALM 119

ANALYSIS

(The analysis of this Psalm may be seen in its superficial structure, and further discovered by an examination of the following Table of Synonyms.)

SYNONYMS EXPRESSIVE OF JEHOVAH'S WILL IN RELATION TO HUMAN CONDUCT AS CELEBRATED IN PSALM 119.

TABLE OF PRINCIPAL WORDS AND PHRASES USED IN CONNECTION WITH EACH SYNONYM.

English	Hebrew	No. of oc. in M.T.	No. Emended
1. COMMANDMENTS	<i>mizwah</i>	22	22 look well to, 6; go astray from, 10, 21, 110; run in way of, 32; lead in path of, 35; delight in, 47, 143; keep, (55), 60; believe in, 66; understand in order to learn, 73; are faithfulness, 86, 151; broad, 96; make wise, 98; observe, 115; love, 47, 127; long for, 131; quicken, (156), done, 166; not forgotten, 176.
2. DECISIONS (appointments)	<i>mishpat</i>	23	22 learn, 7; rehearse of thy mouth, 13; long for, 20; esteem, 30; good, 39; wait for, 43; remember, 52; thanks for, 62; better than g. and s., 72; righteous, 75; execute on (just decision), 84; h. and earth stand by, 91; not turned aside from, 102; keep, 106; afraid of, 120; done, 121; shew favour ac. to, 132; equitable, 137; quicken ac. to, 149; righteous and age-abiding, 160; praise for righteous, 164; sing of, 172.
3. LAW or INSTRUCTION	<i>torah</i>	25	22 walk in, 1; delight in, (16), 70, 77, 92, 174; discern wonders out of, 18; favour with, 29; observe, 34; keep, 44, 136; forsake, 53; not forgotten, 61, 109, 153; men not ac. to, 85; love, 97, 113, 165; frustrate,

STUDIES IN PSALMS

English	Hebrew	No. of oc. in M.T.	No. Emended
4. PRECEPTS or CHARGES	<i>pikkudh</i>	21	22 126; truth (or faithfulness), 142; go far from, 150. keep, 4, 63, 128, 134, 168; so- liloquise in, 15, 78; observe, (22), 56, 69, 100; cause to un- derstand, 27; long for, 40; sought out, 45, 94; not for- saken, 87, do, (112); stray from, 118; not forgotten, 141; know from, 152; love, 159; choose, 173.
5. PROMISE or SAYING	<i>'imrah</i>	19	22 keep, (5), 67; treasure, 11; not hide, (19); quicken ac. to, (25), 107, 154; leadeth to re- vere, 38; salvation ac. to, 41; hath quickened, 50; shew fa- vour ac. to, 58; comfort ac. to, 76; eyes bedimmed for, 82, 123; to gen. after gen., 90; smooth (sweet), 103; uphold ac. to, 116; direct footsteps in, 133; love, refined, 140; solilo- quise in, 148; joyful over, 162; deliver ac. to, 170.
6. STATUTES	<i>hok</i> <i>hukkah</i>	19	22 keep, 8; teach me, 12, 26, 64, 68, (108), 124, 135, 172; so- liloquise in, 23, 48; point out to me the way of, 33; become melodies, 54; be thorough in, 80; not forgotten, 83, 93; get understanding out of, (104); delight in, 117; righteous, (144); observe, 145; not sought after, 155; love, 163.
7. TESTIMONIES	<i>'edah</i> <i>'eduth</i>	23	22 observe, 2; rejoice in, 14; de- light, 23; keep close to, 31; incline heart to, 36; speak of bef. kings, 46; swerved from, 51, 157; turned feet to, 59; learn, (71); know, 79; keep, 88, 146, 167; dil. consider, 95; are soliloquy, 99; take as in- heritance, 111; love, 119, 167; get to know, 125; wonderful, observe them, 129; commanded as righteous and faithful, 138; help me, (175).

PSALM 119

English	Hebrew	No. of oc. in M.T.	No. Emended
8. WORD	<i>dhabhar</i>	22	22 walk in, (3); take heed ac. to, 9; keep, 17, 57, 101; raise up ac. to, 28; quicken, 37; trust in, 42; remember, on wh. hope, 49; deal well ac. to, 65; wait for, 74, 81, 114, 147; stationed in heavens, 89; lamp and light, 105; surety with, (122); opening giveth light, 130; forgotten, 139; not kept, (158); stood in awe of, 161; cause understanding ac. to, 169.

[1. THE EIGHTFOLD ALEPH.]

Each verse in the Hebrew beginning with the letter Aleph;
and so with the rest.

- 1 How happy the blameless in behaviour—¹
who walk in the LAW of Jehovah.
- 2 How happy they who observe his TESTIMONIES—
with a whole heart do they seek after him.
- 3 Yea they have not wrought perversity—
in his (WORD)² have they walked.
- 4 Thou thyself hast commanded thy PRECEPTS—
to be kept³ diligently.
- 5 Ah! that my ways might be established—
to keep thy (PROMISE).⁴
- 6 Then shall I not be put to shame—
when looking well unto all thy COMMANDMENTS.
- 7 I will thank thee with uprightness⁵ of heart—
when I learn thy righteous DECISIONS.
- 8 Thy STATUTES will I keep—
do not forsake me utterly.

1. U.: "way."

2. M.T.: "ways"—not one of the eight synonyms: "word" otherwise missing from stanza.

3. Ml.: "to keep."

4. M.T.: "statutes," in ver. 8: "promise" not otherwise in stanza.

5. Or: "straightforwardness."

STUDIES IN PSALMS

[2. THE EIGHTFOLD BETH.]

- 9 Whereby shall a young man keep⁶ pure his path?—
by taking heed according to thy WORD.⁷
- 10 With all my heart have I sought after thee—
let me not go astray from thy COMMANDMENTS.
- 11 In my heart have I treasured thy PROMISE—⁸
to the end I may not sin against thee.
- 12 Blessed art thou Jehovah—
teach me thy STATUTES.
- 13 With my lips have I told
of all the DECISIONS of thy mouth.
- 14 In the way of thy TESTIMONIES have I rejoiced—
as over all riches.
- 15 In thy PRECEPTS will I soliloquise—
that I may discern thy paths.
- 16 In thy (LAW)⁹ will I delight myself—
I will not forget thy word.¹⁰

[3. THE EIGHTFOLD GIMEL.]

- 17 Deal bountifully with thy servant I shall live—¹¹
so shall I keep thy WORD.¹²
- 18 Unveil thou mine eyes that I may discern
wonderful things¹³ out of thy LAW.
- 19 A sojourner¹⁴ am I in the earth—¹⁵
do not hide from me thy (PROMISE).¹⁶
- 20 Crushed is my soul with longing
for thy DECISIONS at all times.
- 21 Thou hast rebuked the insolent as accursed—¹⁷
who go astray from thy COMMANDMENTS.

6. Or: "make."

7. Some cod. (w. 2 ear. pr. edns., Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "words" (pl.)—Gn.

8. Some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn., Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "promises" (pl.)—Gn.

9. M.T.: "statutes"—in ver. 12: "law" not otherwise in stanza.

10. In some cod. (w. 2 ear. pr. edns., Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "words" (pl.)—Gn.

11. Cp. Isa. 38:19.

12. Some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "words" (pl.)—Gn.

13. Cp. ver. 27.

14. Cp. ver. 54, Ps. 39:12, Gen. 47:9.

15. Or: "land."

16. M.T.: "commandments"—in ver. 21; "promise" not otherwise in stanza.

17. Or: "insolent—accursed are they who," etc.

PSALM 119

- 22 Roll off from me reproach and contempt—
for thy (PRECEPTS)¹⁸ have I observed.
- 23 Although princes have taken their seat against me have
talked—
thy servant doth soliloquise in thy STATUTES.
- 24 Yea¹⁹ thy TESTIMONIES are my delight—
[they are] my counsellors.²⁰

[4. THE EIGHTFOLD DALETH.]

- 25 My soul cleaveth unto the dust—
quicken me according to thy (PROMISE).²¹
- 26 My ways I recounted and thou didst answer me—
teach me thy STATUTES.
- 27 The way of thy PRECEPTS cause thou me to understand—
so will I soliloquise in thy wondrous things.²²
- 28 My soul hath wept itself away for grief—
raise me up according to thy WORD.²³
- 29 The way of falsehood remove from me—²⁴
and with thy LAW be gracious unto me.²⁵
- 30 The way of faithfulness have I chosen—
thy DECISIONS do I esteem.²⁶
- 31 I have kept close to thy TESTIMONIES—
Jehovah! do not put me to shame.
- 32 The way of thy COMMANDMENTS will I run—
for thou wilt enlarge my heart.²⁷

[5. THE EIGHTFOLD HE.]

- 33 Point out to me Jehovah the way of thy STATUTES—
and I will observe it unto the end.

18. M.T.: "testimonies"—in ver. 24: "precepts" not otherwise in stanza.

19. So Dr., Br.; also Per.; "Nevertheless" (thus connecting vers. 23, 24)
—Del.

20. Ml.: "my men of counsel"="my counselmen"="my counsellors."

21. M.T.: "word"—in ver. 28: "promise" otherwise not in stanza.

22. Cp. vers. 18, 129.

23. Some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn.): "according to thy words" (pl). But
other cod. (w. Sep., Vul.): "in (or 'by') thy words" (pl).—Gn.

24. Cp. Mt. 6:13.

25. "And favour me with Thine instruction" ("torah not having the
notion of fixed doctrine, but that of living empirical instruction")—Del.
"Grant me thy law graciously"—A.V., R.V., Dr. "With thy law be gracious
to me"—Br., Per. "Bestow upon me thy law"—Carter. "Be gracious to me
according to thy law"—Aglen.

26. So Dr. "Have I set before me"—Del.

27. "That is, cause it to swell for joy." Cp. Isa. 60:5—Dr. Sp. I.
Watts'h'm. "My God the spring," ver. 4.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

- 34 Cause me to understand that I may observe thy LAW—
and I will keep it with a whole heart.
- 35 Lead me in the path of thy COMMANDMENTS—
for therein do I find²⁸ pleasure.
- 36 Incline my heart unto thy TESTIMONIES—
and not unto covetousness.
- 37 Cause mine eyes to pass on from beholding unreality—²⁹
by thy (WORD)³⁰ quicken thou me.
- 38 Confirm unto thy servant thy PROMISE—
which leadeth men to revere thee.³¹
- 39 Cause to pass away my reproach which I have feared—
for thy DECISIONS are good.
- 40 Lo! I have longed for thy PRECEPTS—
in thy righteousness quicken thou me.

[6. THE EIGHTFOLD WAW.]

- 41 And let thy kindness reach me O Jehovah—
thy salvation according to thy PROMISE.
- 42 And I will make answer to him that reproacheth me—
for³² I trust in thy WORD.
- 43 And do not snatch away from my mouth a truthful word
utterly—
because for thy DECISIONS have I waited.
- 44 And I will keep thy LAW continually—
to the ages³³ and beyond.
- 45 And I will walk to and fro in a roomy place—³⁴
because thy PRECEPTS have I sought out.³⁵
- 46 And I will speak of thy TESTIMONIES before kings—
and shall not be put to shame.
- 47 And I will delight myself in thy COMMANDMENTS—
the which I have loved.

28. Or: "have I found."

29. So Dr. "Without real, i.e., without divine substance; God-opposed teaching and life"—Del. "Worthlessness"—Br. "Delusion"—Carter. "Perhaps from looking on idols"—Aglen. And cp. Mt. 6:13.

30. M.T.: "ways"—not one of the eight: "word" not otherwise in stanza.

31. Cp. 130:4.

32. Or: "that."

33. U.: "to times age-abiding."

34. Cp. 18:19, 31:8, 118:5.

35. Or: "studied."

PSALM 119

- 48 And I will lift up mine open hands⁸⁶ unto thy
commandments—⁸⁷
and will soliloquise in thy STATUTES.

[7. THE EIGHTFOLD ZAYLN.]

- 49 Remember the WORD to thy servant—
seeing that thou hast caused me to hope.
50 This is my comfort in my humiliation—⁸⁸
that thy PROMISE hath quickened me.
51 Insolent men have scorned me exceedingly—
from thy (TESTIMONIES)⁸⁹ have I not swerved.
52 I have remembered thy DECISIONS [that have been] from
antiquity Jehovah—
and have consoled myself.
53 A ranging heat hath seized me by reason of the lawless—
forsakers of thy LAW.
54 Melodies have thy STATUTES become to me—
in my house of sojourn.⁴⁰
55 I have remembered in the night thy name Jehovah!
and have kept thy (COMMANDMENTS).⁴¹
56 This hath become mine—
that thy PRECEPTS have I observed.

[8. THE EIGHTFOLD HETH.]

- 57 My portion Jehovah!
I have said⁴² I would keep thy WORDS.
58 I have sought the smile of thy face⁴³ with a whole heart—
be gracious unto me according to thy PROMISE.
59 I thought on my ways—
and turned my feet unto thy TESTIMONIES.
60 I have hastened and not delayed—
to keep thy COMMANDMENTS.
61 The meshes of lawless men have enclosed me—
thy LAW have I not forgotten.

36. Ml.: "palms."

37. M.T. adds: "which I have loved"—"repeated probably by error from ver. 47"—Dr.

38. Cp. vers. 67, 71, 75, 92, 107.

39. M.T.: "law"—in ver. 53: "testimonies" not otherwise in stanza.

40. Cp. ver. 19, Ps. 39:12, Gen. 47:9. Or—may not the allusion be to a temporary banishment? Cp. and consider Pss. 42, 43.

41. M.T.: "law"—in ver. 53: "commandments" not otherwise in stanza.

42. Or: "promised." Cp. 1 Ch. 27:23, 2 Ch. 21:7, Est. 4:7, 2 K. 8:19, Neh. 9:23; hence *'imrah* easily becomes "promise" where context favours.

43. "Lit. make the face of any one sweet pleasant"—O.G. 318b.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

- 62 At midnight I arise to give thanks to thee—
because of thy righteous DECISIONS.
- 63 Companion am I to all who revere thee—
and to them who keep thy PRECEPTS.
- 64 Of thy kindness Jehovah the earth is full—
thy STATUTES O teach me.

[9. THE EIGHTFOLD TETH.]

- 65 Well hast thou dealt with thy servant—
O Jehovah according to thy WORD.
- 66 Good perception⁴⁴ and knowledge teach thou me—
for in thy COMMANDMENTS have I believed.
- 67 Before I was humbled⁴⁵ I was going astray—
but now thy PROMISE⁴⁶ have I kept.
- 68 Good art thou and a doer of good—⁴⁷
teach me thy STATUTES.
- 69 Insolent men have plastered falsehood over me—⁴⁸
I with a whole heart will observe thy PRECEPTS.
- 70 Unfeeling like fat⁴⁹ is their heart—
I in thy LAW have found delight.
- 71 Well was it for me that I was humbled—⁵⁰
to the end I might learn thy (TESTIMONIES).⁵¹
- 72 Better to me the (DECISIONS)⁵² of thy mouth—⁵³
than thousands of gold and silver.

[10. THE EIGHTFOLD YODH.]

- 73 Thine own hands made me and established me—
cause me to understand that I may learn thy
COMMANDMENTS.
- 74 They who revere thee shall see me and rejoice—
that⁵⁴ for thy WORD I waited⁵⁵

44. Ml.: "taste"—quick moral perception.

45. Cp. refs. to ver. 50.

46. "Promise"—if understood as conditional or directory: else, "saying."

47. Cp. Wesley's hymn: "Good thou art."

48. So Dr.

49. "Impervious to good influences; cp. Isa. 6:10"—Dr.

50. Cp. refs. to ver. 50.

51. M.T.: "statutes"—in ver. 68: "testimonies" not otherwise in stanza.

52. M.T.: "law"—in ver. 70: "decisions" not otherwise in stanza.

53. Cp. vers. 13, 88.

54. Or: "because."

55. Cp. 35:27.

PSALM 119

- 75 I know Jehovah that righteous are thy DECISIONS—
and in faithfulness didst thou humble⁵⁶ me.
- 76 Let thy kindness pray serve to comfort me—
according to thy PROMISE to thy servant.
- 77 Let thy compassions reach me that I may live—
for thy LAW is my delight.
- 78 Put to shame⁵⁷ be insolent men that with falsehood they
deprived me of justice—⁵⁸
I soliloquise in thy PRECEPTS.
- 79 Let those who revere thee turn⁵⁹ unto me—
and they shall⁶⁰ know thy TESTIMONIES.
- 80 Let my heart be blameless⁶¹ in thy STATUTES—
to the end I may not be put to shame.

[11. THE EIGHTFOLD KAPH.]

- 81 My soul languisheth⁶² for thy salvation—
for thy WORD have I waited.
- 82 Bedimmed are mine eyes for thy PROMISE—
saying When wilt thou comfort me?
- 83 Though I have become like a wine-skin in smoke
thy STATUTES have I not forgotten.
- 84 How many are the days of thy servant?
when wilt thou execute on my persecutors a DECISION?⁶³
- 85 Insolent men have digged for me pits—
who are not according to thy LAW.
- 86 All thy COMMANDMENTS are faithfulness—
falsely⁶⁴ have they persecuted me help me!
- 87 Almost had they made an end of me⁶⁵ in the land—⁶⁶
but I forsook not thy PRECEPTS.
- 88 According to thy kindness quicken me—
that I may keep the TESTIMONY⁶⁷ of thy mouth.

56. Cp. refs. to ver. 50.

57. Cp. 35:26.

58. So (prob.)—O.G.

59. Or: "return."

60. Or: "who"—ancient authorities divided.

61. Or: "thorough"; cp. ver. 113.

62. Cp. 84:2.

63. A pos. error for the customary "thy decisions."

64. Cp. ver. 78: and 35:19.

65. Cp. 35:25.

66. Or: "earth."

67. "Read 'testimonies' as usual"—Br.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

[12. THE EIGHTFOLD LAMEDH.]

- 89 To the ages⁶⁸ O Jehovah—⁶⁹
thy WORD is stationed in the heavens.
- 90 To generation after generation is thy PROMISE—⁷⁰
thou hast⁷¹ established the earth and it standeth.
- 91 By thy DECISIONS they stand to-day—
for they all⁷² are thy servants.
- 92 Unless thy LAW had been my delight—
then should I have perished in my humiliation.⁷³
- 93 To the ages will I not forget thy STATUTES—⁷⁴
for by them hast thou quickened me.
- 94 Thine am I O save me—
for thy PRECEPTS have I sought out.⁷⁵
- 95 For me have lawless men waited to destroy me—
thy TESTIMONIES do I diligently consider.
- 96 To all completeness have I seen an end—
broad is thy COMMANDMENT exceedingly.

[13. THE EIGHTFOLD MEM.]

- 97 Oh how I love thy LAW!—
all the day is it my soliloquy.
- 98 Beyond mine enemies shall thy COMMANDMENT make me
wise—
for age-abiding it is mine.
- 99 Beyond all my teachers have I shewn understanding—
because thy TESTIMONIES are a soliloquy to me.
- 100 Beyond elders do I get understanding—
because thy PRECEPTS have I observed.
- 101 From every path of wickedness have I restrained⁷⁶ my feet—
to the end I might keep thy WORD.
- 102 From thy DECISIONS have I not turned aside—
for thou thyself hast directed me.

68. U.: "To times age-abiding."

69. "For ever is Jahve"—Del.

70. M.T.: "faithfulness"—not a syn.: "promise" not otherwise in stanza.

71. Or: "didst."

72. "All things"—Dr. "All beings"—Del.

73. Cp. refs. to ver. 50, and cp. Gen. 8:21, 22, also Ps. 33:6-9.

74. M.T.: "precepts"—in ver. 94: "statutes" not otherwise in stanza.

75. Or: "studied."

76. Dr. after P.B.V.: "refrained."

PSALM 119

- 103 How pleasant⁷⁷ to my palate is thy PROMISE⁷⁸
more than honey to my mouth.
104 Out of thy (STATUTES)⁷⁹ do I get understanding—
therefore do I hate every path of falsehood.

[14. THE EIGHTFOLD NUN.]

- 105 A lamp to my foot is thy WORD—
and a light to my path.
106 I have sworn and have confirmed it—
to keep thy righteous DECISIONS.
107 I have been humbled⁸⁰ exceedingly Jehovah!
quicken thou me according to thy (PROMISE),⁸¹
108 The freewill offerings of my mouth accept pray Jehovah!
and thy (STATUTES)⁸² teach thou me.
109 My life⁸³ is in mine open hand⁸⁴ continually—
yet thy LAW have I not forgotten.
110 The lawless set a trap for me—
yet from thy COMMANDMENTS⁸⁵ I went not astray.
111 I have taken as an inheritance thy TESTIMONIES to the ages—
for the exultation of my heart are they.
112 I have inclined my heart to do thy (PRECEPTS)—⁸⁶
a reward to the ages.

[15. THE EIGHTFOLD SAMECH.]

- 113 Half-hearted ones⁸⁷ do I hate—
but thy LAW do I love.
114 My hiding-place and my shield art thou—
for thy WORD have I waited.
115 Depart from me ye evil-doers—
and I will observe the COMMANDMENTS of my God.
116 Uphold me according to thy PROMISE that I may live—
and do not shame me out⁸⁸ of my hope.

77. Ml.: "smooth."

78. Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.): "are thy promises" (pl.)—Gn.

79. M.T.: "precepts"—in ver. 100: "statutes" not otherwise in stanza

80. Cp. refs. to ver. 50.

81. M.T.: "word"—in ver. 105: "promise" not otherwise in stanza.

82. M.T.: "decisions"—in ver. 106.

83. U.: "soul."

84. Ml.: "palm."

85. M.T.: "precepts"—"commandments" not otherwise in stanza.

86. M.T.: "statutes"—(now) in ver. 108.

87. Cp. ver. 80n.

88. Or: "on account."

STUDIES IN PSALMS

- 117 Support me that I may be saved—
and I will delight in thy STATUTES continually.
- 118 Thou hast made light of all who stray from thy
(PRECEPTS)—⁸⁹
because of the falsehood of their deceit.⁹⁰
- 119 Dross have I accounted⁹¹ all the lawless of the land—⁹²
therefore do I love thy TESTIMONIES.
- 120 My flesh hath bristled up from dread of thee—
and of thy DECISIONS have I been afraid.

[16. THE EIGHTFOLD AYIN.]

- 121 I have done (thy righteous DECISIONS)—⁹³
do not leave me to mine oppressors.
- 122 Be thou surety (with thy WORD)⁹⁴ for thy servant for good—
let not insolent men oppress me.
- 123 Mine eyes have become dim for thy salvation—
and for thy righteous PROMISE.
- 124 Deal with thy servant according to thy kindness—
and thy STATUTES teach thou me.
- 125 Thy servant am I cause me to have understanding—
so shall I get to know thy TESTIMONIES.
- 126 It is time for Jehovah to act—
they have frustrated thy LAW.
- 127 Therefore do I love thy COMMANDMENTS—
more than gold yea than fine gold.
- 128 Therefore all thy PRECEPTS concerning me have I kept—⁹⁵
every path of falsehood⁹⁶ do I hate.

[17. THE EIGHTFOLD PE.]

- 129 Wonderful⁹⁷ are thy TESTIMONIES—
therefore hath my soul observed them.
- 130 The opening of thy WORD⁹⁸ giveth light—
causing the simple to understand.

89. M.T.: "statutes"—in ver. 117: "precepts" not otherwise in stanza.

90. Cp. 35:19.

91. So it shd. be (w. Sep., Vul.)—Gn.

92. Or: "earth."

93. M.T.: "justice and righteousness"—in which case no synonym in ver.

94. So Br. M.T.: no synonym.

95. So. Gt.

96. Cp. ver. 118, Ph. 35:19.

97. Cp. vers. 18, 27.

98. M.T.: "words" (pl.).

PSALM 119

- 131 My mouth have I opened wide and panted—⁹⁹
because for thy COMMANDMENTS have I longed.
- 132 Turn to him that loveth thy name—
and according to thy DECISIONS be gracious unto me.¹⁰⁰
- 133 My footsteps direct thou in thy PROMISE—¹⁰¹
and let no iniquity¹⁰² have dominion over me.
- 134 Ransom me from the oppression of man—
and I will keep thy PRECEPTS.
- 135 Thy face light thou up on thy servant—
and teach me thy STATUTES.
- 136 Streams¹⁰³ of water have run down mine eyes—¹⁰⁴
because they have not kept thy LAW.

[18. THE EIGHTFOLD ZADHE.]

- 137 Righteous art thou Jehovah—
and straightforward¹⁰⁵ are thy DECISIONS.
- 138 Thou hast commanded as¹⁰⁶ righteousness thy TESTIMONIES—
and as¹⁰⁶ exceeding faithfulness.
- 139 My zeal hath undone¹⁰⁷ me—
for mine adversaries have forgotten thy WORD.¹⁰⁸
- 140 Refined¹⁰⁹ is thy PROMISE to the uttermost—
and thy servant loveth it.
- 141 Young¹¹⁰ am I and despised—
thy PRECEPTS have I not forgotten.
- 142 Thy righteousness is right to the ages—¹¹¹
and thy LAW is truth.
- 143 Strait and stress have found me—
thy COMMANDMENTS are my delight.

99. Cp. Pss. 42, 43.

100. Verse emended after Br., restoring synonym.

101. "Promise"—if understood to be conditional and directory: otherwise "saying."

102. "Naughtiness"—Dr.

103. "Rills"—Dr.

104. Cp. 42:3.

105. "Upright"—Dr. "Straight"—Del. Cp. 19:8.

106. Or: "in."

107. U.: "exterminated."

108. M.T.: "words" (pl.). Some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn., Syr.): "word" (sing.)—Gn.

109. "Sterling metal"—Dr. Cp. Pro. 30:5. "Is very pure"—Del.

110. So Del. "Small"—Per., Kp., Br., Dr. ("or young"). "Little"—Carter. "More often of age"—O.G.

111. U.: "to times age-abiding."

STUDIES IN PSALMS

- 144 Righteous are thy (STATUTES) to the ages—
give me understanding that I may live.

[19. THE EIGHTFOLD KOPH.]

- 145 I have called with a whole heart answer me Jehovah!—
thy STATUTES will I observe.
146 I have called upon thee O save me!—
and I will keep thy TESTIMONIES.
147 I am beforehand with the morning twilight and cry for
help—
for thy WORD¹¹² have I waited.
148 Mine eyes forestall the night-watches—
to soliloquise in thy PROMISE.
149 My voice O hear according to thy kindness—
Jehovah! according to thy DECISIONS¹¹⁸ quicken me.
150 They have drawn near who persecute¹¹⁴ with infamous
devices—
from thy LAW have they gone far away.
151 Near art thou Jehovah—
and all thy COMMANDMENTS are truth.
152 Long have I known from thy (PRECEPTS)—¹¹⁵
that to the ages¹¹⁶ thou didst found them.

[20. THE EIGHTFOLD RESH.]

- 153 O see my humiliation and rescue me—
for thy LAW have I not forgotten.
154 Plead my cause and redeem me—
by thy PROMISE O quicken me.
155 Far from lawless men is salvation—
for thy STATUTES have they not sought out.¹¹⁷
156 Thy compassions are many Jehovah—
according to thy (COMMANDMENTS)¹¹⁸ quicken me.
157 Many are my persecutors and mine adversaries—
from thy TESTIMONIES have I not swerved.

112. MSS. and versions vary between "word" and "words"—cp. Gn.

113. So (pl.) in some cod. (w. 6 ear. pr edns.)—Gn. M.T. sing.

114. Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.): "persecute me"—Gn.

115. M.T.: "testimonies"—in ver. 146: "precepts" otherwise not in stanza.

116. U.: "to times age-abiding."

117. Or: "studied."

118. M.T.: "decisions"—in ver. 160: "commandments" not otherwise in stanza.