

NOTES ON
THE PSALMS

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By

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Notes on the Psalms
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To

DAVID MARTYN LLOYD-JONES

MY VALUED AND BELOVED COLLEAGUE DURING THE LAST
YEARS OF MY ACTIVE MINISTRY; A MAN LOYAL TO THE
WORD, AND A PREACHER OF EXCEPTIONAL ABILITY

THE PSALMS

IN the Psalms, we look into the heart of all the saints, and, we seem to gaze into fair pleasure-gardens; into heaven itself, indeed; where bloom the sweet, refreshing, gladdening flowers of holy and happy thoughts about God and all His benefits. On the other hand, where will you find deeper, sadder, more piteous words of mourning than in the Psalms? In these again, we look into the heart of the saints, and we seem to be looking into death, yea, into hell itself. How gloomy, how dark it is there, because of the many sad visions of the wrath of God!

MARTIN LUTHER.

WHAT various and resplendent riches are contained in this treasury, it were difficult to find words to describe. . . . I am in the habit of calling this book, not inappropriately, "The Anatomy of all Parts of the Soul," for not an affection will any one find in himself, an image of which is not reflected in this mirror. Nay, all the griefs, sorrows, fears, misgivings, hopes, cares, anxieties; in short, all the disquieting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be agitated, the Holy Spirit hath here pictured to the life.

CALVIN, Preface to *Commentary on the Psalms of David*.

G. CAMPBELL MORGAN REPRINT SERIES

Foreword

IF IT is true that the measure of a person's greatness is their influence, not only on his own time but on future generations, G. Campbell Morgan must be regarded as a great person. His greatness is seen not only in the wide impact of his ministry on both sides of the Atlantic, but in the fact that his books are still read and studied sixty-five years after his death. Named one of the ten greatest preachers of the twentieth-century by the contributing board of *Preaching* magazine, Morgan made the Bible a new and living book not only to the congregations who listened to him, but the vast multitude of persons who read his books.

For sixty-seven years Morgan preached and taught the Scriptures and served churches in England and the United States. What is remarkable is that his commentaries and expositions of the Bible still speak to persons of a new millennium. There have been many changes in the world since he faithfully preached and taught the Scriptures, but the wide appeal of his books testify to the timelessness of his message.

Although he held pastorates in the Congregational and Presbyterian denominations, he had an ecumenical appeal to persons of all denominations and traditions. The mystic Thomas á Kempis once wrote, "He to whom the eternal word speaks is delivered from many opinions." In one of his sermons, he referred to the words of Amos that there would be a famine for hearing the word of God (Amos 8:11). The timeless work of G. Campbell Morgan addresses that hunger, as his books enable his readers to get beyond opinions to the living Word.

Wipf and Stock Publishers have rendered a great gift to the religious world in reprinting dozens of Morgan's books. This growing collection makes his books more available, so that readers have an option other than searching the internet for used, and often expensive, copies. Among this collection is

the classic *The Great Physician* and commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew and John. Persons seeking a living faith and a meaningful encounter with God would profit from reading any of these Morgan books.

Near the end of his ministry, in a sermon entitled “But One Thing,” Morgan commented on how Portugal changed the words of a coin after Christopher Columbus discovered America. No longer did the inscription say, *Ne Plus Ultra* (nothing more beyond) but *Plus Ultra* (more beyond). It is the hope of the G. Campbell Morgan Trust that the reprinting of these books will bring readers to the “more beyond,” and an even deeper encounter with the Word in Scripture.

THE MORGAN TRUST

Richard L. Morgan

Howard C. Morgan

John C. Morgan

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PSALMS—THE BOOK OF WORSHIP

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PSALMS

INTRODUCTORY

The word "Psalms" is the Anglicized form of a Greek word, which really means a poem set to music. The Hebrew title of the book was simply Praises, or Book of Praises. It is pre-eminently the worship-book of the Hebrew people, and consists of a collection of songs which express the attitude of the soul in the presence of God, when contemplating past history, existing conditions, or prophetic hopes. The whole collection consists, in the Hebrew Bible, of five books. In the English and American Revisions this sub-division is shown.

We have no definite proof who the editor was. His method becomes evident by an examination of the grouping of the psalms. It is perfectly clear that neither authorship nor chronology was in his view. Eusebius declares that "The psalms are disposed according to a law of inward affinity"; and Dr. Anderson says, "It must be remembered that every attempt to classify and arrange the psalms apart from the division of the whole Psalter into the five books as found in our Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate Versions—every such attempt is confessedly imperfect, and more or less arbitrary."

The key to the method of the editor is to be found in the doxologies with which the books close. Each of the five has such a doxology, and an examination of these will reveal a certain conception of God, and an attitude of the soul in worship resulting from such conception. The doxology for each will be found as follows:

Book I.	Psalm 41-13.	Worship of Jehovah as the Becoming One, Who is the Helper.
Book II.	Psalm 72-18, 19.	Worship of Jehovah as the Wonder-working God.
Book III.	Psalm 89-52.	Worship of Jehovah ceaseless.
Book IV.	Psalm 106-48.	Worship of Jehovah rendered.
Book V.	Psalm 150-1 to 6.	Worship of Jehovah consummated.

The individual psalms are natural expressions by many authors, at various times, under differing circumstances, of the consciousness of God. The editing gathers these individual songs around the notes of truth dominant in each.

These notes are indicated in each book by the particular title of Jehovah which predominates. The subject of the Divine titles is too great a one to be discussed at length now; but as an introduction to the study of the Psalter, recognition of difference is necessary. The proportion in which the four titles are used in the book of Psalms, as indicated in the diagram, is a somewhat rough one. Under Elohim are included El and Eloah, because while there is a minor difference of suggestion between the singular and the plural, the underlying thought is the same. So also with reference to Adonahy and Adon.

JEHOVAH. In the ancient Hebrew Scriptures this particular title was always written in the form of a tetragrammaton—YHVH—and there are differences of opinion as to what the actual form of the word should be. Without entering into any discussion of the varied interpretations, I adopt that of Mr. Joseph Rotherham in the *EMPHASIZED BIBLE*, both as to spelling and significance. He claims that the word thus abbreviated is Yahweh, and interprets it as meaning “the Becoming One.” In his Bible, he says, “Yahweh is almost always regarded as

the third person singular, masculine, imperfect tense, from the root Hawah, an old form of the root Hayah. The one meaning of Hawah is 'become.' So that the force of Yahweh, thus derived as a verb, would be, 'He will become,' or, as expressive of use and wont as a noun, it is, 'He who becometh,' 'the Becoming One.'"

In a letter written to me in the course of correspondence on the subject, referring to this meaning, Mr. Rotherham said:—

" 'He becometh,' that is, 'He who becometh,' 'the Becoming One'; becoming to His people whatever in His rich favour He pleases, in order to meet their need, and at last becoming Man."

The truth, therefore, suggested by the use of this word is always that, first of the essential Being of God which enables Him to become; and by deduction, that God in infinite grace does become whatever man needs.

ELOHIM. This is a plural noun, but it is plural in a sense peculiar to the Hebrew language. Canon Girdlestone says:—

"It is well known that the Hebrews often expressed a word in the plural, so as to give it a special or technical meaning, as in the case of the words, blood, water, wisdom, salvation, righteousness, life. . . . It is implied that the word in the singular number is not large enough to set forth all that is intended; and so, in the case of the Divine Name, the plural form expresses the truth that the finite word conveys an inadequate idea of the Being Whom it represents. Other names of God will be found to be plural also, and it is worthy of notice that in the well-known passage in Ecclesiastes (xii. 1) the Hebrew runs thus, 'Remember now thy Creators in the days of thy youth.'"

The root idea is that of strength or might, and the thought of God suggested by it is that of His strength as revealed in creation, and in all the operations of His power.

ADONAHY. This is again plural in form. Its simple signifi-

cation is "Master" or "Lord"; and the thought it suggests is that of sovereign supremacy.

JAH. This is the shorter form of the name Jehovah, and is only found in Scripture; twice in Exodus, a few times in Isaiah, and in thirty-five passages in the book of Psalms.

These names reveal the doctrine of God, which creates man's worship. Recognizing that Jehovah and Jah have the same essential significance, there are three lines of thought suggested. First, the essential Being of God, and the fact that He becomes in grace what man needs. Second, the essential Might of God, and the fact that it operates in power. Third, the essential Lordship of God, and His consequent sovereignty over man.

The analyses are intended to help in the study of the collection, as to the conceptions impelling to worship.

BOOK I.
PSALMS 1-41

BOOK I.—PSALMS 1-41

DOXOLOGY

“Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
From everlasting and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.” Ps. 41-13.

A. THE TITLE.	B. THE RELATION.	C. THE QUANTITY.	D. THE QUALITY.
<p>“Jehovah.” The mysterious name, suggestive of essential Being, becoming whatever is needed by men, and therefore uniformly used as indicating God’s relation to His people as Helper.</p>	<p>“The God of Israel.” “God.” Elohim. The idea of Supremacy. “Of Israel.” The chosen People.</p>	<p>“From everlasting to everlasting.” “The word ‘everlasting’ means the concealed or vanishing point; and suggests the mysterious past, and the unknown future. In its use here it reminds the heart of the eternity of God.”</p>	<p>“Blessed.” The root idea is that of prostration in the attitude of adoration. “Amen, and Amen.” The consent of all to such adoration.</p>

The Divine Name.

The prevailing Name in this book is Jehovah. It occurs in every psalm at least twice, and in one (xxix), as many as 18 times.

“God” is found 18 times in the singular, 50 times in the plural; in all 68 times. From 13 psalms it is absent altogether. The general title “Lord” (Adonahy) only occurs 14 times in all, and these occasions are all in 8 psalms.

The Dominant Thought.

The dominant thought in this book is that of God as Jehovah, the Helper of His people. The psalms are songs of varying emotion, and differing condition, but all express themselves in harmony with this note.

ANALYSIS

A. AUTHORITY ESTABLISHED. 1-8	B. AUTHORITY DEFENDED. 9-15	C. AUTHORITY ADMINISTERED. 16-41
I. The Foundations. 1-2 i. Obedience and Disobedience. 1 ii. The enthroned King. 2 II. The Experiences. 3-7 (See Titles.)	I. The Need. 9, 10 i. The Throne and the Enemy. 9 ii. Appeal for Action. 10 II. The Activity. 11 to 15 (See Titles.)	I. The Person. 16 to 24 (See Titles.) II. The Process. 25 to 39 i. Songs of Assurance. 25 to 29 (See Titles.) ii. Songs of Appropriation. 30 (See Titles.) 34 iii. Songs of Aspiration. 35 to 39 (See Titles.) III. The Person. 40, 41
III. The ultimate Purpose. 8		

PSALM 1

Jehovah's Law, A Contrast; Obedience and Disobedience

BLESSED is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked,
 Nor standeth in the way of sinners,
 Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers:
 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah;
 And on his law doth he meditate day and night.
 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water,
 That bringeth forth its fruit in its season,

Whose leaf also doth not wither;
 And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.
 4 The wicked are not so,
 But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment,
 Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous;
 But the way of the wicked shall perish.

The master thought of this psalm is that of the law of Jehovah. The obedient and disobedient are placed in sharp contrast. This contrast is vividly seen by bringing together the first and last words of the psalm—"blessed," "perish." The former word describes the issue of obedience; the latter, the result of disobedience. The conditions of blessedness are stated negatively and positively. Negatively there must be complete separation from fellowship with such as are disobedient. The graduation in description must not be omitted; "walketh," "standeth," "sitteth," "counsel," "way," "seat"; "wicked," "sinners," "scornful." The positive condition is twofold; delight, and meditation in the law. This, moreover, must be continuous, "day and night." The experience of blessedness is described under the figure of a tree planted, bearing fruit, with evergreen leaf. Moreover, such a man prospers in all he does.

Then comes the contrast. Let the statement, "The wicked are not so" be considered in the light of all that has been said; that is, in the former part of the psalm cancel the negations

where they stand, and insert them where they are not. The condition of the wicked is then summarized, and the contrast is perfected. Instead of the tree planted, they are chaff driven away. They will be unable to stand the test of judgment, and therefore are excluded from the assembly of the righteous. The psalm ends with a summary. "The way of the righteous" is known to Jehovah. "The way of the wicked" perishes, that is, runs out, and is lost in the wood.

PSALM 2

Jehovah's King. Folly of Rebellion. Wisdom of Submission

WHY do the nations rage,
And the peoples meditate a
vain thing?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves,

And the rulers take counsel together,

Against Jehovah, and against
his anointed, *saying*,

3 Let us break their bonds
asunder,

And cast away their cords from
us.

4 He that sitteth in the heavens
will laugh:

The Lord will have them in
derision.

5 Then will he speak unto them in
his wrath,

And vex them in his sore dis-
pleasure:

6 Yet I have set my king
Upon my holy hill of Zion.

7 I will tell of the decree:

Jehovah said unto me, Thou art
my son;

This day have I begotten thee.

8 Ask of me, and I will give *thee*
the nations for thine inher-
itance,

And the uttermost parts of the
earth for thy possession.

9 Thou shalt break them with a
rod of iron;

Thou shalt dash them in pieces
like a potter's vessel.

10 Now therefore be wise, O ye
kings:

Be instructed, ye judges of the
earth.

11 Serve Jehovah with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the son, lest he be angry,
and ye perish in the way,

For his wrath will soon be
kindled.

Blessed are all they that take
refuge in him.

This is the psalm of Jehovah's King. It is impossible to fix the event for which it was written and to which it first referred.

The wider application is perfectly patent. To whatsoever king the words first applied, the singer was looking to the ideal King, and his song has found fulfilment in Christ.

It is very interesting to notice how this psalm is interwoven with the thinking of the New Testament. To study it carefully, first of all we must discover the speakers in each case. The psalmist opens with a description of the nations in opposition to Jehovah and His King. This is given in the form of a question as to why they are in such attitude. He then proceeds to declare the contempt of the Lord for them, and in verse 6 Jehovah is the Speaker, announcing that notwithstanding all their opposition, He has appointed His King.

The next section (vers. 7-9) gives us the words of the anointed King, Who declares the decree of His Kingship. The Son of Jehovah is to receive dominion from His Father, and exercise it for the subjugation of all these opposing forces. The order of procedure is indicated; "inheritance," "possession," "administration." The psalm ends with an appeal to the kings and judges to manifest their wisdom by submitting themselves to Jehovah's King.

PSALM 3

Jehovah's Salvation. Confidence in Peril

JEHOVAH, how are mine adversaries increased!

Many there are that rise up against me.

2 Many there are that say of my soul,

There is no help for him in God.

3 But thou, O Jehovah, art a shield about me;

My glory, and the lifter up of my head.

4 I cry unto Jehovah with my voice,

And he answereth me out of his holy hill.

5 I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for Jehovah sustaineth me.

6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of the people That have set themselves against me round about.

7 Arise, O Jehovah; save me, O my God:

For thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone;

Thou hast broken the teeth of the wicked.		8 Salvation belongeth unto Jeho- vah: Thy blessing be upon thy people.
--	--	--

This is a morning psalm. It is the song of a soul whose circumstances are those of grave peril as a new day dawns. The consciousness of difficulty is first uttered. Adversaries are increased, and the bitterest part of the pain is that these mock him, declaring "There is no help for him in God."

Immediately succeeding are the words which tell of the sufferer's confidence, and its reason. Jehovah is at once "Shield" and "Glory," and "Lifter up." Between this man and Jehovah there is established communion—"I cry," and "He answereth."

Then follows the language of courage. He has "slept" and "awaked," because Jehovah sustained him. In this assurance he will not be afraid of the increased adversaries. Then out of these circumstances of peril and conviction of safety, the prayer arises for salvation, and is accompanied by the assertion that Jehovah has already heard and answered. A consciousness of the constancy of the Divine love has always been the strength of a trusting soul amid circumstances of the greatest peril. If that is lost, all is lost. If that be maintained no great waters can overwhelm.

PSALM 4

Jehovah's Countenance the Cause of Confidence

ANSWER me when I call,
O God of my righteousness;
Thou hast set me at large *when*
I was in distress:
Have mercy upon me, and hear
my prayer.
2 O ye sons of men, how long shall
my glory be turned into dis-
honor?

How long will ye love vanity, and
seek after falsehood?
3 But know that Jehovah hath set
apart for himself him that is
godly:
Jehovah will hear when I call
unto him.
4 Stand in awe, and sin not:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>Commune with your own heart
upon your bed, and be still.</p> <p>5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,
And put your trust in Jehovah.</p> <p>6 Many there are that say, Who
will show us <i>any</i> good?
Jehovah, lift thou up the light of
thy countenance upon us.</p> | <p>7 Thou hast put gladness in my
heart,
More than <i>they have</i> when their
grain and their new wine are
increased.</p> <p>8 In peace will I both lay me down
and sleep;
For thou, Jehovah, alone makest
me dwell in safety.</p> |
|--|---|

This is a song of the evening. The general circumstances out of which it rises are the same as those of the previous psalm. Now, however, the day into which the singer marched with confidence, is over. The evidences of strain are manifest, and yet the dominant thought is that of victory won, and confidence increased.

The opening words constitute a petition in the midst of which the singer declares that God has delivered him. He appeals to the "sons of men," to those who, according to his morning psalm declared, "There is no help for him in God." He now asks them how long they will turn His glory into dishonour, "love vanity," and "seek after falsehood." The experiences of another day enable him to declare that Jehovah is great. He warns them to "stand in awe," to think of it, and "be still."

The testimony merges into an appeal to those who do not know Jehovah. They are pessimists, dissatisfied in the midst of life, and asking, "Who will show us any good?" Out of his experience of Jehovah's goodness he affirms that he has found gladness more than the men who have been in circumstances of material prosperity. The song ends with words that breathe his deep content, "In peace will I both lay me down and sleep"; and the reason is that though he is alone, or in solitude, Jehovah makes him dwell safely.

PSALM 5

Jehovah's Leading in Time of Persecution

GIVE ear to my words, O Jehovah,

Consider my meditation.

2 Harken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God; For unto thee do I pray.

3 O Jehovah, in the morning shalt thou hear my voice;

In the morning will I order *my prayer* unto thee, and will keep watch.

4 For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: Evil shall not sojourn with thee.

5 The arrogant shall not stand in thy sight:

Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.

Thou wilt destroy them that speak lies:

Jehovah abhorreth the blood-thirsty and deceitful man.

7 But as for me, in the abundance of thy loving kindness will I come into thy house:

In thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

8 Lead me, O Jehovah, in thy

righteousness because of mine enemies;

Make thy way straight before my face.

9 For there is no faithfulness in their mouth;

Their inward part is very wickedness;

Their throat is an open sepulchre;

They flatter with their tongue.

10 Hold them guilty, O God;

Let them fall by their own counsels;

Thrust them out in the multitude of their transgressions;

For they have rebelled against thee.

11 But let all those that take refuge in thee rejoice,

Let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them:

Let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

12 For thou wilt bless the righteous;

O Jehovah, thou wilt compass him with favor as with a shield.

This is another song of the morning. It opens with language which reveals the reason of the soul's assurance as it faces another day. First are petitions asking the attention of Jehovah. These are followed by words which reveal at once the singer's conception of personal responsibility, and the reason of his confidence in God.

As to the former, the day is to be begun in prayer, "O Jehovah, in the morning shalt Thou hear my voice." It is,

moreover, to be arranged as in the sight of God, "In the morning will I order unto Thee, and will keep watch." The attitude of God toward wickedness and evil men is then declared. This attitude at once makes the singer sure of his safety as against the opposition of evil men, and causes his care concerning his own condition before God. Turning his eyes towards the enemies that wait for him whom he describes, he seeks the Divine guidance, desiring most of all to see plainly before his face the way of Jehovah. As he goes forth to meet these enemies he does so with a prayer that God will defeat their counsels, and vindicate those who put their trust in Him. There is no doubt or uncertainty in his heart. The things he asked for he is assured he will receive, and with an affirmation of this confidence the song ends.

PSALM 6

Jehovah's Deliverance in Time of Chastisement

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>O JEHOVAH, rebuke me not
in thine anger,
Neither chasten me in thy hot
displeasure.</p> <p>2 Have mercy upon me, O Jeho-
vah; for I am withered away:
O Jehovah, heal me; for my
bones are troubled.</p> <p>3 My soul also is sore troubled:
And thou, O Jehovah, how long?</p> <p>4 Return, O Jehovah, deliver my
soul:
Save me for thy loving-kindness'
sake.</p> <p>5 For in death there is no remem-
brance of thee:
In Sheol who will give thee
thanks?</p> <p>6 I am weary with my groaning;</p> | <p>Every night make I my bed to
swim;
I water my couch with my
tears.</p> <p>7 Mine eye wasteth away because
of grief;
It waxeth old because of all
mine adversaries.</p> <p>8 Depart from me, all ye workers
of iniquity;
For Jehovah hath heard the
voice of my weeping.</p> <p>9 Jehovah hath heard my suppli-
cation;
Jehovah will receive my prayer.</p> <p>10 All mine enemies shall be put to
shame and sore troubled:
They shall turn back, they shall
be put to shame suddenly.</p> |
|--|--|

This is known as the first of the seven great penitential psalms. It is somewhat weak in its note of true penitence, and is not to be compared with some which follow in this respect. It is rather a cry for deliverance from the pain and the sorrow and chastisement, than from the sin which causes it.

The first seven verses are full of the misery of the man. He is perfectly conscious of the meaning of his suffering. He knows that it is chastisement, and under the pressure of it he sobs for deliverance. The light breaks upon the darkness in his confident consciousness of Jehovah's attention and willingness to help him.

If this be considered a psalm of penitence it is remarkable rather as a revelation of the tender compassion of Jehovah, than of the true note of repentance. There is not a single sentence which reveals any profound consciousness of the sinfulness of sin. The saving grace of it, so far as the sinner is concerned, is that it recognizes Jehovah's rebuke and chastening. The desire preeminently manifest is that of escape from the suffering and the sorrow. Notwithstanding the shallowness of the sense of sin, the fact of the recognition of the hand of Jehovah seems to be enough and in answering pity and power the deliverance and the comfort sought are granted.

PSALM 7

Jehovah's Deliverance Confidently Hoped In

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>O JEHOVAH my God, in thee
do I take refuge:
Save me from all them that pursue me, and deliver me,
2 Lest they tear my soul like a lion,
Rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.
3 O Jehovah my God, if I have done this;
If there be iniquity in my hands;</p> | <p>4 If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me
(Yea, I have delivered him that without cause was mine adversary);
5 Let the enemy pursue my soul, and overtake it;
Yea, let him tread my life down to the earth,
And lay my glory in the dust.</p> |
|--|---|

- 6 Arise, O Jehovah, in thine anger;
Lift up thyself against the rage
of mine adversaries,
And awake for me; thou hast
commanded judgment.
- 7 And let the congregation of the
peoples compass thee about;
And over them return thou on
high.
- 8 Jehovah ministereth judgment
to the peoples:
Judge me, O Jehovah, according
to my righteousness, and to
mine integrity that is in me.
- 9 Oh let the wickedness of the
wicked come to an end, but
establish thou the righteous:
For the righteous God trieth
the minds and hearts.
- 10 My shield is with God,
Who saveth the upright in
heart.
- 11 God is a righteous judge,
Yea, a God that hath indigna-
tion every day.
- 12 If a man turn not, he will whet
his sword;
He hath bent his bow, and made
it ready;
- 13 He hath also prepared for him
the instruments of death;
He maketh his arrows fiery
shafts.
- 14 Behold, he travaileth with in-
iquity;
Yea, he hath conceived mischief,
and brought forth falsehood.
- 15 He hath made a pit, and digged
it,
And is fallen into the ditch
which he made.
- 16 His mischief shall return upon
his own head,
And his violence shall come
down upon his own pate.
- 17 I will give thanks unto Jehovah
according to his righteousness,
And will sing praise to the name
of Jehovah Most High.

This is a song of confidence and appeal in circumstances of the most trying description. He is persecuted by enemies, some one among them being violent and cruel. The basis of their attack would seem to be some charge they make against him of wrong-doing. He vehemently denies the charge, and cries to Jehovah for vindication, which he firmly believes the God Who tries the hearts of men will surely grant.

In the first part of the psalm the story of personal need is told. The ruthlessness of the foe is the reason for his appeal. The declaration of personal innocence follows. If the charges were true, then would the heaviest judgments be just. They are untrue, as God is witness. Then let Jehovah appear on behalf of the innocent, against the guilty. Then follows the general affirmation of the equity of God upon which the singer

builds his confidence. God is righteous. The way of wickedness cannot prosper. It creates its own destruction. The pit digged is the grave of the man who digs it. The mischief and violence meditated return as retribution upon the evil-doer.

The psalm is a song of confidence in the reign of God in equity over all men, and the consequent certainty that innocence will be vindicated in this particular case. Thanksgiving is according to Jehovah's righteousness.

PSALM 8

Jehovah's Excellence Manifest in Nature and Man

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| <p>O JEHOVAH, our Lord,
How excellent is thy name in
all the earth,
Who hast set thy glory upon the
heavens!</p> <p>2 Out of the mouth of babes and
sucklings hast thou established
strength,
Because of thine adversaries,
That thou mightest still the
enemy and the avenger.</p> <p>3 When I consider thy heavens, the
work of thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which
thou hast ordained;</p> <p>4 What is man, that thou art mind-
ful of him?
And the son of man, that thou
visitest him?</p> | <p>5 For thou hast made him but little
lower than God,
And crownest him with glory and
honor.</p> <p>6 Thou makest him to have do-
minion over the works of thy
hands;
Thou hast put all things under
his feet:</p> <p>7 All sheep and oxen,
Yea, and the beasts of the field,</p> <p>8 The birds of the heavens, and the
fish of the sea,
Whatsoever passeth through the
paths of the seas.</p> <p>9 O Jehovah, our Lord,
How excellent is thy name in all
the earth!</p> |
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This is a great song of worship. It opens and closes with the same words. These words enclose the psalm, and create its burden. The matters lying between are the proofs of the opening and closing statements. They are two. The manifestation of Jehovah's excellencies in nature and man. These are first

briefly stated (vers. 1b, 2) and then more particularly described (vers. 3-8).

The principal manifestation is in man, and this is revealed in both sections. The outlook on nature is toward the encompassing heaven, all the glory of which is expressed in one inclusive thought—Jehovah has set His glory there. From this he turns to the little children of the human race, and in them he finds a perfection of praise absent from the glorious heaven. It is such as “to still the enemy and the avenger.”

These two facts are then more particularly considered. The first impression suggests the littleness of man. In the presence of the glorious heaven man seems beneath consideration. Yet it is not so. Man is greater than all. He is but little lower than God. His place is that of dominion. The contemplation of the heaven leads to the consideration of man. This creates first a wonder at Jehovah’s consideration of him. This consideration issues in investigation, and man is found nearer to God than the heavens. The issue is worship. It is the true order of creation. Through man’s sin it has been lost. Through Jesus it is being restored.

PSALM 9

Jehovah’s Righteous Rule Rejoiced In

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| <p>I WILL give thanks unto Jehovah
with my whole heart;
I will show forth all thy marvelous
works.</p> <p>2 I will be glad and exult in thee;
I will sing praise to thy name,
O thou Most High.</p> <p>3 When mine enemies turn back,
They stumble and perish at thy
presence.</p> <p>4 For thou hast maintained my
right and my cause;
Thou sittest in the throne judg-
ing righteously.</p> | <p>5 Thou hast rebuked the nations,
thou hast destroyed the
wicked;
Thou hast blotted out their
name for ever and ever.</p> <p>6 The enemy are come to an end,
they are desolate for ever;
And the cities which thou hast
overthrown,
The very remembrance of them
is perished.</p> <p>7 But Jehovah sitteth <i>as king</i> for
ever:</p> |
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| <p>He hath prepared his throne for judgment;</p> <p>8 And he will judge the world in righteousness,
He will minister judgment to the peoples in uprightness.</p> <p>9 Jehovah also will be a high tower for the oppressed,
A high tower in times of trouble;</p> <p>10 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee;
For thou, Jehovah, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.</p> <p>11 Sing praises to Jehovah, who dwelleth in Zion:
Declare among the people his doings.</p> <p>12 For he that maketh inquisition for blood remembereth them;
He forgetteth not the cry of the poor.</p> <p>13 Have mercy upon me, O Jehovah;
Behold my affliction <i>which I suffer</i> of them that hate me,
Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death;</p> <p>14 That I may show forth all thy praise.</p> | <p>In the gates of the daughter of Zion
I will rejoice in thy salvation.</p> <p>15 The nations are sunk down in the pit that they made:
In the net which they hid is their own foot taken.</p> <p>16 Jehovah hath made himself known, he hath executed judgment:
The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.</p> <p>17 The wicked shall be turned back unto Sheol,
Even all the nations that forget God.</p> <p>18 For the needy shall not always be forgotten,
Nor the expectation of the poor perish for ever.</p> <p>19 Arise, O Jehovah; let not man prevail:
Let the nations be judged in thy sight.</p> <p>20 Put them in fear, O Jehovah:
Let the nations know themselves to be but men.</p> |
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The burden of this psalm is that of thanksgiving for Jehovah's righteous rule by which He has overcome the enemies of the chosen people. It is almost exclusively a song of thanksgiving. There are a few brief petitions, but they are intimately related to the measures of praise. These songs of praise move from the personal to the general. First, deliverances wrought for the singer are celebrated (vers. 1-4); then the government of the enthroned Jehovah among the nations, a government based upon righteousness, is sung (vers. 5-8); and next the tenderness of Jehovah toward the oppressed, and His unflinching succour of the needy, is declared (vers. 9, 10). The song