**Thorough Heart Examination**

Ps 73:1—Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

23 Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.

24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

25 Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.

26 My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

27 For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.

28 But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.

* The Heart is being tested
* Our walk of faith and work of love is being tested

Ps 26:2 Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

1Co 11:28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

2Co 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Ps 17:3 Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.

4 Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.

5 Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.

Heart - mind, X unawares, understanding

((faint), (tender-)heart((-ed))

“a **clean** heart “ True heart (level – true - right on)

Beloved Choice Pure empty clear

No discouragement

No unbelief

No wrath

No guile

No hypocricy

De 28:47 Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things;

30:2 And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul;

6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

10 If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.

14 But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

15 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

1—Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a **clean heart**.

13—Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.

21—Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.

26—My flesh and my heart faileth: but **God is the strength of my heart**, and **my portion for ever**.

1. His heart was being put to the test
2. The heart is the seat of the intellect (thoughts), feelings and Will (choices).
3. The heart
   1. Principle --- cause
   2. Thoughts --- reasoning
   3. Intents ---- motive

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

* 1. The heart needs constant Cleansing,
     1. By faith in the blood of Jesus
     2. By the obeying the Word of God
  2. The heart needs constant Guarding
     1. The Breast plate of Faith and Love
  3. The heart needs constant Strengthening
     1. When you’re angry or lie your physical heart will beat faster
     2. When you get excited gases and adrenalin is released

Of what the world is thinking and doing.

Of what self (your mind) is thinking.

Of what the devil is doing

We need to constantly learn and experience the truth by exercising faith to appropriate every redemptive right.

The Church is not aware of what is going on in the spiritual realm. The professing church is confused on fundamental truths The church today is Limited or No knowledge or wisdom of the plan of God beyond the fundamental truths.

No discernment from the Holy Ghost Life in the Spirit unto Perfection Life of fruitfulness unto Perfection Life of the Gifts of the Spirit Life of Holiness unto Perfection Holiness makes you strong spiritually-----Sin makes you weak

* You can’t live your life by what other people are doing!
* Everybody has got to have someone they can trust
  + Not in the place of God
    - To be Accountable to
    - To be a true faithful friend for a witness

2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. 3 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

2Co 5:7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

Temptation, arising from the Prosperity of the Lawless,

Triumphantly Overcome.

1. He kept his footing and got the victory.

Ps 73:15—If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.

John 7:37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Ps 15:1 <<A Psalm of David.>> LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

2 He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.

3 He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

4 In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.

5 He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

Ps 73:3 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

Job 12:6—*The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.*

21:7*—Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?*

Psalm 37:1*—Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.*

7*—Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.*

35*—I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree.*

Jer 12:1—*Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?*

2*—Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins.*

3*—But thou, O LORD, knowest me: thou hast seen me, and tried mine heart toward thee: pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.*

4*—How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end.*

John 2:24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, 25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

1Ki 8:39 Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;)

1Sa 16:7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

1Ch 28:9 And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.17 I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee.18 O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee: 29:19 And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision.

Ps 7:9 Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.

Pr 17:3 ¶ The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts.

Jer 11:20 But, O LORD of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I revealed my cause.

Jer 17:10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

Jer 20:12 But, O LORD of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause.

Ro 8:27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

1Th 2:4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

*Re 2:23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*

Proverbs 8:17 I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

Jer 29:13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

Ps 73:1 ¶ <<A Psalm of Asaph.>> Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

Ps 73:17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I **their end**.

Ps 73:18 Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. 19 How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.

Psalm 73:1-28

God is merciful to us to show the end of the wicked in the beginning so we will not go that way.

Hell is a place of hopelessness

Pr 11:7 When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth.

Da 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and **everlasting contempt**.

Lu 16: 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being **in torments**, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 25 But Abraham said, **Son, remember** that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art **tormented**. Ac 2:31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. Eph 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

**Love—Poor in spirit** – Empty out of self, humble, lowly, right estimation of yourself and others.

James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the **poor of this world** rich in faith, and **heirs of the kingdom** which he hath promised to them that love him?

Don’t read into things more than what the Lord reveals

1. Christ draws a picture , with every line we should honestly and carefully *compare ourselves.*

This declaration of Christ’s is so different from the popular view among men! The world view is, Blessed are the rich, for theirs is the kingdom of the world.

1. Christ says "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," which is better than being rich and better than all the kingdoms of the earth;

1Cor. 1:20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

2:6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

3:19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

Who before Christ ever regarded the poor in spirit as the blessed or happy ones of the earth?

And who but genuine Christians do so today?

1. The keynote of all His teaching is not what a man does but what he **is**in the sight of God. "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

There is pride in the poor as there is in the rich. Both the Poor and the Rich must be emptied out of self.

1. This poverty of spirit receives seed for the fruit of Love which is a spiritual grace wrought by the Holy Spirit in those whom He renews, restores and delivers. (Rom.5:5)

By nature we are well pleased with ourselves, and mad enough to think that we deserve something good at the hands of God. Only a miracle of God’s grace can change our heart. Of a rich in spirit attitude, proud, filling our hearts instead of emptying our hearts from self-righteousness.

Poverty of spirit is **not** found among the majority. Often we see advertised "promotions for the higher life," but who ever heard of one for furthering the *lowly* life?

Mat. 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

2Cor. 8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

"filled with the Spirit" - “led by the Spirit” and be spiritually emptied of self—emptied of self-confidence, self-importance, and self-righteousness.

**A Deep sense of Trust in Him not a insufficiency and nothingness.**

Luke 16:15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

That which is of great price in His sight is despised by men—by modern Pharisees, who hold nearly all the positions of prominence in Christianity. Almost all of the so-called "ministry’s" of this generation feeds pride, instead of denying the flesh; puffs up, rather than abases; and frowns upon searching and stripping. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." And *what is* poverty of spirit?

1. It is the opposite of pride, haughty, self-assertive and self-sufficient disposition which the world so admires and praises. It is the very reverse of that independent and defiant attitude which refuses to bow to God, which determines to brave things out, which says with Pharaoh, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?" To be "poor in spirit" is to realize that I have nothing, am nothing, and can do nothing, and have need of all things.

Poverty of spirit is a consciousness of my emptiness and my nothingness. This only results from the Spirit’s work within, but He never leaves us empty but He Fills us with **His** **Love**.

Romans 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

It comes from the understanding that all my righteousnesses are as filthy rags. It follows the awakening that my best performances are unacceptable, yea, an abomination to the Lord.

Isaiah 64:6—*But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

1. Poverty of spirit corresponds to the awakening of the prodigal in the far country, when he "began to be *in want.*" Preached not only to their ears, but to their hearts!

Mat. 11:5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

1. Poverty of spirit may be termed the negative side of faith. It is that realization of my utter worthlessness which precedes the laying hold of Christ, the eating of His flesh and drinking His blood. It is the Spirit emptying the heart of self that Christ may fill it: it is a sense of need and destitution.
2. This first Beatitude, then, is foundational, describing a fundamental trait which is found in every regenerate soul. The one who is poor in spirit is nothing in his own eyes, and feels that his proper place is under God. He may, through false teaching or worldliness, leave this place, but God knows how to bring him back; and in His faithfulness and love He will do so, for it is the place of blessing for His children. How to cultivate this God-honoring spirit is revealed in Matthew 11:29.
3. Poverty of spirit is "blessed." because he has a disposition the very opposite of what was by nature, He has the first sure evidence that a Divine work of grace has been wrought in his heart, because he is an heir of the "kingdom of heaven"—the kingdom of grace to glory.

Many gracious promises are addressed to the poor in spirit.

Eph. 3:19—*And to know the* ***love*** *of Christ, which passeth* ***knowledge****, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. (Be emptied out for His Fullness)*

Ps 40:17 But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

Ps 69:33 For the LORD heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners.

Ps 72:13 He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

Ps 107:41 Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.

Ps 132:15 I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.

Isa 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Isa 66:2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

1. Let the Holy Ghost stir us up to pray earnestly for more of this poverty of spirit that we might have a good heart for the Love of God and Love for Truth.

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. Eph 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Acts 3:26 Unto you first **God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you**, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

1John 4:14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Mat.1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Acts 14:15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

Romans 4:25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Gal. 1:1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) 4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

**1Thes. 1:9** For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

Pr 15:8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight. 26 The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words. 16:5 Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished. 17:15 He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD

Ps 107:1 O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

**Ps 107:6 Then they cried** unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. 8 Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! 9 For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

10 Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; 11 Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: 12 Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help.

**13 Then** **they cried** unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. 15 Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

**19 Then they cry** unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. 20 He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. 21 Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

**22 And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.**

24 These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep. 25 For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. 26 They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. 27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end.

**28 Then they cry** unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. 29 He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. 30 Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. 31 Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

32 Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

33 He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground;

34 A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. {barrenness: Heb. saltiness} (Not all punishment but prevention)

35 He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings.

36 And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation;

42 The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

43 Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.

PSALMS

BOOK THE THIRD

PSALM **7 3**

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Temptation, arising from the Prosperity of the Lawless,

Triumphantly Overcome.

ANALYSIS

Stanza **I.,** vers. 1-5, Under Protest, the Psalmist Confesses how Nearly he

had Fallen, by Observing the Prosperity of the Lawless. Stanza II., vers. 6-9,

The Evil Wrought in the Lawless Themselves by their Prosperity. Sranza III.,

vms. 10-14, The Evil Wrought in Others, breeding Sceptical Discontent.

Stanza IV., vers. 15-17, The Psalmist's Recoil from the Natural Effect of **such**

a Frank but Incomplete Statement, leads him to Seek More Light.

vers., 18-20, The Startling Picture which More Light Reveals. *Sta*

VII, VIII, vers. 21, 2'2; 23, 24; 25, 26, The Psalmist Shames Away his

tion in three stanzas of great power. Stanza IX., vers. 27, **28, A** Fi

**uast,** Culminating in Public Song.

Stanza

(Lm.) Psalm-By Asaph.

1 After all God is good to Israel

to the pure in heart.

**2** But as **for** me

**my** feet had well-nigh stumbled,

my steps had almost slipped;

**3** For I was envious of the boasters,

at the prosperity of the lawless I kept looking.

**4** For unfettered they are,

sound1 and fat is their body:

1. So Gt,-Gn. **Cp. O.G. 359a.**

**1**

STUDIES IN **PSALMS**

Of the travail of common men have they none,

nor with the earth-born are they (wont to be smitten.

Therefore a‘necklace for them is haughtiness,

violence doth envelope them as their garment:

Their iniquityZ hath proceeded from fatness,

the imaginations of the heart have overflowed :

They mock and wickedly speak oppression,

from on high they speak:

They have set in the heavens their mouth,

and their tongue marcheth through the earth.

Therefore his people turn back hither,

and waters **of** abundance are discoveredS by them ;

And they say-“How doth GOD know?

and is there knowledge in the Most High?

Lo ! these are lawless men ;

and yet secure for an age they have attained wealth!

After all in vain have I cleansed my heart,

and bathed in pureness my palms **;4**

And been smitten all the day,

and been rebuked morning by morning!”

“If” thought I “I must recount such things as these5

lo! the circle of thy sons shall I have betrayed.”

So I began to think in order to understand this,-

a travail was that in mine eyes :-

Until I could enter the great sanctuary6 of GOD,

could give heed to their future.‘

After all in slippery places dost thou set them,

thou hast let them fall into ruins:

**Row** have they become a desolation in a moment,

come to an end been consumed in consequence of terrors!

**Ams** a dream by one who awakeneth

Sovereign Lord ! when thou bestirrest thyself their image

wilt thou despise.

***5***

**6**

**7**

8

**9**

**10**

11

**12**

**13**

**14**

**15**

**16**

**17**

**18**

’ **19**

**20**

**2.** So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr., Vu1.)-Gn.

**3.** So some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vu1.)-Gn. **M.T.:** “drained out’-Dr.

“Supped up”-Del.

**4.** With special allusion *to* bribery. “Here evidently referring to the keeping

of the palms clean from bribery, robbery and just those forms ***of*** violence

(ver. 6b) and oppression (ver. 8b) by which the wicked had to a great

extent gained their wealth and prosperity”-Br.

**6.** So, conjecturally, O.G. 466a.

6. MI. : “holy places,” or (possibly) “holy things.”

**7. Cp.** on **37:37, 38.**

**2**

**21**

**22**

**23**

**24**

**26**

**26**

**27**

**28**

STUDIES IN PSALIMS

If my heart should become embittered,

and in my feelings8 **1** should be wounded

Then should I be brutish and without knowledge,

a stupid beastD should I have become with thee.

**And** yet I am continually with thee,

thou hast grasped my right hand :

By thy counsel wilt thou guide me,

and afterwards gloriously take me.

Who (is there) for me in the heavens?

and with theezo I have no delight on the earth.

When have failed my flesh and my heart

the rock of my heart and my portion is God to the ages.

For lo! they who have gone far from thee shall perish,

thou wilt have exterminated every unchaste wanderer **Prom**

But as for me approach to God for me is blessedness.

I have fixed in Adonai Jehovah my refuge,

to tell of all thy praises

in the gates of the daughter of Zion.ll

thee.

**Wm.)**

PARAPHRASE

PSALM **73**

How good God is to Israel-to those whpse hearts are pure.

**2** But as for me, I came so close to the edge of the cliff!

**3** Flor I was enviious of the prosperity of the proud and

**4** Yes, all through life their road is smooth!l They **grow**

***6*** They aren’t always in trouble and plagued with problems

***6*** So their pride sparkles like a jeweled necklace, and their

**7** These fat cats have everything their hearts could ever

My feet were slipping and I was almost gone.

wicked.

sleek and fat.

like everyone else,

cloithing is woven of cruelty !

wish for!

8. U.: “reins.”

9. **MI.: “A hippopotamus”-“a plump colossus** of flesh , . . emblem **of**

colossal stupidity”-Del.

10. “Having thee”-Dr.

11. Thus found in **Sep.** and Vul., **as** in **9:14.**

1. Or, ‘‘they never have any pains.“

**3**

STUDIES IN PSALMS

**8** They scoff at God and threaten His people. How proudly

9 They boast against the very heavens, and their **words**

**10** And so God’s people are dismayed and confused, **and**

**11** “Does God realize what is going on?” they **ask.**

**12** “Look at these men of arrogance; they never have to lift

a finger-theirs is a life of ease; and all the time their riches

multiply.”

**13** Have **I** been wasting my time? Why take the trouble

to be pure?

**14** All I get out of it is trouble and woe-every day and all

day long!

**16** If I had really said that, I wodd have been a traitor to

Your people,

**16** Yet it is so hard to explain it-this prosperity of those

who hate the Lord.

**17** Then one day I went into God’s sanctuary to meditate,

and thought about the future of these evil men.

**18** What a slippery path they are on-suddenly God will

send them sliding over the edge of the cliff and down to their

destruction :

**19** An instant end to all their happiness, and eternity of

terror.

**20** Their present life is ,only a dream! They will awaken

to the truth as one awakens from a dream of things that never

really were !

**21** When **I** saw this, what turmoil filled my heart!

**22** I saw myself so stupid and so ignorant; I must seem

like an animal to You, *0* God.

**23** But even so, You love me! You are holding my right

hand !

**24** You will keep on guiding me all my life with Your

wisdom and counsel; and afterwards receive me into the glories

of heaven **!2**

**26** Whom have I in heaven but You? **And I** desire no one

on earth as much as You!

**26, My** health fails; my spirits droop, yet God remains! He

is the strength of my heart ; He is mine forever !

they speak!

strut through the earth.

drink it all in,

**2. *Or,* “You will bring me unto honor.”**

**4**

PSALM **73**

**27** But those refusing to worship God will perish, for He

destroys those serving other gods.

**28** But as for me, I get as close to Him as I can! I have

chosen Him and I will tell everyone about the wonderful ways

He rescues **me.**

EXPOSITION

lt is fortunate that the uniform rendering of the expressive

particle ***ak,*** in vers. 1, 13, and 18 of this psalm, has led **to** such

a striking commencement of a poem which embraces a precious

mental history; since, by the combinetion, in that little word, of

an affirmative with a restrictive meaning, it so happily opens

the whole case, as *ko* suggest to Perowne the following amplification:

“Yes, ilt is so; after all, God is good, notwithstanding all

my doubts.” This entitles him to say of the psalmist: “That the

result of the conflict is stated before the conflict itself is described.

There is no parade of doubt merely as doubt. He

states first, and in the most natural way, the fiml conviction

of his heart.”

The next point of importance is suggested by a comparison

of 81 **:26** (“TO the pure thou didst shew thyself pure”) ,with the

final clause of the psalmist’s first statementto the pure ***in*** heart.

Only a pure mind can vindicate a pure God. In confessing how

nearly he had lost his confidence in God’s goodness, the psalmist

admits that his thoughts had, in a measure, become defiled: he

had looked, he had lusted-without taking moral quality into

account, Happily, he looked again: until he saw something more

than prosperity; and that later look helped to clarify his thoughts.

But at first he lingeringly viewed the glitter and the show, until

he felt his feet slipping from under him. His attention had

clearly been arrested by fascinating examples of godless prosperity

: examples shewing the absence of fettering restrictions,

sound health, freedom from common troubles, immunity from

providential inflictions. It should here be noted how a premature

and disturbing notice of the “death” of those well-to-do

godless men is avoided, by a critical revision of the Hebrew text,

which a€ter all amounts to no more than a re-grouping of the

Hebrew letters. Premature such an. allusion would certainly be ;

“for surely,” says Delitzsch, “the poet cannot begin the description

of the prosperity of the ungodly with the painlessness of

their death, and only then come to speak of their healthfulness.”

Moreover, when afterwards, in vers. 18, **19,** the psalmist does

STUDIES IN PSALM,S

undoubtedly confront the death of ‘the lawless, it is very doubtful

whether he intends to imply that it is painless. At all events,

in his first stanza he confines himself to the fascinatilon of the

godless lives to which his abtention had been repeatedly drawn.

In the second stanza, however, while the fascination still

lingers, certain repulsive features begin to obtrude themselves.

**A** *neckkce* and **a** *flowing robe* are, no doubt, signs of opulence

and social importance; but, when the former of these is *haughtiness*

and the latter is *vioilence,* then, alas! for those who have to

suffer from them. *Fatness* generates *iniquity* : perverse *imagina****tions***

*overflow* in speech. *Mocking* at things sacred and divine,

such assuming and insolent men *speak oppression,* as their appropriate

dialect. With open profanity, their *mouth* sets divine

law at defiance, and *their tongue* presumes to propose laws concerning

all men and things in the *earth* to please themselves-in

their unmitigated selfishness. Such is the purport of the second

stanza. It is the result of a second look at the prosperous ungodly.

It is proof of a determination to look even worldly

fascinations full in the face. The discovery is already being

made that it is not all gold that glitters; and, as the result, the

snare is already nearly broken.

But, as stanza three shews, there is another source of danger

to be considered: **“WHAT OTHER PEOPLE SAY”** sometimes perverts

our own judgment. What, then, *do* they say? let us not fear to

examine it. That these prosperous lawless ones wield a great

influence, is, indeed, too apparent. Not only do they influence

their own ctaoz-each wealthy prince *h4s* gown *peuple,-as* some

expositors take ver. 10a to intimate; but even among *His people*

that is, God’s,-some there may be who are seduced into the

expectation of discovering *waters of aburtdance* where these

enviable wealthy men have already found them: And so these

admirers reason (themselves into scepticism. **It** is shallow reasoning,

but it is taking. *‘Zook* you,” say these misguided onlookers,

*“these* are such as good people call *‘lawless men’;* and

yet see how they *get* oryl: see how, f o r *a life-time, they have been*

*secure* from providential visitation, and to what *wealth they have*

*attained!* Talk of Providence-where is it? Does God-if there

be one-know anything about it?” So much for vers. 10-12 of

this stanza,

It is probably best to take vers. 13, **14** as still continuing to

describe “what other people say” who are unduly under the influence

of the prosperous lawless ones: only, now, another class

**6**

PSALM **73**

of them comes into view-namely the hitherto punctilious people,

more alive to their religious “profit and loss account” than to

abstract reasonings about the Divine Government. We need not

deny that, by voicing the precise difficulty €elt by these whining

and selfish religionists, the psalmist, at the same time, provides

that his own transient doubts of the like kind shall find expression.

Suffice it, that lthe pernicious iniluence of the ungodly

rich has been amply described.

But it is time that the tables were turned, and **a** decisive

solution lof the problem were given; and so, here, at ver. 16, we

come to the second part of the psalm. It is observable, that the

psalmist resumes where he left off; namely, with the consideration

of what others would say-only now the “others” are a

very different class from those just described. He now brings

before him those whom, in their collective capacity, he terms *the*

*circle of God’s* sow, amongst whom, therefore, a sense of the

Divine Fatherhood is still preserved. “What will these say,”

he seems to ask, “if I frankly tell them of these admirations of

the godless rich, and these shallow reasonings about their example;

if, at least, I tell the story as though I ***for*** *rnyseZf* serilously

felt its spell? Will they not be shocked that I have so betrayed

the honour of our Divine Fatherhood?” Happy the reasoner

who has a circle of brethren from whom such a counteracting

and healing influence may be counted upon; so that, to think of

frankly telling *them* of his mental difficulties, is to feel those

difficulties more than half solved by anticipation. Thrice happy

was Asaph, that he was one of such a companionship of *pure*

*hearted* Israelites-the more *so,* because he was both a *thinker*

and a *prophet:* as a thinker, able to appreciate lthe mental *travail*

involved in working out a difficult problem (ver. 16); and, as a

prophet, knowing by experience how a sudden flash of light from

the Spirit of God could at once remove difficulties which no mere

thinking could solve (ver. **17).** Hence, as he here intimates,

although he at once *begun to think,* he was nlot sanguine of the

results to be expected from that process alone: he counted much

more for success upon such a **REVELATION** as he felt would be

more likely to be vouchsafed amidst the oongenial influences of

the *great sanctuary* of *God* than elsewhere: *the great sanctuary,*

with its leisure and quiet, with its sacred associations, with its

solemn sacrifices, with its inspiring music, and especially with

its songs old and new, some of which, like **37** and **49,** might be

found to have anticipated his present difficulties, or ***at*** least **to**

**7**

STUDIES IN PSALMIS

favour the making of ’fresh discoveries by his own mind. It

should be noted, however, that the psalmist’s late experience and

present ponderings are already putting him on the right track

for search; that, in fact, he knows the precise point on which he

needs illumination : namely the *future* of these ungodly prosperous

men: *until* ***I*** *could consider their future.* We do wisely to be

thus careful to observe precisely where this stanza breaks offthe

exact point to which it leads up; and there can be no mistake

that now the language of the psalm leads over from reflection

and resolve to that of discovery. In ver. **17** it is resolve: in ver.

**18** it is discovery. The discovery is introduced by the significant

term *after* ***all,*** to which reference has already been made; and

the disclosure is thenceforward continued in the form of direct

address to Deity. Note the wording: *thou dost set them-thou*

*hmt let them falGwhen thou bestirrest thyself-their image wilt*

*thou despise.* Plainly it is now thq confident language of direct

address to Deity. Bult the language is changed, because the scene

has changed: the psalmist is now in *the great* sanctuary,’and feels

himself to be in the very presence of God, and by the confident

directness and assurance of his words shews that he has **now**

*received the further light* which he was resolved to seek concerning

*the future* of these ungodly prosperous men. Thus, then,

every word of the ensuing stanza demands our most careful attention-

and our utmost confidence.

*“After* all,”-he exclaims, in the very language of discovery :

“after all the wealth and all the power and show; after all the

admiration and envy and the vain reasoning; after all the appearance

of thine indifference, as though thou knewest not how

thou wast being set at nought: *after all,* thou hast been very

much in this very ,thing, carrying forward thy h’oly designs. For

thou hast been *setting* these very men whom their fellows have

so much envied, in *slippery places* of *uttermost* peril.” We

naturally and rightly supply, in undertone, from our other and

it may be fuller knowledge of the fairness and equity of God’s

ways, the important qualification : “Thus-for sins already committed-

hast ‘thou been punishing them for their presumption

in wilfully persisting in doing without thee.” And it was well,

therefore, that we detected, in the first lines sketching the ***image***

of these men, the note of previous self-determination to evil: they

had already become *unfettered,* having brushed aside Divine law

and silenced the voice of conscience. **“AS** a punishment **for** this

previous course of sin and self-hardening; and (should we not

***8***

PSALM **73**

add?) as a last Divine resort to convince them of their folly:

*thou dost set them in slippery places.”* Alas! in the actual

circumstances revealed to ‘the psalmist, this punishment avails

nothing for reformation, but takes effect as punishment with destructive

effect. With startling fulness and vigour is this disclosure

made: *“Thou hast let them fall into* ruins-like a bowing

wall which comes down of its own weight with a crash, its ruin

being sudden and complete.” With this revelation the psalmist’s

mind is deeply impressed-as its exclamatory form shows:

***“How*** *have they beciome* ***u*** *desolation in a moment-so* complete!

*so* sudden !” The final catastrophe is further described by terms

piled up for effect: *They have come to an end, ha,ve been* ***con***sumed,-

how could complete destruction be more strongly expressed?

But, to this, the significant addition is made: *in*

*oonsequence of terrors-who* shall venture to say what these

terrors are? As in Job **18:11, 14, 24:17, 27:20, 30:15,** they may

be terrors within the bounds of this life, and cloping it; or, as

in Ezekiel **26:21, 27:36, 28:19,** they may be terrors connected

with the Hadean continuation of existence, and ending it. That

they do *terminate* the *being* of these erewhile *boasters,* is the

lone thing which the disclosure makes plain, We have not yet

done with this description. Let us complete our notice of it,

before we turn back ‘to ask what it all means. With a simple

oriental audacity which has in it no particle of irreverence, the

psalmist represents the *Sovereign Lord* as having been *asleep*

while these godless rich have been indulging their lust of wealth

and pomp and power-and cruelty: by all which we understand

no more than that Adonai had *interfered* as little *as though* he

had been asleep. But, working out this figurative vein, he says:

*“as a dream* (is despised) *by one who awakeneth, Sovereign*

*Lord! when thou bestirrest thyself* (to deal with their case as it

demands and deserves) *their image wilt thou despise?’* Here,

undoubtedly, much depends upon a right appreciaticon of the word

*imuge;* since, whatever it is, it is something which Adonai

*despises,* and it becomes us to be careful how we define **an**

object ‘of avowed Divine *aversion!* Scholars are not quite agreed

in their renderings of this instance of the Hebrew *xelem.* The

R.V., Perowne and Leeser follow the A.V. in translating it

“image” ; but Carter and Delitzsch represent it by “shadow,”

Driver by “semblance,” Briggs and Wellhausen (in P.B.) by

“phantom.” Now, undoubtedly, there i s one passage, namely

**39:6,** in which-by reason of the context-some such rendering

**9**

STUDIES IN PSALMS

is required: and it is further undeniable that the notion of

“shadow” lies at the root ‘of the original ‘word; for which very

reason, however, it is submitted that “image” is the better

translation in the present instance; not only as connecting his

passage with the account of man’s cpeation in Genesis (1 **:26, 27,**

9:6), and usefully reminding us in passing that even there man’s

likeness ‘to his Maker-consisting in his capacity to rule (cp.

Exposition on Ps. 8) was after all little more than a “shadow”

of the Divine capacity and power to govern ; but more particularly

and most vitally lthat ‘the very word “image” is *the* term which

takes us to the heart of this most weighty passage. *“Their image*

-as a mere caricature of thine own, it is, 0 Sovereign Lord,

which *thou wilt despise!”* Assuredly, it is not the mere frailty

of man’s ordinary mortal condition, which God despises; nor is

it the attenuated semblance of man’s former self which alone

can penetrate hades “as far as the circle of his fathers” (49:19),

which God despises. Out of the former, by transformation, he

can raise up new men, mighty as angels and immortal as his

own Son; and unto the latter, as still “the work of his own

hands,” he may come to have a “longing,” as Job faintly hoped

(14:15). Therefiore it is neither of these semblances, as such,

that Adlonai despises; for *despises* is a strong word, and] in

neither of the above cases is it consistent with the known condescension

of “a faithful Creator” (1 P. 4:19). **No!** far other

than merely these, is the object which here starts forth from

the canvas as, so t o speak, exciting the contempt of an awakened

and affronted God. It is the primary image of God, wickedly,

wantonly disfigured. Even we, under Asaph’s sympathetic guidance,

have, already-within the compass of this psalm-looked

on that “image” and loathed it: the *unfettered* free-thinker and

free-liver; the fat, sleek pamperer of his precious self; the socalled

pet of Providence, stranger alike *to* ordinary and extraordinary

trouble; deeming it an adornment to be *haughty,* and

a becoming robe to be *violent;* whose gross mind concocts evil

schemes; whose vile mouth propounds and promotes and defends

unblushing villainies; whose tongue talks as if all the earth had

been made for his convenience-a man therefore who practically

deems himself to be his own God! *alas turned devil!* Have we

by this time learned to detest him? How great a ,wonder, then,

that a holy God should have left him to himself so long !

Such then, in full, is the description given by Asaph of the

revelation which he had received in *the great sanctuary* ***of*** *God,*

**10**

PSALM **73**

concerning *the future* ‘of the lawless rich bearing this debased

*image* of God,

And now what does it all mean? Does it merely mean *sudden*

death; or does it rather mean *totar* death: an utter destruction

of personal being? If any elect to say, “Merely sudden death”;

may we not turn upon them with Itlie questifon, how mere sudden

death meets the case? Suppose we could (as we cannot, for

want of evidence) accept it as an observed fact, that such

presumptuous men do uniformly die sudden deaths ; hiow would

that alone solve this mystery of providence? Is there, after all,

any such broad distinction to be drawn between slow death and

sudden death? What does it signify so much, whether a man is

struck down in a moment, or whether he slowly wastes and wears

away? It is not at all plain that there is anything material in

the difference. Besides, it may with confidence be affirmed,

that this is not the direction in which the text points. Certainly,

suddenness is there-at least relative suddenness *(in a moment).*

But the point emphasized by the accumulated terms of the

passage is rather the completeness of the destruction, than the

suddenness of the death, Indeed, it looks as though the word

“death” had been carefully avoided; but while the common word

“death” is avoided, the word *terrors* is emphatically broughlt in,

and some scope must naturally be given in which those terrors

may be supposed to effect the terrible overthrow intended: an

overthrow so terrible and complete that before the psalm is

ended, it is termed both a *peyishing* and an *extermination.* In

fine, the impression made by the whole passage is, that it is

not what is understood as an ordinary sudden death that is

meant; but an awful infliction of the utter destructilon of the

whole being by some unendurable manifestation of Divine wrath :

as a Christian, availing himself of New Testament language,

might say,-the first and second deaths being blended in one,

and the terrors including the wrath of the Lamb (Rev, **6:16, 17).**

These may be regarded as here foreshortened for the practical

purpose #of summary statement, and because the then current

knowledge of the future could not bear the introduction of details.

Reverting to what the O.T. itself does teach, we may usefully

remind ourselves of that great passage in Isaiah **(57:16)**

which plainly intimates that there is possible such a protracted

manifestation of Divine anger, as no man could sustain; and

though, there, the intention seems to be, to let in a hope of mercy,

yet here the intention is equally visible of excluding such hope.

**11**

STUDIES IN PSALMIS

Of course, if death were ordinarily to be taken as equivalent to

total extinction of personal being, all this would amount to

nothing; and our exposition would have to remain unfinished.

But, assuredly, we may, with the general consent of Bible readers,

dismiss that devastating conception of death as extravagantly unwarrantable;

and therefore may reaffirm our present contention

that the utter desolation and final extinction of personal

being is the true meaning of this passage: first, because it

completely fills up the terms employed, and, second, because

it solves the providential mystery it was given to explain. After

such a revelation, who dare pray to be rich, who can desire to

be set in such slippery places? The temptation is gone; and

therefore it follows that the answer is complete. In further

confirmation of all which, as thus far advanced, suffice it to

call attention to the broad, fundamental harmony which this exposition

of the Psalms unfolds. In the first of this series of

psalms, **37, 49, 73,** it was sribmitted that for the righteous man

*there is a ficture:* for transgressors there is *not!* The confident

assurance of the truth of that conclusion has helped us so far

through this psalm and nothing else could. That conclusion

stands as an immovable principle, Details are yet needed, but

some particulars are already being supplied. Here we see not

only the principle confirmed; but the detailed and penetrating

lesson taught, that *even in this life the Divine* image *may be* so

*defaced and caricatured as to become an offence to the Almighty*

*and ripe for destruction, as a consequence of unknown* terrors!

In ,at length advancing to Stanza VI. of this psalm (vers.

**21-22),** we have to express immeasurable obligation to Delitzsch

for suggesting and defending the hypothetic oolouring thrown

upon it. How disconcerting it would have been to find the

psalmist still floundering in (or, if not flloundering in, at least

lingering over) the doubts, from which the vision in the greak

sanctuary was given to deliver him! How delightful, by contrast

and by helpfulness onward, to perceive that he is now merely

shaming his former doubts into perpetual silence. **“How** unmanly!’’

he is now heard saying, “to cherish such feelings any

longer! How unworthy of the name of **a** *man,* to harbour such

thoughts any more!” He had modestly assumed to be a *thinker,*

before he could find opportunity to go into the great sanctuary

of God. But now that he has been thither-or is still perhaps

remaining there, since his address to God is as yet unbrokenhe

thinks again, and to some purpose; and his thought is, what

**12**

PSALM **73**

“a colossus of stupidity” he would be, nlot now to be satisfied:

“I, a m,an, who can converse with thee, and receive such counsel

w thou hast now been giving me!” Furthermore, this merely

hypothetic repetition of the old temptation enables us to advance

at once, at the close of this stanza, to the natural rending of

the preposition *(with thee-Gk,* rough breathing *’immalca)*

which has to do such important service in the very next line,

namely the first of Stanza VII. The old doubt only hypothetically

put, enables us to anticipate by saying “with thee,” here at

the close of ver, **22:** “Being, as **I** am, *with thee,* how stupid

such a doubt would now appear.” And then he can fiollow on in

ver. **23** by saying, *And yet I am continually with thee (’immzaka).*

In contrast with the smoothness of which, how awkward and

even suspicious ito have to render the same preposition first

“before thee” (ver. **22)** and then “with thee” (ver. **23).** We

are thus particular down to a particle, because of the extreme

value of Delitzsch’s hypothetical translation of vers, **21** and **22:**

which, thus defended, may now be dismissed.

Stanza VII. thus at once bears us along into $he midstream

of near fellowship with God and of consequent victorious confidence

in Him. *“Thou hast grasped my right hand,* by thus

disclosing io me that which for ever shames into silence my

doubts. By *Thy counsel wilt thou* (continue to do as thou hast

now done) *guide me,* ***And*** *afterwards* (leaving us easily to supply

the thought, ‘after life’s journey’) *glio.riously take me.”* ‘ He

knows not precisely *how* it. will be done, but gIo/yious *in the*

*manner* of *it* will it assuredly be; and the decisive *act* done, he

says, will be to *take me,* even as Enoch was taken to be with

God; or, as Ps. 49:16-if just sung in “the great sanctuary”-

may have suggested, *“wilt take me* (out (of the hand of hades,

whether by transformation preventing death, or by resurrection

reversing death) )’ The point of this revelation clearly cannot

lie in details, which are confessedly not supplied; but in the

broad and simple fact announced, of being *taken* by God. Obviously

all turns on the character of him who takes. Re who, **as**

an enemy whom I hate, captures me, makes of me a slave, and

excites my utmost fears; but he who, as a friend whom I admire

and love, captures me, at the same time enraptures me, delights

me, and excites my highest hopes, All, then, here turns on the

character of God, and of his relation to me, And of this, the

next stanza sings.

In language of extreme simplicity and brevity-like the

**13**

STUDIES IN PSALMS

lispings of a babe that has not yet learned to speak-and yet

of extreme beauty, because everything is suggested that is not

expressed, the psalmist (Stanza VII.) says, Who-for me-in the

heavens? And-with thee : having thee- (whether there or

here) ***I*** have no delight on the earth (where are, or have been,

all I have known and loved), Of course, the language is comparative,

even while it shrinks from comparison; but the one

clear thing ,which it reveals is the delight in his God now felt,

as never before, by this pure-hearted Israelite. It is on the tide

of this delight in God himself that he is carried over into the

unknown, and is moved to express a conception to convey which

no exact words had yet been coined; and the approximate words

to express which amount to a contradiction in terms: When

have failed *my* flesh and *my* heart-(in other word$, my body

and my mind)-the *rolck* of *my* heart and *my* portion (then and

on and ever) is *God* age-abidingly. The mind that rests on thmat

rock cannot sink. The essential Ego will somehow survive the

wreck; if it have nothing else in which to inhere, it will inhere

in God, or else a sorry poytion would he be! But, indeed, we

have gone too far, in saying that for this conception no language

had yet been coined-although, it is true, Asaph may not have

been familiar with it: “Into thy hands I commit my,spirit” **(31 *:5)***

probably is a prayer which exactly meets the case, and at all

events was honoured by being used by Jesus and by his first

martyr Stephen. Nevertheless, in any case, Iiove finds out how

to make itself understood; and absolute triumph over death is

here radiant as the rising sun. Perfect love to a perfect God

gives the victory: the nearest possible approach to that God

(Stanza IX.) constitutes the highest attainable blessedness, and

must ever prompt the mlost joyful songs *of* Zion whether earthly

or heavenly.

Ps 73:23 Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.

24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

25 Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.

(KJV)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

**1.** Read verse one and discuss whether or not the conclusion

to the problem is here stated.

**2.** There are several Psalms which discuss the problem of the

prosperity af the wicked. If it was

solved before, why raise the issue again? Are there different

facets of the problem in each Psalm? Discuss.

**3.** If all we know about heaven was that which is contained

in the Old Testament, how easy would it be for us to endure

the arrogant prosperity of the wicked? Discuss.

(Cf. Ps. **27** and **49)**

**14**

PSALM 73 AND 74

**4.** Into which “sanctuary” did the Psalmist go? Into whmat

sanctuary can we go? Is the church building a sanctuary?

Is there a better one?

***6.*** Please be h’onest with yourself and give ‘a personal answer

to the several questions asked in the texlt: (1) “Does God

realize ,what is going on?”; **(2)** “Have 1 been wasting my

time?”; **(3)** “Why take the trouble to be pure?”; **(4)** “Whom

have I in heaven but You?”; ***( 6 )*** “Whom do 1 desire on

earth but Thee?”

**6, A** large part ,of the problem is in what others will see and

say about the believer-Discuss.

**7.** Is the problem of this Psalm larger in America or in Asia

or Africa or Europe? Discuss.

PSALM

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Ruthless Injuries to the Sanctuary and Oppression in the Land

by an Enemy, call forth Expostulation with God

for his quiescence.

ANALYSIS

Stanza **I,,** vers. 1-3a, In Expostulation for Present Rejection, the Psalmist

Reminds God how he had Acquired, Redeemed, and Exalted His Inheritance.

Stanza 11,, vas. **3b-7,** Profanation of the Sanctuary Described. Stanza III., vers.

8, 9, Extent of the Desolation. Stanza IV., vers 10, 11, Renewed Expostulation

with ***God.*** Stanzas V., VI., VII., vers, 12, 13; 14, 15; 16, 17, Divine Activities

Aforetime in History and in Creation. Stanzas VIII., IX., X., vers. 18, 19;

20,21; **22,** 23, Earnest Pleadings for Divine Interposition.

(Lm.) An Instructive Psalm-By Asaph.

1 Wherefore 0 God hast thou cast off utterly?

wherefore smoketh thine anger against the flock of thy

shepherding?

aforetime?

inheritance,-

**2** Remember thy congregation (which) thou acquiredst

(which) thou redeemest to be the tribe of thine

Mount Zion wherein thou didst make thy habitation,

**15**

STUDIES IN PSALMS

which thy footsteps exalted to perpetual dignity.l

Everything hath the enemy marred in the sanctuary:

roared have thine adversaries in the midst of thy place **of**

they have set up their signs for signs.

**A** man used to become known **as** one who had wielded on

in a thicket of trees axes!2

But now the doors3 thereof all at once

with hatchets and hammers they smite!

They have thrust into the fire thy holy thing^,^

to the ground have they profaned the habitation of thy name.

They have said in their heart-“We will ,force them **down**

they have caused to cease all the festivals of God in the

**Our** signs (we see not,

there is no longer a prophet;

nor is there with us one who knoweth how long.

How long 0 God shall an adversary reproach?

shall an enemy blaspheme thy name perpetually?

Wherefore shouldst thou draw back thy hand?

and thy right hand in the midst **of** thy bosom retain’?

And yet God was my king from aforetime,

working victoriess in the midst of the earth.

Thou didst divide in thy strength the sea,

didst shatter the heads of (river) monstersQ upon the waters:

Thou didst crush the heads of the crocodile,

didst give him as food to the creatureslO that dwell in the

meeting,

**high**

altogether !”, ,

land?

deserts.

1. So Br., who says: “Requires no change in the unpointed text.”

**2.** Supply, perhaps, in thought: “when the sanctuary was built.”

**3.** So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr., Vu1.)-Gn.

**4.** So in some **cod.** (w. **3** ear. pr. edns.) -Gn.

**3**

**4**

***5***

**6**

**7**

**8**

**9**

**10**

**11**

**12**

**13**

**14**

***6*** So Del.

6. So Sep. M.T.: “They have burned up all the meeting-places of God in

the land.”

**7.** So Br. “From the midst of thy bosom (pluck it forth) and consume.”

So Driver and others, following M.T. and supplying “pluck forth.” Ginsburg

says that *kalleh,* “consume,” shd. be *d a h* (? “lift up,” as in 68 **:4).**

8. **Or:** “a great salvation” (pl. intensive).

9. So Dr.

10. **Ml.:** “people.” Dr. : “folk” as in Prov. **30 :25, 26.**

**16**

**15**

**16**

**17**

**18**

**19**

**20**

**21**

**22**

**23**

PSALM **74**

Thou didst cleave open fountain and torrent,

thlou didst dry up rivers of steady flow.

Thine is the day yea thine the night,

thou didst establish light-bearerll and sun **:I2**

Thou didsit set up all the bounds of the earth,

summer and autumn thou didst fashion them.

Remember this! an enemy hath reproached Jehovah,

yea the people lof a vile13 person have blasphemed thy name.

Do not give up to a wild beast the life14 of thy tuntle-dove,16

the living host of thy humbled ones do not forget perpetually.

Look well to thyla clovenant,

for filled are the dark places of the land1‘ with the

habitations of violence,

May the crushed one not turn back confounded !

the humbled and the needy let them praise thy name.

Arise! 0 God 0 plead thine own plea,

remember the reproach of thee from the vilex3 person all the

Do not forget ithe voice of thine adversaries,-

the noise of them who rise up against thee ascending

(Lm.) To the Chief Musician. (CMm.) “DO not destroy.”

day

continually.

PARAPHRASE

PSA’LM **74**

0 God, why have You cast us away forever? Why is your

anger hot against us-the sheep of Your own pasture?

**2** Remember that we are Your people-the ones You chose

in ancient times from slavery and made the choicest of Your

possessions.

**3** Walk through the awful ruins of the city, and see what

the enemy has done to Your sanctuary.

**4** There they shouted their battle cry and erected their idlols

to flaunt their victory.

You chose Jerusalem1 as Your home on earth!

**11.** Prob. : “moon.”

12. Sep.: “sun and moon.”

13. Or: “senseless.‘l Cp. on **Ps. 14.**

**14.** u.: **“SOUI.”**

***15.*** Sep. : (‘a soul giving thanks unto thee.”

16. So it shd. be **(w.** Sep., Syr., Vu1.)-Gn.

17. Or: <‘earth.” Cp. Intro., Chap. III., “Earth.”

1. Literally, “Mount Zion.”

**17**

STUDIES IN PSALUS

**5, 6** Everything lies in shambles like a forest chopped to

the ground. They came with their axes and sledgehammers and

smashed and chopped the carved paneling,

7 And set the sanetuary on fire, and razed it to the ground-

Your sanduary, Lord.

**8** “Let’s wipe out every trace of God,” they said, and went

through the entire country burning down the assembly places

where we worshiped You.

9, 10 There is nothing left to show that we are Your people.

The prophets are gone, and who can say when it all will

end? How long, 0 God, will You allow our enemies to dishonor

Your name? Will You let them get away with this forever?

**11** Why do You delay? Why hold back Your power? Unleash

Your fist and give them a final blow.

**12** God is my King from ages past; You have been actively

helping me everywhere throughout the land.

**13, 14** Ylou divided the Red Sea with Your strength; You

crushed the sea-god’s heads! You gave him to the desert tribes

to eat!

**15** *Art* Your command the springs burst forth to give Your

people water; and then You dried a path for them across the

everflowing Jordan.

16 Day and night alike belong to You; You made the starlight

and the sun.

17 All nature is within Your hands; You make the summer

and the winter too.

**18** Lord, see how these enemies scoff at You. 0 Jehovah,

an arrogant nation has blasphemed Yonr name.

19 0 Lord, save me! Protect Your turtle-dove from the

hawks.2 Save Your beloved people from these beasts.

**20** Remember Your promise! For the land is full of **dark**ness

and cruel men.

**21 0** Lord, don’t let Your downtrodden people be constantly

insulted. Give cause for these poor and ttieedy ones to praise

Your name!

**22** Arise, **0** God, and state Your case against our enemies.

Remember the insults these rebels have hurled against You all

day long.

**23** Don’t overlook the cursing of these enemies of Yours;

it grows louder and louder.

**2. Literally, “the wild beasts.”**

**18**

PSALM **74**

EXPOSITION

It is clear that the composition of this psalm was occasioned

by the desecration of the Temple and the oppression of the Land

by some foreign invader; but precisely which event of this kind

is here intended, is uncertain, Some have confidently pointed to

the time ,of the Maccabees, when the temple was desecrated

under Antilochus: against which may be urged the standing unlikelihood

that any psalm had so late an origin, and yet found

its way as did this, and lthe rest, into the ancient Septuagint

version of the Old Testament; and the particular objection that

the very line in the psalm which might otherwise have seemed

*to* point to a Maccabean origin, viz. ver. 8, “And they have

burned up all the meeting-places of God in the land,” appears

in the Sep. in the milder fiorm, *And they have mused to cease*

*all the festivals of God in the land.* It may be true, that the

erection of synagogues cannot be traced further back than to

the time of the Maccabees; but it is inconceivable that the Greek

translators should have obliterated such an allusion, had it existed

in their Hebrew exemplars, though quite possible that later

Slopherim should have adapted the Hebrew of the old psalm, so

as to conform it to later and more startling events. Others

again, have advocated the time of the Chaldean invasion under

Nebuchadnezzar, as having probably given birth to this psalm.

And that is a possible date; although the lament over the want

of a *prophet* lor one who *knew how long* but ill agrees with the

presence of Jeremiah and Ezekiel in those days. Even if, to

avoid this awkwardness, the origin of the psalm be thrown

further down the Exile, and in favour of that time the words

be cited, “Lift up thy footsteps to the perpetual desolations,” **as**

showing that now the desolation of Jerusalem had lasted a long

time,-then it is at least disconcepting to note, what Briggs says,

that the same consonants, otherwise vowel-pointed, may be read

(surely mlore in harmony with the immediate context) *Which*

*thy footsteps exalted to peipetual dignity.* Under these circumstances,

it may be questioned whether the “Speaker’s Commentary”

has not more nearly hit the mark in suggesting as the

probable time and occasion of origin, the invasion of the Egyptian

monarch Shishak in the days ‘of Rehoboam. In favour of

this comparatively early date, may be mentioned: the care which

the psalmist observes ‘to express rather a desecration than a

demolition of the temple; and the aptness of his language in

vers. 5, 6 to apply to a hime when the *building* of the temple

**19**

STUDIES IN PSALM’S

was yet a comparEtively recent event. While yet the honlour of

having lifted an *axe* in the Lebanon to supply cedar for the erection,

of the temple was well remembered, here are profane

*hatchets and hammers* engaged in ruthlessly tearing off the

plates of gold which covered *the dolors.* It seems as though:the

psalm was writ ile this profanation was going on; and

not merely conce conflagration viewed from afar ! Given,

a psalmist well remembering the glory of the erection of the

temple; given also, the instinctive horror felt by such a man on

occasion of the first intrusion of foreign feet within the sacred

precincts;-and you have probably a more fitting psychological

condition to suit the origin of this psalm than any other that

can be imagined with due regard to known facts. It is difficult

to say why the psalm does not contain a confession of *sin,* **‘as**

the true reason why such a foreign invasion was permitted,

especially as this is made so prominent in the history; but we

may perhaps surmise that this element lay, for the moment,

comparatively dormant in the psalmist’s mind, because of his

ignorance of ;the lengths to which the invader might be permitted

to go, and the vividness with which he saw in those broader

views of Gsod’s gracious purposes in calling Israel to be his

people and in making Mount Zion his dwelling-place, such weighty

pleas against the destruction which at the time appeared imminent.

Whatever the cause of this absence of confession from

the psalm, it shlould be remembered that the fact of its omission

bears as much upon one foreign invasion as another: any such

invasion-whether Egyptian, Chaldean or Syrian-must have in

reality seemed permissible only because of grievous national sin

commibted.

The course of thought which the psalm actually pursues is

noteworthy, especially in respect of the broad collateral facts in

history and in nature by which the psalmist strengthens his

pleading with God.

After reminding God of the wonderful way in which he

had made the Hebrew *congregation* peculiarly his own (vers.

1-3a) ; and then vividly depicting the present devastation of the

sanctuary (vers. **3b-7),** and the forlorn condition of the land,

especially as regards religious privileges (vers. 8, **9 ) s ;** and after

pleading with God no longer to delay his silencing of the profanity

of the invader (vers. 10, 11);-the psalmist then enlarges on

the almighty deeds of Israel’s King. He introduces the great

facts clustering around the deliverance from Egypt and the ad-

**20**

PSlALM **74**

mission into the promised land (vers. 12-16)-facts which oonstituted

an almighty handling of the powers of nature and pressing

them into the service of creating and redeeming a Nation. **At**

this point, in a stanza of great simplicity and beauty (vers. 16-

**17)** the poet passes on to a notice of the Divine relahion h

**day** and *night, moon* and *sun, earth* and *seas, s u m e r* **a8** presupposing

*sprimg* and *autumn* as bringing after it *w i n t e r .* These

allusions are not only beautiful in themselves, and a poetic

relief to the mind of the reader but they are true aids to dewtion,

and give pleasing force to the petitions which they introduce.

They suggest more than they formally articulate. They seem to

say: “Such, 0 God, are the praises, which habitually ascend to

thee from this holy place; but now, only hear the reproaches

and the defiance which are from this very spot directed against

thy Holy Name! Canst thou be the Divine *King* whom we thus

adlore, and not be able and willing to hearken to our prayers?”

nd then follows a volley of petitions: *remember-do not* ***give***

*do not forget-look weldmrise-remember-do not fovget.*

The very cllose of the prayer is initercessionally dramatic. Instead

of. a final benediction, we hear the gentle but undaunted voice

of this petitioner making a last effort to turn the sustained

*din* and *roar* of the *adversary* in the sanctuary into so much

prayer for speedy Divine Intervention. Noting these things, even

Christian intercessors may learn valuable lessons from this psalm,

as to the reality, boldness and scope of pr,ayer. Moreover, it

would be upardonable to forget what we owe to Dr. Thirtle

for the collateral warrant he affiords for moving the inscription

***Do*** *not destroy,* from the beginning of the next psalm, where its

applicability is not very evident, to the foot of this, where its

appropriateness must strike every unprejudiced mind : *that* has

really been the prayer of this psalm-Do *not destroy!*

1,

2.

**3.**

**4.**

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

The Temple is desecrated-but when? By whom? Give

and defend your opinion,

List the descriptive terms for the nation of Israel. Remember

“we are the Israel of God” (Gal. 6 **:16).**

List the great works of Jehsovah which pnove He could overcome

these profainers of His holy Temple.

To what three attributes of God does the psalmist appeal as

reasons for the restoration !of worship in the Temple?

21

STUD,IES IN PSALMIS

***5.*** Give at least two possible explanations as to why God

sometimes delays His blessings.

***6.*** Notice the petitions addressed to God-which also could be

addressed to ourselves in relation to God.

PSALM **7 5**

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

**A** Song, Enshrining an Oracular Assurance of Equitable

Judgment by the Judge of the Earth.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., ver. 1, Congregationail Thanksgiving, Promising a Rehearsal of

Divine Wonders. Stanza IE., vers. *2-4,* A Divine Oracle: Declaring that, at

the Right **Time,** Justice shall be Done; and Admonishing that Moral Preparations

**for** Judgment be Made. Stanza III., vers. **5-7,** Prophetic Exhortation

Enforcing the Oracle. Stanza IV., ver. 8, A Prophetic Warning **of** Coming

Wrath. Stanza V., vers. *9,* 10, With Prophetic Exultation, the Psalmist, in

the Name of the Nation, Counts on being Employed in the Judicial **Adjust**ment.

(Lm.) Psalm-By Asaph-Song.

1 We give thanks to thee 0 God we give thanks to thee;

and they who call on thy name1 tell **of** all thy wondrous

**2** “Yea! I will seize a right time,

**I** with equity will judge:

**3** Dissolving may be the earth and all the dwellers therein,

**I** have adjusted the pillars thereof:

**4** have said to boasters-‘Do not boast!’

and to lawless ones-‘Do not lift up a horn!’ ”

***5*** Do not lift up on high your horn,

nor speak against a Rock2 with arrogance.

works.

**1.** So **“read** probably”-Dr. **And so** ( ?)-Gn.

**2.** So it shd. **be (w. Sep.)-Gn.**

PSALM **75**

**6** For neither from the east nor from the west,

nor from the wilderness8 (oometh) lifting up;4

**7** Eor God is judge,

this one he pubteth down and that one he lifteth up,

8 For a cup is in the hand of Jehovah with wine which

foameth,

it is full of spiced-wine which he poureth o u t f r o m one to

another,s

surely the dregs thereof shall all the lawless of the eanth

drain out and drink.

9 But I will exulte to the ages,

let me make melody unto the God of Jacob!

10 And all the horns [of lawless (ones will 1 hew off,

lifted up shall be the horns of the righteous.

(Lm.) To the Chief Musician.

(CMm.) With stringed instrumentseT

PARAPHRASE

PSALM ***75***

How we thank You Lord! Your mighty miracles give proof

**2** “Yes,” the Lord replieb, “And when I am ready, I will

**3** Tbough the earth shakes and all its people live in turmoil,

**4** 1 warned the proud to cease their arrogance! I told the

***5*** And to stop being stubborn and proud.

**6, 7** For promotion and power come from nowhere on earth,

but only from God.

8 In Jehovah’s hand tihere is **a** cup of pale and spankling

wine. It is His judgment, poured out upon the wicked of the

earth. They must drain that cup to the dregs.

**3.** Prob.=‘%outh.” “North” perh. omitted as quarter whence the enemy

thak You care.

punish the wicked !

yet its pillars are firm, for I have set them in place!”

wicked to lower their insolent gaze,l

He promotes one and deposes another.

**was** coming,

**4.** Heb. : *Harim,* generally=“mountains”; but, according to a Heb. tradition.

excerkionallv here=“liftinn UTI” **(as** derived from **Y U ~ ,** to be high) :

which seeks to strike the key-note bf the psalm, for which cp. vers. **4,** %**’**,**7 ,**

**10.**

**6.** So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr., Vu1.)-Gn.

6. So it shd. be (w. Sep.)-Gn.

**7.** And therefore with all the choirs in the temple,

1. Literally, “lift not **up** the horn.”

**23**

STUDIES IN PSALM’S

9 But as for me, I shall forever declare the praises of the

10 “I will cut off the strength of evil men,” says the Lord,z

God of Jacob.

“and increase the power of good men in their place.”

EXPOSITION

does, this psalm requires

exercise of the historical imagination, to bring

effectiveness. It follows well the outcry of the previous psalm.

“How long?” by declaring that, *at the right time,* Divine Interposititon

shall come, With equal fitness, it anticipates the

exulting outburst of the psalm which follows it, already claiming

the souls of those who are yet waiting, to the sore trial of their

faith. It may thus be placed historically anywhere between the

invasion of Shishak and the loverthrow of Sennacherib the

Assyrian, and could, with fine effect, be used in temple worship

either during the days of ,trial which befell Jehoshaphat or during

those which came upon Hezekiah.

When the dramatic structure of the psalm is perceived, its

dignity and force rise to the sublime. The opening stanza reveals

the congregation giving thanks as For an answer received, and

as if in anticipation of Divine Wonders to follow.

Then, with an effective change of measure, Jehovah is represented

as giving, in the first person, his assurance that in due

time he will effectively interpose. Society-and perhaps especially

the society of natifons-may appear to be *falling* ***to*** *pieces*dissollving-

for lack of ithe effective grip of the bonds of *equity;*

but already Jehovah prophetic declares he has *adjusted* ***the***

*pillars* of the social structure, hat those “pillars” are to be

understood as fundamental *moral principles,* is at once intimaked

by the two, Divine behests-Do *not bloast, Do not lift up the horn,*

which two proclamations may perhaps be distributively applied :

the former to Israel and the latter to the nations ready to oppress

them; though, indeed, bolth may well be heeded by all concerned,

seeing that *boasting* and *oppression so* often go hand in hand.

It is not quite certain at what point the direot Divine address

ends; but, having regard to the propriety **of** letting **an**

oracle appear brief, and to the difficulty of carrying on the direct

address to the close of ver. **7,** it is probably best to close the

quotation at the end of ver. **4.** This naturally leads us to take

Standing whe

**2. Implied.**

**24**

PSALM 75

vers. 5-7 as a continuing prophetic address, by the psalmist himself,

in enforcement of the Divine Oracle. It seems to be fittingly

left to the *psa2mist* to emphasize, in amplified hortatory words

(ver. sa), the previous briefer oracular words (ver. Qb) ; and

then that he, *the psalmist,* should go on (ver. 6b) to speak of

Jehovah as a *Roclc,* in the third person; just as, also, (in ver. **7)**

he naturally refers to God, in the third person. These niceties

may not appear very important, inasmuch as they respect the

mere *fomz* of what must all, in substance, be regarded as a

Divine utterance ; but an approximately correct settlement of

them, sensibly contributes to the impressiveness of the psalm.

The psalmist now, in Stanza IV., gives a highly figurative

but effective reason for the urgency of his exhortations to prepare

for judgment. Equitable as is the Divine Rule, in the long

run, in dealing with both individuals and nations, it nevertheless

is framed upon the pattern of “times and seasons,”-“times”

of delay, in which God as judge is silent and seemingly inactive,

**as** though he were taking no notice of the moral quality of human

conduct; and then, “seasons” of activity, involving the principle

of bringing up arrears, and dealing all at once with long series

of actions; and implying, where wicked conduct has been in the

ascendant, an accumulation of punishment, corresponding with

the accumulation of unvisited sin. But an accumulation of punishment

implies an accumulation of Divine displeasure, so *far* ***CGS***

*its manifestation i s colzcerned.* And *so* we arrive at the conceptilon

of stored-up wrath : arrears of displeasure : intensified

punishment, involving stroke upon stroke, when it does come.

This is the revealed principle of Divine resentment of sin. No

doubt this principle could be philosophically defended : as necessitated,

not by infirmity in God, but by the limitation of man.

But whether or not we can account for such a method of divine

government, and successfully defend it, as probably we may; it

suffices to maintain, that such in fact is God’s governmental

method of dealing with the m~ral quality of the actions of men

and of nations. This being so, that very fact lies at the root of

such representations as that which here confronts us in this

psalm : accumulated wrath breaking forth in accumulated punishment,

being figuratively represented as a *cup* in the hand of

Jehovah, a cup *foaming* in the activity #of its contents, *mixed*

**as** with *stimulating spices* in the intensity of its action, and held

€orth to the individuals who are to drink, and to be compelled

to drain their cup to its *dregs.* We **may**

25

~

Such is the figure.

STUDIES IN PSALMIS

call it oriental. But, instead of therefore under-estimating it,

our wisdom is \*to accept it as a common, and, in the East, most

natural as well as effective style of speech; and at once seek to

translate it into our own methods of thought. The following list

of passages, alluding to the ***wine-cwp*** *of* ***wrath,*** will shew how

familiar the figure is in the Old Testament, and will suggest

the deeper principles to which our thoughts are thereby conducted:

Job **21 :20,** Ps. **60:3,** Isa. **51 :17,** Jer. **25:15, 27, 49:12,**

**51:7,** Ob. **16.**

Glancing, finally, at Stanza V. (vers. 9, lo), and connecting

it with Stanza I., as together constituting the devotional framework

of the psalm, we recognise the appropriateness of the observations

of Delitzsch : “The prophetic picture stands upon a

lyric background ‘of gold; it rises up out of the depths of emotion

and is withdrawn again into these same depths , . . The psalm

closes as subjectively as it began. The prophetic picture is set in

a lyric frame.” This is well said. But when the same expositor,

in calling attention to the obvious fact that the psalmist in ver.

10 ascribes to himself what he tn ver. **7** sets forth as God’s

own doing, associates this human fellowship in the judicial rectification

with the reigning “Church,” we respectfully withhold

our consent; preferring to connect the ***hewing*** *off* of ***the h o w***

*of* ***the lawless*** with the triumphant *fiation* of Israel than with

the triumphant ***ecclesia.*** The callings of the two communities

are distinct, and as such should be carefully preserved

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. This psalm is “a revelation of the principle of God’s government

of the world, of His action in human history”. Please

follow this line of reasoning and outline the principles **sug**gested.

**2.** This psalm balances well between the two psalms of before

and after-explain how.

**3.** There seems to be a dialogue in this psalm. Who speaks?

What is said? Discuss.

**4.** “Jesus who died shall be justified, God is the ruler yet”-

so wrote the song writer. There are at present millions

and millions who have never heard-now reconcile this with

the rule of God?

**5.** America and Israel stand together in God’s Judgment.

Explain and discuss.

**26**

PSALM **76**

PSALM 7 6

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

**A** Song of Triumph over a Divinely-smitten Foe.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-3, By reason of a Recent Interposition in behalf of

Jerusalem, God has Anew Made Himself Known there, as a Lion Dwelling

in his Lair, Stanza II., vers. **4-6,** The Majesty of God and the Impotence

of the Smitten Enemy contrasted. Stanza III., vers. *7-9,* God, Terrible when

Arising to Judgment. Stanza IV., vers, 10-12, The Wrath of Mankind turn**ing**

to Give Thanks and Keep Festival. Counsels to Worshippers.

(Lm.) Psalm-By Asaph-Song.

God hath made himself known in Judah,

in Israel great is his name:

And his covert hahh come to be in Salem,

and his lair in Zion hath been placed

He hath shivered the flames of the bow,2

shield and sword and battlesa

Enveloped in light art thou majestic-from the mou-ntains

They let khemselves be spoiled did the valiant of heart-

And none of the men of might could find4 their hands: .

**At** the rebuke 0 God of Jacob-stunned were the horsemen.6

**As** for thee fear-inspiring thou art:

who then shall stand before thee because of the powera of

Out of the heavens proclaimedst thou sentence :

earth feared and was still

**1. So** Br. revocalises, ***shm-h,*** and brings back to end of this line,

**2. A** poetic description of arrows.

**3,** Comprehensively, €or all other weapons **of** war.

**4.** Far less **use** them, to arise and grasp their weapons.

***5.*** So it shd. **be** (w. Sep., Syr., Vu1.)-Gn.

**6. SO** G. Intro. **144,** correcting orthography.

of **prey:**

they slumbered their sleep,

thine anger?

**27**

STUDIES IN PSALMIS

9 When God arose to vindication,l

to save all the humble ob the land.s

**10** Surely the wrath of mankind will thankQ thee,

the residue of intenselo wrath will keep festival to theell

11 Vow and pay to Jehovah your God,

all ye around him bear along a gift to the inspirer of fear,

**12** He taketh away12 the spirit of nobles,

is fear-inspiring to the kings of the earth.

(Lm.) To the Chief Musician, (CMm.) Jor Jeduthun.13

**PARAPHRASE**

PSALM **76**

God’s reputation is very great in Judah and in Israel!

**2** His home is in Jerusalem! He lives upon Mount Zion.

**3** There He breaks the weapons of our enemies.

**4** The everlasting mountains cannot compare with You in

***5*** The mightiest of our enemies are conquered; they lie before

**6** When You rebuked them, God of Jacob, steeds and riders

**7** No wonder You are greatly feared! Who can stand

8 You pronounce sentence on them from heaven; the earth

9 You stand up to punish the evil-doers and to defend the

10 Man’s futile wrath will bring You glory! **You** will use

glory !

us in the sleep of death; not one can lift a hand against us.

fell.

before an angry God?

trembles and stands silent before You;

meek of the earth.

it as an ornament! \* \* \* \* \*

11 Fulfill all your vows that you have made to Jehovah your

God. Let everyone bring Him presents. He should be reverenced

and feared,

**12** For He cuts down princes and does awesome things to

the kings **of** the earth.

**7. Intro., Chap. III., “Righteousness.”**

**8. Or “earth.”**

**9. Cp. 6:6 n.**

**10. “The word WRATH is in the plural, denoting either wrath of every**

**11. So Sep., implying a difference,** in **Heb. exemplar, of a single letter,**

**12. So O.G. (“cut off=take away”)** ; **and SO Br. (w. Sep., Vul., Jerome),**

**13. Cp. 38 n.**

**kind, or wrath in its intensity.”-Per.**

28

PSALM **76**

EXPOSITION

The reference of this psalm to the overthrow of Sennacherib

is so obvious as to explain the unanimity with which expositors

find in it that allusion, Doubtless there are some minor points

in the psalm which invite discussion, and as to which a difference

**of** final opinion may be expected. But these are of little moment

as compared with the remarkable statement regarding *the wrath*

of *wan* which occupies the 10th verse, as to which a perplexing

amount of diversity exists, This verse stands as follows in the

,

**A.V.** :-

Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee,

The remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

The assurance thus conveyed may be said to meet with general

devout acceptance, as is evident from the frequent acquiescent

use ‘of the words in public worship. The only difficulty they

present is that scholars are unable to find the word “restrain”

in the original of the second line, Accordingly, in the R.V., the

following innovation appears :-

The residue of wrath shalt thou gird upon thee ;

and with this rendering Dr., Per., Del., and others in the main

agree. But it is distinctly unacceptable, apparently far-fetched,

and gives rise to endless diversities when exposition is attempted.

Whose wrath does God gird about him, whether by way of ornament,

or for use? If his own, then why with only a “residue”?

to say nothing of the awkwardness of taking the wrath to be

human in one line and divine in the next. In short, there can be

little doubt that the Sep. has here preserved the true reading,

by the use of a word differing only by one letter from the M.T.

*(h-h-g-k)* instead of *(h-h-g-r) will keep festival to thee.* **A** renewed

study of the passage-giving to it a more literal turn

and bringing it into closer touch with the contexLbrings out

the force and beauty of this ancient variation, Note then **(1)**

that *mankind,* instead of “man” (for *a-dm)* in the first line,

widens the outlook, and prepares us to discover that it is the

excusable wrath of the down-trodden nations directed against

the down-treading world-power, represented by Assyria, which,

when Divine interposition effects deliverance, turns to give God

thanks-“thanks” itself being more literal than “praise”-willing

thanks rather than unwilling and merely enforced and constructive

praise. **(2)** That *keep festival* in line **2,** makes a good

**29**

I

.. .

STUDIES IN PSALMS

parallel with *thank* in line **1. (3)** That the *intense* ***wmth* of**

line **2** prepares for the strong verb *keep festival* which follows

it; so that the stronger motive power produces the stronger

result, implying that there are some among the lately downtrodden

nations ushose “wrath” was so intense khat mere “thanks”

will not serve for its outlet-it moves to nothing less than the

keeping of a *holy festiva2 of praise.* Nate **(4)** how strongly this

construction works out of the foregoing context and into the

succeeding: *Earth feared and was still when God arose to vindication*

(vers. **8,** 9)-so deep was its emotion, and so potent to **turn**

its wrath of resentment into thanksgiving for deliverance. Will

ye, then, *keep festival?* Then, mind ye *pay your* ***vows* (ver. 11).**

*All ye around him* (ibid)-ye smaller neighboring nationsp who,

having shared in Israel’s peril, now share in her deliverance, *bear*

*along,* in procession, *a g i f t to the Inspirer* **of** *fear,* even Israel’s

God who has just smitten the Assyrians. It is distinctly pleasant

thus to get a glimpse of *mankind* lying outside the dominant

world-power, sharing in Israel’s deliverance, and fulfilling a more

hopeful part than merely contributing unwitting and unwilling

praise to the God of all the earth. Moreover, the student **of**

unfulfilled prophecy will not fail to observe how, by exchanging

*earth* for *iand* in ver. 9, he obtains a most significant adumbration

of time yet to come when God will arise to the vindication **of**

the humble through all the earth.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION ’

1. The historical circumstances of this psalm is the destruction

of Sennacherib’s army in the reign of Hezekiah. Read

Isaiah, chapters **36** and **37.** Why is there such a unanimity

of opinion as to what incident is here described?

**2.** Refer again to the three psalms of **74, 75** and **76** and show

how they fit together.

**3.** The poet has so well described the destruction of Sennacherib’s

host-

“Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,

That host with their banners at sunset were seen :

Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,

That host on the morrow lay wither’d and strown.”

What encouragement is this to us?

**4.** Rotherham sees a real exegetical problem with verse **10-**

how is it solved? Does Taylor agree with him in the paraphrase?

Do you agree? Discuss.

**30**

PSALM **76** AND **77**

***6,*** When and where and how will God defend “the meek of

the earth”? (vs. 9)

PSALM **7 7**

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Comfort in Distress Obtained by the Study of a Song,

ANALYSIS

Stanza I,, vers. 1-3, Introductory-shewing, by quotation of Language

and Statement of Fact, that the Psalmist has been Inconsolable. Stanza II.,

***4-9,*** In like manner, the Psalmist pursues his Study, rising to an Intense

Spirit-Search (indented). Stanza III., vers. 10-15, **A** second study, conducting

to a Satisfying Conclusion (indented) : God is Holy, Incomparable, Redeeming.

Stanza IV., vers. 16-19, The “StringSong” itself, on which the “Study” has

been based (divisible into four sub-stanzas-tristichs) , Stmza V., ver. 20,

Conclusion: The Flock is under the Care of a Divine Shepherd (implied).

(Lm.) By Asaph-Psalm.

1 “With my voice unto God let me cry:

with my voice unto God, and he will give ear to me.”

**2** In my day of distress after Adonai I sought,

mine eye poured out and became not s1ack:l

my soul refused to be consoled :-

**3** “Let me remember God though I moan,

let me soliloquise though my spirit swoon.”

**4** I anticipated the night-watches with mine eyes,z

I was disturbed and could not speak:

***6*** I pondered on days out of aforetime:-

“The years of by-gone ages let me recall,-

**6** My string-song in the night is near my heart,-3

let me soliloquise that my spirit may make diligent search.4

**7** To the ages will Adonai reject?

and not again grant acceptance any more?

1. **As** in Lam. **3:49;** and **so** Dr. deems probable. **M.T.:** “my hand by night

**2.** So, nearly, Br. (w. Vul. and some cod, **of** Sep.),

**3.** Or: “mind”-so that I can easily recall it.

**4** N.B. : this “spirit-search” begins with the next line.

was outstretched, and grew not numb.”

**31**

8

**9**

10

**11**

**12**

**13**

**14**

**15**

**16**

**17**

**18**

**19**

STUDIES IN BSALMS

Hath his kindneds perpetually ceased ?

is speech ended to generation and generation?

Hath GOD forgotten to be gracious?

**or** shut up in anger his compassions?”

And I saidS--“Now have I made a beginning:-

this changing of the right-hand of the Most High!6

I will commemorate the doings of Yah,-

yea let me recall‘out of aforetime thy wonders ;?

And talk to myself of all thy works,

and of thy deeds let me soli1oquise:-

0 God! in holinessds thy way8

who is a great GOD like unto Elohim?

Thou art the GOD that did a wonderful thing,

thou madest known among the peoples thy might:

Tbou redeemedst with thine own arms thy people;

the sons of ’Jacob and Joseph.”lQWaters

saw theell 0 God!

waters saw thee they were in birth-throes,12

yea perturbed were the deeps.

Clouds poured down waters,

skies uttered a voice;

yea thine arrows flew hither and thither.

The voice of thy thunder was in the whirlwind,

thyls lightnings illumined the world, ’

perturbed and in commotion was the earth.

In the sea was thy way,14

and thy path16 in the mighty waters;

and thy footprints could not be known.

Wm.1

6. Renewing his “soliloquy.”

6. So after Sep. Other renderings: “This is my sickness”-“sorrow”-

7. So (pl.) (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.)-Gn.

8. Anticipating ver. 19 a.

**9.** So Sep. **M.T.:** I‘w, an arm.”

10. So far, appar., the “spirit-searching soliloquy.” Now comes the

“string-song”-confident, joyous: in tristichs which mark it off as ***a*** song in

itself. “The whole stanza [vers. **10-161** is an overture to the following hymn

of praise of God the Redeemer out of Egypt”-Del.

11. In the cloud, as thou camest up ***to*** the sea.

**12,** About to bring fbrth a nation of freed-men.

13. So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr., Vu1.)-Gn.

**14.** “In the sea thou didst tread with thy horses’)-Br., after Hab. **8:16.**

16. So to be ***read.*** Some cod. (w. **6** ear, pr. edns.) both write and read:

“cross.” Also : “The years of thy r-h,” instead of ‘khanging.”

“path” (Sing.)-Gn.

**52**

PS'ALM 77

Thou didst lead like a flock thy people,

by the hand of Mloses and Aaron.

PARAPHRASE

PSALM **77**

**20**

I cry 'to the Lord; 1 call and call on Him. Oh, that He

***2*** I am in deep trouble and I need His help so badly. All

There

**3** I think of God and moan, overwhelmed with longing for

**4** I cannot sleep until You act, I am too distressed even to

5 I keep thinking of the good old days of the past, long since

6 Then my nights were filled with joyous songs. I search

7 Has the Lord rejected me forever? Will He never again

8 Is His lovingkindness gone forever? Has His promise

9 Has He forgotten to be kind to. one so undeserving?

10 And I said: This is my fate, that the blessings of God

11 I recall the many miracles He did for me so long ago.

**12** Those wonderful deeds are constantly in my thoughts.

would listen.

night long I pray, lii'ting my hands to heaven, pleading,

can be no joy for me until He acts.

His help.

pray !

ended.

my soul and meditate upon the difference now.

be favorable?

failed?

Has He slammed the door in anger on His love?

have changed to hate.l

I cannot stop thinking about them,

as mighty **as** You?

demonstrate Your awesome power.

\* \* \* \* \*

**13** 0 God, Your ways are holy. Where is there any other

**14** You are the God of miracles and wonders? You still

''

***e \* \* \* \****

15 You have redeemed us who are the sons of Jacob and of

16 When the Red Sea saw You, how it feared! It trembled

17 The clouds poured down their rain, the thunder rolled

Joseph by Your might.

to its depths!

and crackled in the sky. Your lightning flashed.

1. Literally, "that the right hand of the Moat High has changed."

**33**

STUDIES IN PSALMS

up the world ! The earth trembled and shook..

no one knew was there.

sheep, with Moses and Aaron as their shepherds.

**18** There was thunder in the whirlwind; the lightning lighted

**19** Your road led by a pathway through the sea-a pathway

**20** You led Your people along that road like a flock of

EXPOSITION

This is emphatically a psalm of moods and tenses, so delicately

expressed in the Hebrew that only clumsily and by the aid

of quotation-marks can they be represented in English, and then

not without risk of overdoing. The key to the psalm lies in this:

That memories which ultimately yield consolation, when first

recalled aggravate present sorrow, *The right hand* of *the Most*

*High:* this is what, after *diligent search,* stays and consoles the

psalmist’s mind-a hand put forth with redeeming efficacy in

the doings that gave the nation birth. But the first apprehension

concerning it is, the contrast between its former activity

and its present supineness : a contrast so painful that the psalmist,

though resolved on the contemplation, anticipates that it will cause

him to *moan* in anguish, even to the extent of causing his spirit

to swoo’ybto be enshrouded in mental darkness, to be able to

think no more.

**A** day of anguish seems to have culminated in a night of

agony. The outspoken petitions with which his prayers had

been begun, not without hope of being heard, falter on his lips,

and he can no longer pray-he can conly *ponder;* but those apparently

long-lost *days Gulled out of a f o r e t h e* are his theme,

and he is determined, at whatever cost, to *recall* them. Fortunately,

there comes back to his mind a *string-song* of his,

embalming mem,ories of those ancient redeeming days. He does

not start *singing* that song forthwith. No! he is too gloomily

critical for that; but he will recall it-he will study it-he will

soliloquise on that as a text, talking aloud to himself as the manner

of study then was. He can at least ask questions-his *8pirit*

shall make *diligent search.* And then the questions follow. They

are so framed as to indicate that the psalmist’s mind is in process

of recovering its balance. The answer suggested, withsout being

expressed, is-“Surely not !” He cannot have *rejected* for ever!

His *kindness* cannot have *perpetually ceased!* He may have

changed his dealings ; but surely He himself remains unchanged !

En-

**34**

He takes breath. He feels he has made a *beginning.*

PSALM **77**

couraged, he follows it **up,** He looks in the face the conception

which like a spectre had projected itself besore him. *“Thnk*

changing of the right *hamd* of the Most High!” he seems to say,

“let me examine it more closelyI” And this he does, by thinking

of its *doings,* its wondevs, its **ZVOT~S,** its deeds. He is gortified

to think out these topics, because he already sees that a change

of dealings *by* God, does not necessitate the admission of ***a***

changed *God!* It is true (we may admit in passing) that the

Hebrew word sh’wth may be rendered by the word “years” as

well as by the word changing; but since the recalling of the

(‘yews of the right hand *of* the Most High” seems to bring

with it, as an undertone, the change made between those ancient

days of activity and the present days of inactivity, we may

continue to let our thoughs run con the thread of the Septuagint

rendering.

The study of the string-song is renewed

to such good effect, that, whereas the previous stanza culminated

in questions, this one rises to conclusions, confidently addressed

***to*** God himself, conclusions indicating a rest of spirit in them on

the part of the psalmist. The very first word set after the

Divine name in these conclusions is reassbring: 0 *Glod* in holiness

***is*** thy wuy-whether in manifest mercy or not. Again, it is

what God *is* which leads on to what he has done; and what he ***is***

remains for renewed manifestation. Mloreover, what was it that

God *did?* Was it not to reveal himself to the nations around,

and that, as redeeming for Himself a people-the people for

whom the present petitiloner is pleading? Clearly, this is logically

the conclusion of the s~oliloquy-of the study! It is all reflective

thus far. And it is a great gain to recognise this conclusiveness

here, inasmuch as the apparent abruptness of the formal conclusion

is thereby explained.

In fact, **the** four tristichs which now follow, so far from

being lout of place or a mere afterthought, are the very forethought

of the whole psalm: at least from the moment when

the faaouritedd string-song came up to the surface of the poet’s

memory. Happy is it for men in a storm, to recall the charm

of the still sunlit waters through which they have passed ; who

have something better than “dead selves’’ to help them to survive

the stress of present trouble. This psalmist Asaph had improved

an earlier and more auspicious time $or song-making and songsinging

and song-memorising; and now his song comes back to

him in his night of agony, and he knows it well enough to hold

**36**

To resume, then.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

it before his mind’s eye while he panders and reasons and questions

and summarises and cancludes. And then he gives the

string-song itself-altogether and compact, and af a sufficiently

peculiar formal structure, as-without the aid of quotation marks

or altered type, of which, of course, he was innocentto make

it recognisable by us after a long lapse of ages.

The *Song* speaks for itself, It is too boldly and elementally

poetical to need detailed comment. Only in its final triplet

(ver. 19) does it betray as much subjectivity as to amount to

a symbolical undertone, *I n the sea* was *thy* way-as how often

it is! *And thy path in the mighty* waters-too mighty for US

to conturol! ***And*** *thy footprints could nolt be* know-and *so* it

ever is, something withheld, something unknown. The work

remains : the Worker disappears, When-where-how will he

next reveal his right-hand! 0 Asaph! wait: wait until the

Assyrian draws nearer, and thou shalt see!

After the four triplets of the *string-song,* comes a couplet

--only-in conclusion. How little it says, and yet how **much:**

it seems to say everything needing to be added. Under the

Divine Shepherd’s care, it starts the flock on its journey to its

home. That flock is in itself a moving appeal to its Divine

Redeemer.

With respect to the origin of this psalm, it may be added:

That while, so far as direct evidence is concerned-‘% remains

obscure what kind of nati,onal affliction it is which impels him

[the singer] to betake himself in flight from the God wh’o is at

present hidden to the Gad who was made manifest in olden

times” (Del.) : yet the earlier period of the Assyrian invasion

prabably afforded more than one conjuncture during which

prophecy was silent, and it appeared to the strained hearts **of**

the faithful that *a n end* had come to prophetic *speech,* and *God*

*had forgotten to show favour.* It is certainly “shown by the

comfort sought in the revelations of power and grace made in

connection with the earlier history of his people,” that it was

“an affliction shared in common with the whole of the nation.”

The place of this psalm, and the indications afforded by several

of its companions, point in this direction.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

**1.** It is always a help to attempt to sunderstand the historical

circumstances of the psalm-what is it here?

**36**

PSALM **77 AND** 78

In the many prayers for help, do you feel the petitioner had

a specific type of help in mind? Was it physical or spiritual?

Where is this man's faith? Read verses **3** and **4.** Isn't this

an admission of defeat ?-Discuss,

Discuss the best use of past pleasant memories.

Should we ever think-feel-believe-that God has rejected

**us?** Discuss.

Under two or three circumstances we can almost expect a

negative, discouraged, exaggerated response. Name at least

**two** and discuss.

What possible miracles were in the mind of the psalmist?

The holiness of God is such a basic belief-why?

The deliverance from bondage is an oft recurring theme.

Should not this be also true of us? Discuss.

God leads through men. Read verse **20.** Is this true now?

Discuss.

**2,**

**3.**

**4.**

***5.***

**6,**

**7.**

**8.**

**9.**

***10,***

**PSALM** 7 8

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

**A** Didactic Poem, Counselling the Re-union **of** the Tribes.

ANALYSIS

Part 1.-THE PRELUDE

(1) An Invitation to Attend to a Series of Problems Drawn **from *An***tiquitp-

vers. 1, 2.

**(2)** An **Appeal** to the history-reciting instinct: sustained by the claim

that Jehovah's Might and Wonders are to be Seen in This History-vers. **3,**

***4.***

**( 3 )** Divine Authority pleaded for such Historical Recitations-ver. ***5.***

***( 4 )*** Their Utility for the purposes of Knowing, Believing, Observing

and Avoiding: Grave Ancestral Fadts Implied-vers. 6-8.

Part 11.-THE COMPLAINT

Specially lodged against Ephraim, first named with Honour, but charged

with Disappointing Expectation-with being Unfaithful, Disobedient, and

Forgetful-vers. 9-1 1.

Part 111.-SUGGESTIVE HISTORICAL REMINISCENCES

( 1) Divine Wonder-Working in Egypt: Deliverance-the **Exodus:** Guidance:

Provision of Water-vers. 12-16.

**37**

STUDIES IN **PSALMS**

(2) Sinful Doubts about Food, Provokingly Expressed-vers. 17-20.

(3) Divine Displeasure, yet Provision of Manna-vers. 21-25.

**(4)** Provision of Flesh, followed by Outburst of Divine Anger-vets.

(5) Further Sin brings Further Punishment, with Speedy but Superficial

***(6)*** Divine Compassion and Forbearance; followed by Peop

**(7)** Forgetfulness, writ large: concerning the Plagues of Egypt, and the

(8) The Home-bringin

**26-3** 1.

Reformation-vers. 32 -3 7.

causing Divine Pain-vers. 38-41.

Exodus (pxobably extracted fr

obedience in the form of Idolatry (? suggesting without naming the Ephraimites

as Chief-Offenders)-vas. 54-58.

(9) In Divine Anger, Israel is Largely Rejected, the Tent of Shiloh

Abandoned, the Ark Suffered to go into Captivity, and Priests and People

are Slain-vers. 59-64.

*Summary* of above details as suggesting “problems”: Time-from **Moses**

to the Judges; ***Pldce-Egypd,*** ‘ the desk, Canaan; ***Freedom*** of ***D i v i e Actio***alternations

of Anger, Punishment, Mercy, Deliverance.

Part IV.-CLOSING INDIRECT APPEALS

New Divine Activity as to Enemies-vers. ***65,*** 66; Tribe-vers. 67-68a;

Sanctuary-vers. 68b, 69; and King-vers. 70-72.

(Lm.) An Instructive Psalm-By Asaph.

**(PART**1. -THE PRELUDE)

**1** Oh give ear my people to mine instruction,l

incline pour ear to the sayings of my mouth :

**2** Let me open in a poem2 my mouth,

let me pour forth problems3 out of antiquity.

**3** What we have heard and come to know,

and our fathers have told us

**4** We will not hide from their sons,

to an after generation telling the praises of Jehovah,

both his might and his wondrous works which he wrought;

1. U.: “law.”

**2.** “After the manner of an epic. **The** individual historical statements

**3.** So Sep. c‘Riddles”-Del., Dr., Leeser. “Similitudes”-Carter. “Weighty

have **a** gnome-like finish, and a gem-like elegance”-Del.

lessons”-P **.B** ,

**38**

**PSALM 78**

So he raised up a testimony4 in Jacob,

and an instructionB set he in Israel ;

Which he commanded our fathers,

b make them known to their children.

**6** To the end an after generation might know,

children who should be born might raise up and tell their

**7** That they might set in Elohim their confidence,

and not forget the doings of El;

but his commandments might observe;

8 And not become like their fathers

a generation rebellious and insulting,6

a generation that set not aright it,s heart,

nor faithful with God was its spirit.

**(PART** 11.-THE COMPLAINT.)

9 The sons of Ephraim armed and shooting with the bow

turned in the day of battle:

10 Kept not the covenant of God,

and in his instruction refused to walk;

11 But forgat his doings,

and his wondrous works which he caused them to see.

(PART1 11.-HISTORICAL PARALLELS.)

**12** Before their fathers’ wrought he wonderfullys

in khe land of Egypt the country of Zoane:

**13** He clave open the sea and let them pass through

and reared up the waters as a mound;

**14** Anxled them with a cloud by day,

and all the night with a light of fire.

16 He used to cleave open rocks\*O in the desert,

and let them drink as of the deeps abundantly;

**16** And brought forth streams out of **a** cliff,

and caused waters to flow down like rivers,

***5***

children;

, ***4.*** Cp. **81:5, 122:4.**

I **6. U.:** ‘‘law.”

6. **Cp.** Deu. **21:20.**

**7. A** compliment to Ephraim.

8. Or: “he did wonders.”

9. “The district **of** which Zoan, ancient name for ***Tank*** was the capitai,

10. **Exo. 17:6.** Tense (cp. ver. **29)** and number (pl.) prob, a poetic

situated on the east bank **of** the Tanitic arm **of** the Nile”-Br.

generalisation.

**39**

STUDIES IN PSALMIS

Yet went they on still to sin against him,

to disobeyll the Most High in a thirsty land ;

And put GOD to the proof in their heart,

by asking food to their liking12

And they spake against God they said,-

“Will @?d bp able to lay ouit **a** table in a desert?

lo! he hath smitten a rock

and there have gushed out waters,

and torrents roll along,-

Bread also will he be-able to give

or provide flesh fur his people?”

and a fireza was

yea even anger mounted up against Israel :

Because they believed not in God,

nor trusted in his salvation.

Yet commanded he the skies above,

and the **doors** of the heavens he opened;

And rained on them manna ta eat,

**and** the grain of the heavens gave **he** unto them;

And the bread of the mightyz4 did they eat every one,

a supply of,foodlS sent he them to th

He put forthlS an east-wind in the heavens,

and drave onla by his might a south-wind;

And rained on them flesh like dust,

and like the sand of the sea winged fowl ;

Which he let fall in the midst of his camp,

round about his habitations;

***So*** they did eat and were filled to abundance,

since their desire he would bring to them:17

They were not estranged from their desire,

yet was their food in their mouth

.

Therefore Jehov nt,

**17**

**18**

**19**

**20**

**21**

**22**

**23**

**24**

**26**

**26**

**27**

**28**

**29**

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11. “Def y”-Dr.

12. Dr.: “appetite.” U.: “soul.” Cp. Intro., Chap. III., “Sou1.”

13. Cp. Num. 1l:lff.

**14. *“Angels’ food*** (Sep., Vul., Syr.) is probably a right paraphrase of

the words ***the*** bread ***of the mighty,*** though the term is nowhere applied to

the angels. But cp. 103:20”-Kp.

16. Cp. Exo. 12:39.

16. As though the elements were flocks under Divine direction.

17. Or: “he brought to them.” But, strictly, the Heb. verb is **so** used here

**as** to denote either ***yepetition*** or ***modality,*** that is, to express the feeling of

those concerned; as if to imply that the expected the supply of quails would

be repeated.

**40**

PSALM **78**

When the anger of God mounted up against them

,and he slew of their vigorous ones,

yea the young men of Israel bowed he down,

For all this they sinned still,

and did not believe in his wondrous works :

So he ended with a breath their days,

and their years in dismay.18

If he slew them then they inquired after him,

yea they turned and early sought GOD;

And remembered that Elohim was their Rock,

yea El Most High their Redeemer :

So they spake him fair with their mouth,

and with their tongue were ready to lie unto him;le

But their heart was not steadfast with him,

nor were they trusty in his covenant.

But he *full of* co’llzpassionzo

wouldz1 cover2z iniquity and not destroy;

Yea mqny ***a*** time turned he back his anger,

and would not stir up all his wrath ;

But remembered that flesh they were,

breath””. departing which could not return.

How often used they to disobeyz4 him in the desert,

to grieve him in the wilderness!

Yea they again put GOD to the proof,

and to the Holy One of Israel caused painaZ6

They remembered not his hand,

the day when he ransomed them from the adversary:

When he set forth in Egypt his signs,

and his wonders in the country of Zoan **:-zs**

When he turned into blood their Nile-streams,

and their own rivers could they not drink:

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**18.** So **Dr. “Made to haste away in suddenness”-Br. “in sudden haste”**

**19. See note on ver. 29.**

**20. Cp. Exo. 34:6, 7.**

**21. Again see note on ver. 29. Driver and others prefer to regard the**

**verb as expressing a standing truth: “cancelleth.” The context, however,**

**rather favours conception of** *habit at* **that *period.***

**22. *See* 66:3 (note).**

**23. Or: “wind.”**

**24. “Defy”-Dr.**

**26. *So* O.G., w. Sep. A.V.: “limited.” Tregelles (in T.G.): *“to set marks***

**26. Cp. ver. 12.**

**-Del. Cp. Num. 14.**

**or** *limits* **gives a good sense in the passage.’’ Thrupp** : **“crossed.”**

**41**

STUDIES IN **PSALXS**

He would send2‘ among them the gad-fly and it devoured

and the frog and it despoiled them;

And he gave to the corn-locust their produce,

and their toil to the swarming-locust:

He would killz7 with hail their vine,

and their sycamores with frost.

And delivered up to hailstones their beasts,

and their cattle to pointed flames :

He would send among them the glow of his anger,-

wrath and indignation and distress,

a mission of messengers of misfortune !

He would level a path for his anger,

withheld not from death their soul,

but their life to the pestilence delivered;

And smote every first-born in Egypt,

the beginning of their strength in the tents of Ham.

And he put forthz8 like sheep his own people,

and led them on like a flock in the desert;

Yea he guided them securely and they dreaded not,

and their enemies the sea covered.

So he brought them into his own holy bounds,

the mountain-range which his right-hand acquired;

And drave out from before them nations,

and allotted them by line an inheritance,

and caused to dwell in their homesz9 the tribes of Israel.

But they put to the proof and disobeyed30 God Most High,

and his testimonies did not observe;

But drew back and proved treacherous like their fathers,

they turned aside like a deceitful bow;

And provoked him to anger with their high-places,

and with their images used to move him to jealousy.a1

God heard and was indignant,

and largelya2 rejected Israel;

And abandoned the habitation of Shiloh,

the tent he had set up among men;

them,

**27. See note on ver. 29.**

**28. “Moved forth by stages”-Dr.**

**29. Ml.: “tents.”**

**30. “Defied”-Dr.**

**31. Cp. note on ver. 29.**

**32, M1.** : “with **muchness,” gen. d‘greatly.”**

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PSALM 78

**And** gave to captivity his

yea his glorys4 into the hand of the foe;

And delivered up to the sword his people,

and with his own inheritance was indignant:

**A** fire devoured his young men,

and his virgins were not praised in song:

His priests by the sword did fall,

and his widows not bewail.

Then awoke as one sleeping the Sovereign Lord,

***m*** a hero that shouteth from wine;

And smote his adversaries behind,s6

the reproach of ages laid on them ;

But rejected the tent of Joseph,

and of the tribe of Ephraim made not choice;

But chose the tribe of Judah,

the mountain of Zion which he loved;

And built like the heights his sanctuary,

insT the earth founded it to the ages :-

And made choice of D‘a;Sid his servant,

and took him from the folds OP the sheep ;

From after suckling ewes brought him in,

to be shepherd over Jacob his people,

and over Israel his inheritance;

And he tended them according to the blamelessnessss of his

and with the discernment of his hands he guided them,

( Nm. )

(PART1V .-CLOSINiG INDIRECT APPEALS.)

heart,

**61**

**62**

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PARAPHRASE

PSALM **78**

0 my people, listen to my teaching. Open your ears to what

I **am** saying.

33. Cp. 132:8.

34. Or: “beauty.” Cp. 89:17, 96:6.

35. Cp. note on ver. 29.

36. “Backward”-Dr. ‘(God smote the Philistines most literally ***in posteriora***

(LXX., Vulg., Luther), Still ver. 66 embraces all the victories gained

by Israel in the time **of** Samuel, Saul and David, from I Sam, **5** onwards and

still later”-Del.

37. So some cod, (w. 2 ear. pr. adns., Sep., Syr., Vu1.)-Gn. **M.T.: “Like.”**

38. Or : “devotion.” “singleness,” (ml.) ‘Lwholeqess.”

**4.8**

STUDIES IN **PSALMS**

**2, 3** For **I** will show you lessons from **our** history, stories

handed down to us from former generations.

**4** I will reveal these truths to you so that you can describe

these glorious deeds of Jehovah to your children, and tell them

about the mighty miracles He did.

***5*** For He gave His laws to Israel, and commanded our

fathers to teach them to their children.

***6 So*** that they in turn could teach their children too. Thus

His laws pass down from generation to generation.

**7** In this way each generation has been able to obey His

laws and to set its hope anew on God and not forget His glorious

miracles.

8 Thus they did not need to be as their fathers werestubborn,

rebellious, unfaithful, refusing to give their hearts

to God.

9 The people of Ephraim, though fully armed, were defeated

in battle.

10 Because they didn’t obey His laws. They refused fo

follow His ways.

**11, 12** And they forgot about the wonderful miracles God

had done for them, and for their fathers back in Egypt.

**13** For He divided the sea before them and led them through!

The water stood banked up along both sides of %em!

**14** In the daytime He led them by a **cloud,** and at night

by a pillar of fire.

**16** He split open the rocks in the wilderness to give them

plenty of water, as though gushing from a spring.

**16** Streams poured from the r&ck, flowing like a river!

**17 Yet** they kept on with their rebellion, sinning against

**God** who is above all gods.

**18** They murmured and complained, demanding other food

than God was giving them.

**19, 20** They even spoke against God Himself. “Why can’t

He give us decent food as well **as** water?” they grumbled.

**21** Jehovah heard them and was angry; the fire of His

wrath burned against Israel,

**22** Because they didn’t believe in God **or** trust in Him to

care for them.

**23** Even though He commanded the skies to open-He opened

the windows of heaven-

**24** And rained down manna for their food. He gave them

bread from heaven !

I

**44**

PSALM 78

**26** They ate angels food! He gave them all thsat they

**26** And He led forth the east wind and guided the south

**27** He rained down birds as thick as dust, clouds of them

**28** He caused the birds to fall to the ground among the tents!

**29** The people ate their fill, He gave them what they asked

€or.

**30** But they had hardly finished eating, and the meat was

yet in their mouths,

**31** When the anger of the Lord rose against them and killed

the finest of Israel’s young men.

**32** Yet even so the people kept on sinning and refused to

believe in miracles.

**33** So He cut their lives short and gave them years **of**

terror and disaster.

**34** Then at last, ,when He had ruined them, they walked

awhile behind Him; how earnestly they turned around and

followed **Him!**

**35** Then they remembered that God was their Rock-that

their Savior was the God above all gods.

**36** But it was only with their words they followed Him,

not with their hearts;

**37** Their hearts were far away. They did not keep their

promises.

**38** Yet He was merciful and forgave their sins and didn’t

destroy them all. Many and many a time He held back His

anger.

**39** For He remembered that they were merely mortal **men,**

gone in a mtoment like a breath of wind.

**40** Oh, how often they rebelled against Him in those desert

years and grieved His heart.

**41** Again and again they turned away and tempted God to

kill them, and limited the Holy One of Israel from giving them

His blessings.

**42** They forgot His power and love, and how He had rescued

them from their enemies;

**43** They forgot the plagues He sent upon the Egyptians

in Tank1-

could hold.

wind by His mighty power.

like sands along the shore!

**1. Literally,** “the **plains** of **Zoan.”**

**45**

STUDIES **IN PSALMS**

**44** How He turned their rivers inbo blood, so that no **one**

could drink;

**45** And how He sent vast swarms of flies to fill the land,

and how the frogs had covered all **of** Egypt!

**46** He gave their crops to caterpillars. Their harvest ***wm***

consumed by locusts.

**47** He destroyed their grapevines and their sycamores with

hail,

**48** Their cattle died in the fields, mortally wounded **by** iceballs

from heaven.

**49** He loosed on them the fierceness of His anger, sending

sorrow and trouble. He dispatched against them a band of

destroying angels.

**50** He gave free course to His anger and,

Egyptians’ lives, but handed them over to pla

**51** Then He killed the eldest son2 in each

he who was the beginning of its strength and joy.

**52** But He led for

them safely through the

’ **53** He kept them safe, so they were not afraid.

Sea closed in upon their enemies and overwhelmed them.

**54** He brought

to this land of hills He

Their sheep were killed by lightning.

**1**

His own people like a flock,.guiding

But the

***e*** border of His land of blessing,

cupying the land, and’ gave

against the God above all gods, and refused to flollow His commands.

**57** They turned back from entering the Promised Land and

disobeyed as their fathers had. Like a crooked arrow, they

missed the target of God’s will.

**58** They made Him angry by erecting idols and altars to

other gods.

**59** When God saw their deeds, His wrath was strong and

He despised His people.

**60** Then He abandoned His tabernacle at Shiloh, where He

had lived among mankind,

**61** And allowed His ark to be captured; He surrendered

His glory into enemy hands.

**62** He caused His people to be butchered because His anger

was intense.

**2. Literally, “all** the **first-born.”**

**46**

PSALM 78

**63** Their young men were killed by fire and their girls died

**64** The priests were slaughtered and their widows died

**66** Then the Lord rose up as though awakening from sleep,

**66** He routed His enemies and drove them back and sent

67 But He rejected Joseph's family, the tribe of Ephraim,

68 And chlose the tribe of Judah-and Mount Zion which

He loved.

**69** There He built His towering temple, solid and enduring

as the heavens and the earth.

**70** He chose His servant David, taking him from feeding

sheep,

71, 72 And from following the ewes and lambs; God presented

David to His people as their shepherd and he cared for

them with **a** true heart and skillful hands.

before they were old enough to sing their wedding songs.

before they could even begin their lament.

and like a mighty man aroused by wine

them to eternal shame.

EXPOSITION

To judge aright of the design ,of this psalm, it is important to

notice both what it includes and what it omits; as well as to

observe the special adaptation of its several parts to Secure its

main purpose, The psalm was most probably composed to promote

the efforts of the Good King Hezelriah to secure the reunion

of the Twelve Tribes. As Thrupp has well said, the king himself

sought to bring the Northerners to worship at Jerusalem,

modestly saying nothing of himself as their rightful monarch

**(2** Ch. **30:6, 9).** The psalmist goes further: claiming not only

the Divine preference of Judah over Ephraim (the leading tribe

of the north), and 'of Jerusalem over Shiloh (the first restingplace

of the ark) ; but of David as the appointed Shepherd-King

over all Israel.

It is observable that, though the psalmist goes back to the

time of Moses, he comes no further forward than to the time of

the Judges: an excellent stroke of policy, since the pericod thus

spanned was abuqdantly sufficient to afford the historical parallels

of which he desired to make use, while he could nevertheless

avoid irritating references to later events, of which the Northerners

had no need to be reminded. Again, the omission of

Saul and Solomon on either side of David-to whom so much

prominence is given at the close of the psalm-justifies itself

**47**

STUDIjES IN PSALMS

in each case as a wise omission: .of Saul, because the kingship

was taken from him and his heirs, and because the opposition

which had for a time lingered in the tribe of Benjamin (the

tribe of Saul) against the Davidic Royalty had now died away;

and of Solomon, because any allusion to him might have revived

inconvenient memories of those oppressions of his which clearly

paved the way for the great disruption. It was enough, for

the end in view, to set David high on the pedestal of Divine approval

and appointment: all hearers of the psalm could in a

moment pass from David to David’s loyal and worthy son,

Hezekiah-and that was enough. But though Solomon is not

named, yet the Temple he built is brought into prominence: thus

supporting the invitation to renewed wou’ship ther

so magnificent and to all appearance so abiding. ’

Then if we pass on to nlotice the manner in which the

assumed design of the psalm is sought to be obtained, we shall

be able to detect many tokens of exquisite adaptation. Not only is

there, in the psalm, all the winsomeness of poetic form and

beauty; but a skilful appeal is at once made ***$0*** the patriotic

sentiment which loves to hear the story of one’s ancestors,

especially as entwined around the formation of a unique nationality;

which appeal is made the more telling when the poet avows

that he is about to bring forth from the venerated past ***problems***

of present-day application.

It is true that the psalmist’s serious purpose compels him to

lodge a grave complaint against one of the most powerful of the

Northern Tribes-that of *Ephraim;* but both the way in which

he leads up to this complaint and the terms in which he **ex**presses

it, are well fitted to secure for it attention. He breathes

not a word against any single tribe, until he has first made

against the nation’s ancestors as a body an indictment expressed

in the startling terms in which parents were authorized by

Moses to bring their refractory sons as ***rebellious*** *and* ***insulting***

before the elders of their city for condign punishment in the

event of continued obstinacy. Then, although he does level his

charge against the tribe of *Ephraim* thus early in the psalm

(vers. g-ll),-without which specification it is not easy to see

how he could have quickened the apprehensidn of the Ephraimites

to see their own likeness in the mirror which he **was**

about to hold up to their gaze,-yet it is not difficult to detect

in his allusion to their proficiency with the ***bow,*** a compliment,

and a reminiscence ***0%*** their father Joseph which were not likely

**48**

PSALM 78

to be lost upon them (Gen. **49:23, 24).** If their *bow* was no

longer “abiding in strength,” was that not due to m’oral defection?

If they had *turned in the* day *of babtle* (which, in

the absence of specification, one may perhaps refer broadly to bhe

day of entrance into the land under Joshua, followed by sin’ful

compromise with idolatry), were they not the more chargeable

with blame by reason of their high national aspirations?

There is no need here **210** dwell in detail on the historical

reminiscences to which attention has been called by our “\Analysis.”

The one obvious thing to do, if we would use the “mirror”

of history to profit, or at least perceive how the NoAherners

might be expected so to use it,-is to go back to the “prelude”

and fetch up therefrom the significant term *problems* (ver. **2)**

as applied to the history here in Part 111. recited. In what way

does this application ,of ‘the word *problems* to the history furnish

a suitable appeal to the Ten Tribes? This has already been

suggested ‘by the aforesaid Analysis. High above the limitations

of “Time” and “Place” there sufficiently alluded to, stands the

great question of the “Freedom of Divine Action.” Let us

assume-as we reasonably may-that, at the time this psalm is

ciomposed and sent forth on its mission, the North has been overrun

by Assyria, and that Samaria is already in siege, or if we

would make the picture still blfacker, that that city has alrelady

capitulated,-how and where do the *problems* find application?

Look back over those historical details with this especial feature

in view: How did God *act* in those sinful and perilons times of

old? and note especially this: That the Divine action is various:

always doubtless holy, always right; yet, in its springs, gar above,

out of our sight; in its activities and modificatilons, many a time

taking us by surprise, Sometimes he is angry, ,and yet grants the

blessing; sometimes his rising displeasure is checked-he will

not *stir up all his wrath;* sometimes, pent-up wrath suddenly

breaks forth as if to bring up arrears of displeasure, and make a

clean sweep of the rebels whose insults can no longer be endured.

Behind all these adjustments and adlaptations, lies the great

primal fact of Divine Redemption out of Egypt; and high above

all is descried the Divine fountain-head of *compassion* and the

Divine remembrance of human frailty. This, God never forgets.

So that, as applied to Ephraim, the lesson briefly is this: It is

yet *problemtical* how Jehovah may deal with you: he may smite

and yet spare; may carry away and yet bring back. Do not

*despair:* Jehovah of old brought out of Egypt; and even now he

**49**

STUDIES IN PSALMS

can deliver from Assyria. Do not ***presume:*** beware of pent-up

wrath; do not provoke once too often. Humble yourselves **AND**

**RETURN (2** Ch. **30:6,** 9). And, in your thoughts of return,

forget not, that some forfeited honours may never be restored,

some past provisions may never be renewed, Your leadership

in Israel has been forfeited for ever, Shiloh has been abjandoned

for ever. You have lost the ark, and to you it may never return.

The Shepherd of Israel may be now leading his flock to fresh

pastures.” But this brings us up to Part IV., on which a few

words will suffice.

If we wisely avoid resenting the ,anthropomorphism which

likens Jehovah to a waking her’o, and honestly endeavour to

enter into the spirit of the teaching thereby conveyed, we shall

not fail to perceive the new tone which now makes itself manifest.

We have done with ***problems,*** so far as the poetic development

lof them is concerned; and are now brought face to face

with Facts-facts calculated to urge on **a** settlement of the great

practical problem of the then immediate future: *to* ***return*** *or not*

***to retwmz.*** It was time that the old enemies, ‘the Philistines, were

decisively dealt with; and so ***reproach*** was cast upon them when

they were ignominiously smitten before the very ark they had

taken captive; and later on (as we may supply) when they were

finally subjugated at the hands of a shepherd stripling that

***reproach*** has been made notorious and ***age-abiding.*** But it was

also time that the historic claims of Joseph and his son Ephraim

were disposed of for ever by the choice of Judah, by the erection

of the temple in Jerusalem, and by the selection of David as

King for all Israel; and so ‘the psalm comes to a powerful conciusion.

It was left to silence, and other psalms, and other

agencies, to do the rest.

**1.**

**2.**

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Graham Scroggie has well observed: “Some think it’ was

written in David’s reign, or early in Solomon’s, because the

record does not go further than David **(70-72).** Others

think it was written after the disruption of the Tribes, because

of the references to Ephraim and Shiloh. (9, **67,** 60).

Others, again, place the Psalm in the time of Hezekiah and

Isaiah”. What is Rotherham’s preference? Why? **How**

supported?

Why not go any further forward in the history than the

time of the Judges?

**50**

PSALM 78 AND **79**

**3.** Why is Saul and Solomon omitted?

**4.** How is “patriotic sentiment” appealed to? For what

purpose?

***5,*** Ephraim is both rebuked and complimented at the same

time-explain.

6. This psalm teaches “that the action of God is conditioned

on the conduct of men; that the divine promises were not,

and are not, inalienable gifts to either Israel or the church,

but that His blessings are granted to those who willingly

cooperate with God in His moral government of the world”.

(Scroggie)

**7.** Notice the words describing Israel’s reaction bo God’s law:

(1) stubborn, (2) rebellious, **(3)** forgetful, **(4)** not steadfast,

(5) rebelled, **(6)** tempted, **(7)** spoke against. Give

the seven responses of God to these seven attitudes of Israel.

8. Discuss this provocative thought: “There is an immorality

of forgetfulness”.

Give examples of this truth and discuss.

PSALM **7 9**

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Invasion, Desecration, Demolition, Massacre and Derision call

florth Lamentation, Ewostulation, Petition and Pleading; and

the Hope of Deliverance evokes a Promise of Perpetual Praise.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-4, Lamentation; Stanza II., vers. 5-8, Expostulation and

Perition; Stanza IIL, vers. 9-12, Pleading; Stanza IV., -vet-. 13, Promise of

Perpetual Fraise.

(Lm.) Psalm-By Asaph.

**1** 0 God! nations1 have entered into thine inheritance,

have made unclean thy holy temple;2

have made Jerusalem heaps of ruins **:s**

**2** have given the dead bodies of thy servants4 as food to the

bird of the heavens,

1. Or: “Gentiles.”

**2. Cp. 74:4-8, Lam. 1:lO.**

**3.** Mi. **3:12,** Jer. **26:18.**

**4.** Deu. **28:26,** Jer. **7:33, 16:4, 19:7, 34:20.**

**61**

**3**

**4**

***5***

**..6**

**7**

**8**

**9**

**10**

**11**

STUDIES IN **PSALM’S**

the flesh of thy men of kindness5 to the wild beast of the

have poured out their blood like water

round about Jerusalem with none to bury.s

We have become a reproach to our neighbors,

a mockery and derision to them who are round about US.^

How long Jehovah wilt thou be angry utterly?

how long shall thy jealousy burn like fire?

Pour out thy wrath Ion the nations that have not **known** thee,

and on the kingdoms which on thy name have not, called;8

For they have9 devoured Eacob,

and his homesteadlo have laid waste.

Dmo not remember against us the iniquity of former times!ll

haste thee! let thine acts \of compassion come to meet us;

for we have been brought very low.

Help us 0 God of ‘our salvation, on account of the honouP

and rescue us and put a propitiatory covering overlS our sins,

Why should the nations14 say-“Where is their God?”

let the avenging of the blood of thy servants which hath been

be made known among the nations before our eyes.I6

**Let** the groaning of the prisoner come in before thee,

earth ;

of thy name

for the sake of thy name.

poured out

**5.** Heb. *hasidirh.* “In the age of the Macabees **(B.C. 168** and following

years) the term was adopted as the title of the patriotic party in Israel,

who were faithful to the national religion, and resisted the attempts that

were made to overthrow it-see **1** Macc. **2:12, 7:13, 2** Macc. **14:6** (where

*‘Hasidaeans’* is the Heb. *hasidim,* the plural of this word. It is possible that

‘godly’ is already used in this sense in Ps. **149:1, 5, 9,** if not in **116:18** as

welP-Dr.

**6.** Jer. **14:16, 16:4.**

7. Ps. **44:13, 137:7.**

**8.** Cp. Jer. **10:25.‘**

9. M.T. ml. : “he hath.” But some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., **Syr.,** Vul.) :

“they have.” Cp. Jer. **10:26--Gn.**

**10.** So Dr.; “cp. Jer. **10:26.”**

**11.** So **O.G.** But Dr.: “(our) forefathers.”

**12.** Or: “glory.”

**13.** (Simply) “cover”-Per. ; “expiate”-Del. ; “pardon”-Carter ; “atone

**14.** Or: “the Gentiles,” cp. ver. **1.**

**15.** Deu. **32:43.**

for’-Leeser ; “purge away”-Kp. ; “cancel”-Dr., cp. **66 :3** (fiote) ,

**53**

PSALM 79

according to the greatness of thine arm set thou freelo the

**12** And return to our neighbors-sevenfold into their bosomtheir

reprolach wherewith they have reproached thee

13 So we, thy people and the flock of thy shepherdinP

will give thankslD unto thee to the ages,

to generation after generation will tell of thy praise.

(Lm.) To the Chief Musician.

(CMm.) For “Lilies of Testimony”’=the Feast of Weeks.

sons of deathel’

Sovereign Lord !

PARAPHRASE

PSALM **79**

0 (God, Your land has been conquered by the heathen nations.

Your Temple is defiled and Jerusalem is **a** heap of ruins.

**2** The bodies ‘of Your people lie exposed-food for birds and

animals.

**3** The enemy has butchered the entire population of Jerusalem;

blood has flowed like water; no one is left even to bury

them.

**4** The nations all around us scoff. They heap contempt on

5 0 Jehovah, how long will You be angry with us? Forever?

Will Your jealousy burn till every hope is gone?

**6** Pour out Your wrath upon the godless nations, not on

us! And on kingdoms that refuse to pray, that will not call

upon Your name!

**7** For they have destroyed Your people Israel, invading

every home,

8 Oh, do not hmold us guilty for our former sins! Let Your

tenderhearted mercies meet our needs, for we are brought low

to the dust.

9 Help us, God of our salvation! Help us for the honor

of Your name! Oh, save us and forgive our sins.

10 Why should the heathen nations be allowed to scoff,

us.

**16.** So **it shd. be (w. Aram., Syr.). Cp.** 106:20, **146:7.-Gn. M.T.: “leave**

17. **Cp. 102:20 (2** Sam. 12:6).

**18. As in 74:1; cp. 77:20, 78:62, 70.** “The **favourite Asaphic way of look-**

**19. Cp. 6:6n.**

remaining.” **“Reprieve”-Dr.**

ing **at Israel as a ilocIP-Del.**

**63**

STUDIES IN PSALMS

“Where is their God?” Publicly avenge this slaughter **of** Your

people !

**11** Llsten to the sighing of the prisoners and those condemned

to die. Demonstrate the greatness of Your power by

saving them.

**12** 0 Lord, take sevenfold vengeance on these nations scorning

You.

**13** Then we Your people the sheep of Your pasture, will

thank You forever and forever, praising Your greatness from

generation to generation.

EXPOSITION

If this psalm now appears as it was first composed, its date

must be assigned to the time of the Maccabees; since the time

of the Chaldean invasion under Nebuchadnezzar does not suit all

its leading features, whereas the persecutions and profanations

of Antiochus Epiphanes, against which the Maccabean resistance

was directed, serve to supply in counterpart the finishing-touches

to this picture of Israel’s troubles. Such a late time of origin

does, indeed, leave limttle space for translation into the Septuagint;

but, as the date usually assigned to the execution **of** thiis

Greek Bible does not necessarily apply to all the sacred books,

and some of them, including the Psalms, may well have been

added at a somewhat later time, candour must admit the practical

possibility of a Maccabean origin of this psalm consistently with

its appearance, in the Septuagint where it now stands, in close

conformity with its Hebrew original. The alternative theorythat

it was originally composed soon after the Chaldean invasion

and subsequently freely adapted to the later time-is not wildly

improbalble, as the known free action of the Sopherim on the

Sacred Text sufficiently shews; but, on the other hand, the unity

and symmetry of the psalm as we have it, make strongly for one

spirit working at one time in its production. In either case, an

extract or two from the first bmook of Maccabees will be acceptable

to the general reader. “And there came forth out of [‘them

the servants of Alexander the Great, who bare rule in hi,s place’]

a sinful root, Antiochus Epiphanes, son of Antiochus the king,

who had been a hostage in Rome, and he reigned in the hundred

and thirty and seventh year of the kingdom of [the Greeks,

*ciroa* B.C. **1761** . . . And Antiochus, after that he had smitten

Egypt, returned in the hundred and forty and third year ***[circa***

**B.c. 1701** and went up against Israel and Jerusalem with **a** great

**54**

PSALM **79**

multitude, and entered presumptuously into the sanctuary, and

took the golden altar, and the candlestick of the light, and **all**

that pertained thereto, and the table of the shew-bread, and the

cups to pour withal, and ‘the bowls, and the golden censers, and

the veil, and the crowns, and the adorning of gold which was on

the face of the temple, and he scaled it all off. And he took

the silver and the gold and the precious vessels; and he took the

hidden treasures which he found. And when he had taken all,

he went away into his own land, and he made a great slaughter

and spake very presumptuously , , , And the land was moved for

the inhabitants thereof, and all the house of Jacob was clothed

with shame . , . And after two full years the king sent a chief

collector of tribute unto the cities of Judah, and he came unto

Jerusalem with a great multitude. And he spake words of peace

unto $hem in subtilty, and they gave him credence; and he fell

upon the city suddenly, and smote it very sore, and destroyed

much people out of Israel, And he took the spoils of the city,

and set it on fire, and pulled down the houses thereof and the

walls thereof on every side , . . And they shed innocent blood on

every side of the sanctuary, and defiled the sanctuary. And the

inhabitants of Jerusalem fled because of them . . . And on the

fifteenth day of Chislev, in the hundred and forty and fiifth year

**[circa** B.C. 1681, they builded an abomination of desolation upon

the altar, and in the cities of Judah on every side they builded

idol altars. And at the doors of the houses and in the streets

they burnt incense. And they rent in pieces the books of the

law which they found, and set them on fire . , , On the five

and twentieth day of the month they sacrificed on the idol altar,

which was upon the altar of God” (1 Mac, l : l O , **20-24,** 29-31,

**37, 38,** 54-56) . . . “And Jerusalem was without inhabitant as

a wilderness, there was none of her offspring that went in or

went lout; and the sanctuary was trodden down, and the sons

of strangers were in the citadel, the Gentiles lodged therein;

and joy was taken away from Jacob, and the pipe and the harp

ceased” **(3 :45).**

The structure of the psalm, according to Del., followed

above, is interesting; as revealing three stanzas of nine lines each,

closed by a stimple tristich.

The course of thought running through the whole is natural

and easy to follow.

The first stanza is filled with lamentation, which takes the

obvious course of describing, step by step, Israel’s deep humilis-

**55**

STUDIES IN PSALMS

tion; the invasion of the *lan* e defiling of the temple, the

demolition of city, the massac inhabitants-especially of the

godly, the contemptuous treatment of the ***slaia,*** the disregard of

the heavy responsi’bility of shedding ***blood,*** This last might

have seemed the fitting climax; but, as in Ps. **40** there was to

be added “Many shall see, &c.” though in a totally different

strain to thcat found here; so here there fell to be added a

couplet describing the effect of Jerusalem’s humiliation upon the

onlooking neighbouring nationalities, as to the renewed reference

to whom in ver. **12,** Delitzsch well says: “That the prayer comes

back in ver. 12 to the neighboring peoples, is explained by the

fact that these, seeing they might the soonest have attained to

the knowledge of the God of Israel as the one true and living

God, bear the greatest guilt on account of their reviling of Him.”

Naturally, a stanza follows, taken up with expostulation

*(How* long? ver. ***5 ) ,*** and petitions (Pour out-Do *not* remember

-Haste Chee, vers. ***6-8),*** sustained, no doubt, by recusom, expressed

and implied; 3 among which may be singled out the prayer

against heathen nations, for the purpose of interposing the

caution to be careful not to exaggerate these imprecations, seeing

that the simplicity of poetically expressed Eastern thought

clearly allows us to understand “positives as amounting to ***Corn***pwatives:

“If thy wrath must be outpoured, let it be rather on

the nations,” &e.

followed by yet more urgent pleadings; which may usefully

remind us how much of this element is to be found in the prayers

of the faithful throughout the Holy Scriptures; as witness,

especially, the prayers of Abraham (Gen. 18), (Daniel 9) and

the writer of Ps. 119; and though, at first sight, it might appear

to have been discountenanced .by our Lord (Mt. **6:7-13),** yet

both his own teaching (Lu. **llS, 18:l)** and example (Jn. 17,

**Mk. 14:22-39)** caution us to bear in mind that all repetition

need not be “vain.” Indeed it may safely be said: That he who

has not learned to plead in prayer, has not yet learned **to** pray

at all-especially by way of intercession **(1** Tim. **2:l-8).** It will

not be lost labour, if the devout reader look through this third

stanza afresh, in order to note in how many directions there is

an outgoing of sympathy to his suffering brethren, on the part

**of** the psalmist, prompting to a holy boldness in drawing near

to his **God.**

**56**

But these reasoned petitions, are, in the thi

PSALM **79 AND** 80

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Dso you accept the late date for the composition of this

psalm-Le., during the period o l the Maccabees?

**2.** We *must* associate this psalm with a desecration and destruction

of the Temple-which one? Discuss the reasons

for your choice.

**3.** War has not changed. We could use the description given

here bo describe a thousand wars. Who has won by wars?

**4.** The writer of the psalm feels that jealousy is the cause for

the calamity. Discuss.

***6.*** Are we t.0 assume that God acts on nations-tribes and

families as well as individuals? i.e. the sins of nationstribes

**and** families accumulate over a period of time until

God brings punishment? If not this, what?

**6.** The personal pronoun appears very prominently: (a) *your*

land, (b) *your* Temple, (c) *your* people, (d) *your* namewhy?

Did it help?

**7.** There is both strength and weakness in the promises of

the afflicted. Discuss.

PSALM 8 0

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Prayer for the Flock and Vine of Israel.

ANALYSIS

Sranza I., vers. 1-3, By Three Significant Titles, Jehovah is besought to

interpose for Salvation, before Three Significantly Selected Tribes. Stanza

II., vers. *4-7,* Remonstrance with God for the length of His Manifestation of

Displeasure. Stanza III., vers, 8-1 1, The Vine-Transplanted out of Egypt

and Prosperous in Canaan, Stanza IV., vers. 12-15, The Vine-Endar,gered

and Damaged: Prayer that it be Inspected and Protected. Stanza V., vers.

16-18, In order that the Destruction of the Vine may be Averted, Representation

and Restoration are Besought.

(Lm.) By Asaph-Psalm.

**1** Shepherd of Israel oh give ear!

leader of Joseph as a flock,

throned on the cherubim oh shine forth!

**67**

STUDIES IN PSALMS

Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh

oh stir up thy heroic strength,

and oh come to our salvation!

*Oh God! resto/re us,*

***And*** *light up thy face,*

***And*** *we shall he saved.*

Jehovah God of hosts!

how long hast thou been angry1 in spite of2 the prayer of

thy people?

[How long] hast thou fed them with the bread of tears,

given them ~o drink of tears in large rneas~re?~

[How long] wilt thou make us a strife to our neighbours,

or shall our foes laugh at US?^

0 *God* of *hosts! restore us,*

***And*** *light up thy face,-*

***And*** *we shall be saved.*

**A** vine out of Egypt thou didst lift,

didst drive out nations and plant it:

Didst clear a space before it,

so it rooted its roots and filled the land:

Covered were the mountains with its shade,

and with its boughs the cedars of **GOD** :

It thrust forth its branches as far as the sea,

**and** unto the River its shoots.6

Wherefore hast thou broken down its fences,&

so that all who pass along the way have plucked of its fruit?

The boar out of the forestT gnaweth it,

,and the roaming beast of the field browseth on it.

0 God of hosts! return we pray thee,

look around out of the heavens and see,-

and inspect this vine;

1. MI. : “snorted” or “fumed.”

**2**

**3**

**4**

***6***

***6***

**7**

8

**9**

**10**

**11**

**12**

**13**

**14**

**2.** Or: “during.”

**3.** Ml.: “by the tierce.” “The third part of some larger measure, perhaps

the bath **(Ez. 46:11),** and if so equivalent to nearly three gallons,-a large

measure for tears, though a small one for the earth, **Is. 40:12** (‘measure’)-

Dr.

**4.** So some cod. **(w.** Sep., Syr., Vu1.)-Gn. **M.T.:** “laugh to themselves”

(“mock as they please”-Dr.) ,

***5.*** Or: “suckers.”

6. Or: “wa1Is.”

**7.** That is=symbol of Rome. Or: “river: (=symbol of Egypt), See G.

Intro., **338-340.**

***58***

PSALM 80

I6 And be thou the protection\* of that which thy right-hand

and mover the bough@ thou hast secured for thyself,

16 It is to be burned with fire it is to be cut down,

at the rebuke of thy faceToth ey will perish I

17 Let thy hand be over the man of thy right hand,

over the son of mankindT1 thou hast secured for thyself:

**18** So shall we not draw back from thee,

th’ou wilt restore us to lifeT2 and on thy name will we call.

**19** *Jehovah God* ***of*** *hosts restore us,*

***Light*** *up thy face,-*

***And*** *we shall be saved.*

hath planted,

(Lm.) To the Chief Musician.

(CMm.) For the Wine-presses = Feast of Tabernacles.

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 80

0 Shepherd of Israel who leads Israel like a flock; 0 God

enthroned above the cherubim, bend down Your ear and listen

**as** I plead. Display Your power and radiant glory.

**2** Let Ephnaim, Benjamin and Manasseh see YOU rouse

Yourself and use Your mighty power to rescue us.

**3** Turn us again to Yourself, 0 God. Look down on us in

joy land love only then shall we be saved.

**4** 0 Jehovah, God of heaven’s armies, how long will You

be angry and reject our prayers?

5 You have fed us with sorrow and tears,

**6** And hlave made us the scorn of the neighboring nations.

They laugh among themselves.

**7** Turn us again to Yourself, 0 God of Hosts. Look down

on us in joy and 1ove;I only then shall we be saved.

8 You brought us from Egypt as though we were a tender

vine and drove away the heathen irom Your land and pllanted us.

9 You cleared the ground and tilled the soil and we took

root and filled bhe land.

8. So Del. and others.

***9.*** Ml.: “son.” Some cod. **(w.** Sep., **Syr.,** Vul.) (‘son of man *(adam)”-Gn.*

**10.** *Gt.* : lLmoutli”-Gn.

**11.** Heb.: ***Adam.***

**12.** Or: “quicken **us,”**

1. Literally, “cause Your face to shine upon **us.”**

**69**

STUDIES IN PSALMS

10 The mountains were covered with our shadow; we were

**11** Covering the entire land from the Mediterranean Sea

**12** But now You have broken down our walls leaving us

**I3** The boar from the forest roots around us, and the wild

j **.14** Come back, we beg of You, 0 God of the armies of

’ heaven, and bless us. Look down from heaven and see our

plight and care $or this Your vine!

15 Protect what You Yourself have planted, this son You

have raised for Yourself.

16 For we are chopped and burned by our enemies. May

they perish at Your frown.

**17** Strengthen the man Ysou l0ve,3 the son of Your choice:

18 And we will never forsake You again. Revive us **to**

trust in You,

19 Turn us again to Yourself, 0 God of the armies of

heaven. Look down on us, Your face aglow with joy and loveonly

then shall we be saved.

like the mighty cedar treesf2

to the Euphrates River.

without protection.

animals feed on us.

EXPOSITION

The exceeding beauty of this psalm is obvious at a glance,-

with its striking invocation, its threefold refrain, and its exquisite

allegory of the Vine. Its power, however, cannot be felt

to the full until its scope is observed and its spl’rit perceived.

Its ‘scope is, to reconcile all the tribes of Israel to each other

and to their God: its spirit is, on the ,one hand, one of absolute

loyalty to Jehovah, in his preference for Judlah as the leading

tribe, land to the house of David as the divinely appointed

reigning dynasty; and, on the other hand, one of tender regard

for the susceptibilities of the northern tribes. Whether ***Aimph,***

the author of this psalm, be Asaph the Second or Asaph the

Seventh matters little, so long as we take him to have been

the prophet compeer of King Hezekiah. While the King was

*inviting* the tribes to come to Jerusalem, the psalmist was

*singing* them in to Jehovah’s royal seat.

Viewed from this standpoint, what address is discovered in

**2. Literally, “the cedars of God.”**

**3. Literally, “the man of Your right hand.”**

**4. Literally, “the son** of **man You made strong for Yourself.”**

**60**

PSALM 80

the opening invocation. When the term “Israel” did not mean

the whole nation, it speci~ally meant the Ten Tribes; and of

“Joseph” the same may be said, with the especial consideration

added, that as both Ephraim and Manasseh were integral members

of the northern kingdom, “Joseph” would more emphatilmlly

point “North.” So far, then, the invocation counts two for the

“North”; but when the third Divine Title is added, “Throned on

the cherubim,” then, **as** the holy cherubic Throne was now located

in Jerusalem, that was emphatically one for the South. So that,

while this invocation, in the order of mention, yields the leading

place to the North, and then weightily gravitates to the South,

it may be truthfully described as a tribe-uniting Invocation.

In the same spirit the psalm proceeds, with the tact of a

Divine winsomeness: “Thou who art throned in the South,

before the North shew forth thy glorious presence !” “Before

the North”: more in detail, Befoye Ephraim *and* Benjamin *and*

Manasseh,-Ephraim and Manasseh being, of course, the two

sons of Joseph; with little Benjamin placed between them, with

exquisite good taste and with striking historical reminiscences

clustering about the arrangement; first, as all being the descendants

of the two sons of Rachel; and second, as having been

placed in the rear of the AY‘k in the appointed order of march

through the wilderness: “Thou who are throned in the Ark

before them, before them shine forth, as thou leadest them on to

victory and glory.” Nor was this association of Benjamin with

Ephraim and Manasseh without historical propriety or hortatory

necessity. “At first sight,” says Kirkpatrick, “it may seem ’

strange that Benjamin is reckoned among the northern tribes, for

partilally at any rate it sided with Rehoboam (1 Kings **12:21,**

**2** Chr. **11:3, 23, 15:8,** 9); but the one tribe remaining to David

was Judah **(1** Kings 11:13, 32, 36), and Benjamin must be

reckoned to the Northern Kingdom to make **up** Ten tribes, for

Simeon had becohe merged in Judah and is not counted, The

principal Benjamite towns of Bethel, Gilgal, and Jericho belonged

*to* the Northern Kingdom.” To which we may add a

sentence from Delitzsch as to these three cities: “But, like

Ramah (1 Rings 15:21f), not without being contested (cf. **2**

Chr. 13 :19) ; the boundaries were therefore fluctuating.”

Thus wooed into united supplication, the twelve-tribed nation

is led forward in impassioned pleading, as the repeated use

of the “h-paragogic” shews: Oh give ea?! ***Oh*** shine *forth! Oh*

stir ***up! “0 come!”***

‘

,

61

S’MJDIES IN PSALMS

The refrain too is worthy of its place as the triple crown

of the psalm. 0 *God!* restore us: or, bring **us** back-which

would especially suit those who were in banishment ;-or, ***brhg***

us back to our former estate, Restore us-which would suit all

who lamented their degeneracy and disunion. And light *up* thy

face-with that smile which so gladdens all such as love thee.

And, thus gladdened-united-guided, we *sMl* be saved **from**

foes and dangers and sins.

To this stanza of invocation and petition, succeeds a stanza

of invocation and remonstrance. Only, now, the invocation is

shorter: Jehovah=the Becoming One; *God* of Hosts, with saints

and angels and elements at thy command, waiting to do thy will.

-Invocations are useful, as the natural outcome of earnestness ;

as apt reminders, to the petitioner )and his fellow-worshippers,

of the nature ,of the weighty business in hand-that we are

neither dreaming nor soliloquising, nor aimlessly wandering : we

are in the court of the Divine Presence, speaking to the Almigh’ty

-thud is our one present business. Moreover, Invocations are

turned into pleading$’by the choice of epithets to suit our need,

and by the accumulation of them as so many avenues of approach

to him whom, we worship.-How’ long? is the key-note **of** the

remonstrance, the spirit of which should undoubtedly be carried

through the remainder of the stanza: up to and. preparing for the

supplicatory refrain. How long hast thou been thus angry and

wilt thou continue to be? How long haat *thou* fed us with ***the***

***bread*** *of* team-so that our hungry lips open in vain for food,

only to taste the salt tears that fall upon them? ‘How long art

thou going still further *to* make *us cc* strife to our smaller neig*bours,*

who are quarreli among themselves as to who first and

who most shall insult us in our humiliation? How long are our

more formidable foes to be permitted to turn on u8s with a scornful

laugh when we groan under their unchecked atrocities?-

Thus are we permitted to interweave the element of time with

our prayers: ***How*** long? The longest may seem but “a small

moment” to Him who sees the end from the beginning; but, to

**us,** creatures of a day, it is a serious aggravation to our troubles

that they are so long continued. And what we are here taught

by Asaph is, that we may dare to remonstrate with God over

the almost unbearable protraction of our trials. Thus, as least,

shall we find an intensified refrain of petition welcome, as **a**

reilef to the burden which weighs down our spirits: 0 ***God*** of

***Hosts,*** resbore *us,* ***And*** liight ***up*** thy face, And we *shalt* be saved.

**62**

PSALM 80

And now comes the Vine-the parable, the allegory of the

Vine-and let us remember that we are still, in prayer, speaking

to Him whose vine it is: its Owner, its Planter and Transplanter,

its Waterer and Fencer, its Devastator, its seeming Neglecter,

iB severe Inspector, its true and only Protector, its Redeemer

and Restorer.

It is thus that this Vine comes before us:-1. Transplanted

and Prosperous, **2.** Endangered and Damaged, **3.** Inspected and

Protected, **4.** Represented and Restored. Although these headings

are not exactly conformed to the stanzical divisions of the psalm,

they may be help-ful as a basis of study. While paying a passing

regard to the framework of the Allegory, let us chiefly endeavour

to get at its true meaning.

1. The Vine-Israel : Transplanted and Prosperous. It began

its growth in Egypt. But in Egypt there was neither room for

its growth, nor an atmosphere to make it fruitful. Egypt was

peopled by an oppressing nationality, unfavourable to the growth

within it of a free nation; and Egypt was poisoned with idolatry,

unfitted for the development of a pure nation. Jehovah desired

a nation both free and pure: fitted to be a channel o’f blessing to

all the other nations of the earth. Therefore he transplanted his

Vine-lifted it, as a vine is lifted with its roots, or a vine-layer

is lifted, and laid in its ample bed.

The Owner

of this Vine foresaw this need and provided for it. Hence the

psalmist says: Didst clear a space befoye it. And the Divine

directions were, that the space should be cleared. The iniquity

of the Amorites was now full; and therefore, being mindful that

the space they occupied should be filled to better purpose, the

Disposer of Nations commanded them to be extirpated-a severe

but needful mandate; “severe,” because it involved the destruction

of the innocent with the guilty; “needful,” because the seven

nations of Canaan had become a pest and a peril to the world.

Unmerci-ful? Verily: it would have been more merciful, if the

terrible Divine Behest of Destruction had been sternly executed.

It would have saved the lives as well as the morals of generations

yet unborn,

Nevertheless, space was made; so that this Vine, transplanted

from Egypt, grew rapidly: in the picturesque language

of the psalm, it rooted its rolots, and filled the *land.* As if on

purpose to recall and amplify the blessings on Joseph which fell

from his father Jacob’s lips (Gen. **49),** the psalmist proceeds:

**63**

But it must have *a* cleared space to receive it.

<

STUDIES IN **,PSALMS**

Covered were the mountains with its shade-the mountains **of**

the South, And with its boughs the cedars of Gocl-on the Lebanon

to the North, a feat which the Vine, **as** a climbing plant, is

accomplish; It thrust forth its branches, with the true

thrusting power ***of*** growth, as far as the sea-the Mediterranean,

to the West; and unto the River (Nahar=the Euphrates) its

shoots **(or** suckers). Great (outward) prosperity, nearly if not

quite realised in the days of Solomon. Is it strange that such

prosperity should not have endured? Alas! there was a worm at

the root **of** this Vine. Idolatry-the very thing that the God

of Israel would not tolerate-had entered and was making rapid

advances even in the days of Solomon.

**2.** Endangered and Damaged.-Inwardly, the danger **was**

Sin-flagrant national Sin, The outward danger followed. The

**Owner of** the Vine himself Groke down ***its*** fences. **His om**

character was involved : his purposes were being thwarted :

there was a needs-be that he should interpose. Self-consistency

and truth demanded it: all this had been threatened by **Moses,**

and it must come. ***AH*** who passed ***along*** the way-Egypt ***to***

meet Assyria, Assyria to meet Egypt-plucked ***of* ibs *fmit;*** and

verily the fruit of this Vine was luscious and tempting; **as, for**

example, the golden treasures of the Temple! Pity the defenceless

Vine! when the boar out *of* the forest=the wild-boar

of Assyria, Babylon, Greece or Rome, came thmat way (the Boar

was anciently the symbol of Rome). The Vine, that is the

Nation, more frequently pitied itself, than turned in true repentance

to its offended **God.** True to the life it is, that Jewish

scholars have punned on the very word which describes their

punishment, **The** essential letters of the Hebrew word **for**

forest are **Y, R:** if pronounced *Vmr,* then it means forest; but if

pronounced ye-or then it signifies river, and particularly the

Nile. Now, they did not fear the Boar of the Nile so much as

they stood in awe of the Boar of the forest east or west. The

roaming beast of the field, in the next line, may mean-either

any marauding power, or the smaller neighboring monarchs

ever ready to browse on Israel's most tender and promising

shoots.

**3.** Inspeated and Protected.-No wonder that the psalmist

should again and more earnestly than ever betake himself to

prayer. And, first, he prays for inspection: 0 God **of** hosts!

return, we pray thee ***look*** around out of the heavens-on the

**64**

PSALM **80**

various nations; *am‘* see-whether there is any other nation that

interests and concerns thee like this; and inspect this vinelook

narrowly into its condition, and see what, in thy clemency

and wisdom, can be done in its behalf, So far, we Gentiles

hearken with complacency: it is doubtless right, we are ready

to say, that this vine, on which so much culture has been lavighed

should be inspected! But are we equally prepared to follow

Asaph in the next step which he takes? ***And*** be thou the protection

of that which thy right-hand hath planted. Perhaps we

are utterly and genuinely unable to say “what more” the Divine

Husbandman “could have done for his vineyard which he has

n’ot done for it” (Isa. ***5 ) .*** But how can he protect a nation

which cannot and will not protect itself-cannot and will not

come under his protection? And so we are straitened, not in

God, but in ourselves, and in our own poverty of conception.

We think we have reached the end of **HIS** ways which are “past

finding tout”! Is there never a bough in this Vine, which as a

fresh layer can again be transplanted; and so a New Vine be

produced therefrom? Perhaps, even to this length, the utmost

stretch of our Gentile imaginations may extend. “Yes!” we say;

“even that may be. ‘Salvation is of the Jews.’ The Messiah

‘comes of the seed of David.’ And, only give to the Messiah a

new people: then he and his new people shall form a new Vine;

and in that new Vine the old shall live again and so be perpetuated.”

Good as far as it goes; only it does not go so **far**

as the Apostle Paul would conduct us; for he exclaims, in a

passage wherein Israel cannot mean the Church, “And so all

Israel shall be saved.” Therefore we must yet stand firm tu

the text of this Asaphic Psalm.

**4.** Represented and Restored.--It was something that at the

close of the previous stanza (ver. 15) we saw a bough that was

not likely to be destroyed, seeing that Jehovah had secured it

*for* himself. The Psalmist sets the peril of Israel’s national destruction

clearly before him. The natural doom of such a Vine

is to be burned with fire; and, with a view to such a burning,

to be cut down: there is reason, in Israel’s pensistent sin, for

Divine Rebuke stern enough to leave Israel to perish. But this

apprehension on the part of the psalmist prompts to renewed

and more explicit prayer. Let thy hand be prdectingly over

the man ***of*** thy rioht hand. Is this man an individual or a

nation? There is something to be said for the opinion of some

that it may be the whole nation of Israel; even as, in ver. **16,**

**65**

STUDIES IN PSALMS

***that which thy right hand hath planted*** is clearly the nation.

Still, we have already had brought before us the separating conception

of ***s*** single ***bough,*** or *s a ,* of the Vine; and Jehovah’B

first care is clearly to protect and preserve that ***bough;*** ,and this

is the idea which is now, in supplication, brought forward anew

-brought forward anew and amplified,-and, in the process **of**

repetition and amplification, more fully described and more

accurately defined. Even the phrase, ***the man of thy right hamd***

seems irresistibly to carry us forward ***$0*** the Messiah. But when

the duplicate phrase follows, ***The*** *son* ***of Mankind-the Son of***

***Adam;*** and the striking description is repeated, ***whom thou*** *harrt*

***secured for thyself*** that conclusion is undoubtedly confirmed; **SO**

that we are relieved to find that even the Aramaean Targum

giving scholarly Jewish opinion in the early Christian centuries

is borne along in the same direction with its paraphrase: “And

upon Messiah the king, whom thou hast made strong for thyself.”

Still the question recurs-Does this gravitation **of** the

psalm to the Messiah include **or** exclude the Nation? **If** we

still follow the psalmist’s lead,-to say nothing more now **of**

concurrent Scripture,-we shall undoubtedly answer in the

affirmative-It will include and not exclude the Nation. **For**

who are these who now join in the pleading-So ***shalt we noit***

***draw back from thee,*** fully and finally, On the contrary, however

dead we are at present, yea even generations of our people

in Hades (Eze. **37), *Thou wiEt restore* us *to l4fe,*** and as the

priestly natifon we were originally intended to be **(Exo.** 19) and

which prophecy clearly foretells we yet shall be (Isa. **61 :6, 66 :20)**

***And ocn thy name will we call. Jehovah, God*** *of* ***hosts, restore* us**

-us, the nation, inheriting the name and honour of the Vine

thou didst lift out of Egypt, ***Light up thg face, and we,*** the

Vine, the Nation, ***shall be saved.***

Recurring to the opening of the psalm, a weighty lesson

may be drawn therefrom for the guidance of such as would seek

the reunion of Christendom. There is in this realm also the unfaithfulness

which fears to tell Ephraim his sin. For these

the 78th psalm furnishes instruction : showing the possibility of

faithfully admonishing Ephraim, that he has “turned back in

the day of battle,” and yet so administering the lesson as 60

commend it to his attention. The present psalm furnishes **the**

hint that, besides warning Ephraim, efforts to win him may be

alternated with sterner remonstrances. Set the Ark of the

Divine Presence before him, and entreat him to follow its lead;

**66**

PSALM 80

at the same time endeavouring to convince him that there are

privileges to be enjoyed in Judah which Ephraim has forfeited.

Let US hold fast the honour of having first denounced Divisionalism

in Christendom: at the same time wooing back wanderers

in a generous and winsome spirit.

**1,**

**2,**

**3.**

**4.**

6.

6.

**7.**

8.

**9.**

10.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

There are some very meaningful figures of speech in this

psalm. List them and make application.

There seems to be a national purpose in the structure of

the psalm. Discuss.

Is it ever proper to argue with God? Is this being done in

verse 1 through 7? Discuss.

The comparison of Israel to a vine is fully and beautifully

described. List the divisilons of the text as given by Rotherham.

God accomplished two purposes in defeating the Amorites

and giving their land to Israel. What were they?

Note the extent of the conquered land. Were not the

promises of God fulfilled as to giving Israel the land?

Discuss.

Who is “the boar of the forest”?; or is it “the boar of

the river”?

Did God ever answer the prayer of verses **14, 15?**

Perhaps when we fulfill the promise of verse 18, God will

answer the prayers of verses 14, 15, 17, 19.

An English poet named Mant has done such a beautiful

job poetically we wish to share his poem with you.

Thy hands from Egypt brought a goodly vine,

And planted fair in fertile Palestine;

Clear’d for its grasping roots th’unpeopled land,

And gave it high to rise, and firm to stand.

Far o’er the eternal hills her shadow spread,

Her tendrils wreath’d the cedar’s towering head;

And, as the centre of the land she stood,

**Her** branches reach’d the sea, her boughs the eastern flood.

Why hast Thou now her hedges rent aw’ay,

And left her bare, the passing traveler’s prey?

The field-fed beast devours each tender shoot,

Fierce from the wood the boar assails her root.

Return, *0* God; from heaven Thine eyes incline ;

Behold, and visit thia neglected vine:

67

STUDIES IN PSALMS

Regard the plant, Phou once didst love so well,

And chief Thy pleasant branch, the hope of Israel.

Burnt though she be and rent, her haughty foe

The deathful terrors of Thy wrath shall know.

But on the man, by Thee with strength array’d,

The Son of Man by Thee for conquest made,

Thy hand shall rest; till we Thy triumphs see,

Resound Thy praise, and still remember Thee.

Turn us again, Thou God of heav’n’s high powers,

Beam with Thy radiance forth, and peace shall. still be ours.