

ready been the possessions of the Lord.

Verse 12. Even if God were in personal need of anything, he would not look to man to supply it. The very things that man could present were the creation of God.

Verse 13. God is a spirit and has no bodily use for the food of animals. It was not for such use that animal sacrifices were ordained.

Verse 14. With this verse the psalmist begins to show what it is that God desires in addition to the material sacrifices. Generally speaking it consists in the spiritual devotions out of a pure heart.

Verse 15. If God's people are consistent in their professed service, they may call upon Him with the assurance that he will hear and bless them.

Verse 16. God does not ask unrighteous persons to proclaim his Word. If a wicked person preaches the statutes of the Lord they will still be the truth. And those who hear and accept it will be blessed. But the wicked speaker will get no reward from God.

Verse 17. When a wicked man presumes to preach the word of the Lord it is from the wrong motive. Were he moved by the right purpose he would not himself remain a wicked man. But in his inconsistency the Lord regards him as having cast the truth away.

Verse 18. The preceding verses made general charges of the one-sided lives of the people. Some specific accusations will next be made, such as theft and adultery.

Verses 19, 20. Deception and evil speaking are charged against them.

Verse 21. The longsuffering of God had been mistaken for approval of their evil lives. The time for their chastisement finally came and God was rebuking them.

Verse 22. The full severity of God's judgments had not as yet been heaped upon the people but they were warned to repent or such treatment would come.

Verse 23. Sincere praise will redound to the glory of God. Hence it is that the Lord promised salvation to those who ordered their *conversation* or manner of life according to the divine will.

PSALMS 51

General remarks. This remarkable psalm was composed in connection with the sad affair of David and

Bathsheba. The student should now read carefully the 11th and 12th chapters of 2 Samuel which will give him the historical setting. There was every indication of genuine repentance on the part of David. Furthermore, not only did he fully repent and make unreserved acknowledgment of his sin to the prophet, but God fully pardoned him. That is, he was spared all personal or bodily punishment for it, though he was required to undergo some bitter experiences and losses as a result of his sin. And while he was forgiven his sin upon repentance and confession, as good a man as David would naturally feel humiliated by the circumstance. We know that when God "forgives" he also "forgets," and that the frequent pleas in this psalm do not indicate that David needed more than once to be forgiven for the same transgression. Instead, we should regard the repeated expressions as parts of one great supplication before the throne of God for mercy, in answer to which he was fully pardoned and reinstated in the favor of Jehovah.

Verse 1. David believed that mercy from God toward a guilty man would have to be on the ground of loving-kindness and not on the merit of man. Hence we often read such expressions as the ones in this verse.

Verse 2. *Wash* was used figuratively because there was no physical ceremony to be performed in the case. The Mosaic system did have much to do in the way of literal cleansing. All figurative expressions are based on literal facts or actions, or at least on the possibility of such facts. David had such as that in his mind when he composed this verse and several to follow in the chapter.

Verse 3. *Ever before me* is rendered by Moffatt, "never out of my mind." David knew that God forgets when he forgives, but that did not prevent him from remembering the awful affair himself.

Verse 4. *Against thee only* should not be interpreted to mean that the persons involved had not been sinned against. Bathsheba had been violated and her husband had been killed at the instigation of David. The original for *only* has a meaning that is equivalent to "chiefly." God is the creator of all things and persons in the universe. For that reason, any injury done to things or persons is the same as being done to Him. David used the expression in view of that fundamental truth.

On that basis, also, God would be considered *justified* when he condemned a guilty man.

Verse 5. This verse is relied upon by the advocates of "Adamic sin" or "inherited depravity." By that is meant that human beings come into the world in a state of sin, having received it from the mother at the time of conception, she having received the same condition from her mother, and so on back to Adam and Eve. The doctrine is not only contrary to the general teaching of the Bible, but is not taught by this verse, as a critical study of the words will show. The words *I was shapen* are from *cml* and Young translates it, "To be formed, brought forth." Strong defines it, "A primitive root; properly to twist or whirl (in a circular or spiral manner), i.e. (specifically) to dance, to writhe in pain (especially of parturition [childbirth]) or fear." *Conceive* is from *yacham* and Strong's first definition is, "a primitive root; probably to be hot." It is the word for "warm" in Eccl. 4:11 where the warmth is caused by the nearness of one body to another, not by one body being enclosed by another. A child being warmed in the arms of his mother would thus be "warmed" in the sense of the present verse. With this critical information, considered in the light of the general teaching of the Bible, the meaning of the verse is clear. It shows that the conditions described by David were dated at and after his birth. That will disprove the doctrine that the stain of sin is attached to a person before he is born. We are not told why David mentioned this subject in connection with his own conduct. However, we have no right to assume what his purpose was and then build up a human theory on the basis of that assumption.

Verse 6. This means that God requires man to be sincere in his thoughts. David had shown that quality when the prophet came to chastise him for his sin.

Verse 7. *Hyssop* was used as an instrument to sprinkle the blood of animals in the sacrifices under the Mosaic system (Num. 19:18). It is used here in a figurative sense. (See comments at v. 2.) Strictly speaking, nothing can be "whiter" than something else. The expression *whiter than snow* is figurative and means to emphasize the state of purity in one whom God has cleansed.

Verse 8. David's bones had not been literally broken. He was so overwhelmed by the greatness of his conviction that he used the expression for comparison.

Verse 9. David would not even try to minimize his transgressions which he considered were very grievous. But he asked that God in his mercy would overlook them and *blot out* or forgive him his guilt.

Verse 10. The outward and physical acts of David's sins had been ended and he had bitterly mourned in repentance over them. The inner man was next considered in relation to God. *Create . . . clean heart* meant to help him have a heart that would be clean of any desire to repeat such a sin as he had committed.

Verse 11. David was an inspired man and such an honor would not be fitting in one who was guilty of such grievous sins as he had committed unless he received cleansing from the guilt. In that view he made this earnest plea to God for divine mercy.

Verse 12. *Restore* means to reinstate him in the spiritual favor of the Lord.

Verse 13. A man who is under the guilt of transgressions himself is in no position to exhort others. David wished to be cleared of the guilt hanging over him so that he could contact others who were out of the way.

Verse 14. David had been guilty of violating the moral code. He also had been guilty of bloodshed and asked to be forgiven all guilt.

Verse 15. *Open thou my lips* means for God to suffer him to speak the words that would be appropriate under the circumstances.

Verse 16. This verse and the following are related to v. 15. Material sacrifices would not atone for the terrible sin that David had committed. Could such things be sufficient to "balance the account" in God's sight, David would gladly have provided a myriad of the best animals. He knew that God could not be "bought off" in that way.

Verse 17. Instead of offering animal sacrifices to atone for such a sinful circumstance, David named the kind that God would desire and accept. It was a *broken spirit* and a *contrite heart*. That means that the whole being of the guilty one should be brought to the foot of the throne of God, and be prostrated in humble and

sincere reverence to the God of all mercy.

Verse 18. This is an exhortation addressed to himself. David means that he should accompany the confession of v. 17 with practical acts of service to Zion.

Verse 19. *Then* means that after showing his faith (penitence) by his works, he could consistently resume the animal sacrifices on the altar in Jerusalem.

PSALMS 52

Verse 1. The preceding psalm was devoted to David's personal sin and he did not spare himself from severe condemnation. He can very consistently address his remarks now to other sinners. They had been boastful of their wrongdoings while David repented of his in bitterness. The constancy of the goodness of God should cause the workers of iniquity to become ashamed of themselves.

Verse 2. A razor can be so sharp that it would cut a gash unnoticed by the victim for the moment. The fact is used to compare the deceitfulness of a wicked tongue.

Verse 3. It would be had enough were a man to put evil and good on a par with each other in one's estimation. It is much worse when he prefers the evil. See ch. 3:2 for explanation of *Selah*.

Verse 4. A tongue does not literally love immoral things. This means that a man who is deceitful loves to use his tongue to speak *devouring* or destructive words.

Verse 5. *Destroy* is used in the light of *devouring* in the preceding verse. Just as surely as a deceitful man would wish to injure an innocent victim, so God will bring that wicked man to utter ruin in the final outcome.

Verse 6. When the righteous people see the fate of a wicked man they will fear or respect the judgments of God. They will *laugh at* or belittle the wicked man who is receiving his just deserts.

Verse 7. David here described the man against whom he had been writing in this psalm. The wicked man's conduct was that of one who refused to let God lead him, but trusted in his own riches and other resources.

Verse 8. The olive tree was the principal or only source of artificial light in ancient times. The compari-

son David made was in that he was enlightened by being a true servant of God. Such service was rendered in the house of the Lord and it entitled him to the mercy of God for which he so often prayed.

Verse 9. David gave the Lord due credit for the favors he had received. *Wait on thy name* means to rely on the good name of God in the midst of the trials of life.

PSALMS 53

Verse 1. *Fool* is from *Nabal* and Strong defines it, "stupid; wicked (especially impious)." Young defines it, "Empty person, fool." It is the same word used as a proper noun in the case of the husband of Abigail in 1 Sam. 25:25. That good woman commented on the appropriateness of the word as a name for her wicked and foolish husband. We should be able to see a logical reason for saying it is a fitting name for the kind of person being considered. He made the rash declaration that *there is no God*. It was not merely a denial of the existence of a supreme Being, which would have been foolish enough. This man affirmed something, and before one is prepared to make such a declaration he must be in possession of all the information that pertains to the subject. Unless this man had seen every inch of space in the universe he had no right to make the affirmation he did. We know that no man has seen all of the space, and he does not know but there could be a God in some place which he has not seen. Hence the statement, *there is no God*, is a rash one and no one but a fool would make it. The rest of the verse is a comment on the general character and conduct of a man who would be so rash as to make the declaration at the beginning of the verse. The plural pronoun *they* is used to mean that all persons are in a common class of evil workers who are guilty of this atheism.

Verse 2. *Looked down . . . to see if*, etc., is accommodative language. God knows all things at all times and does not have to make any investigation to find out. But the style of inspiration is to speak to man about the actions of God as if he were also a man. (See Rom. 6:19.) The present verse means that God would classify all of the men, such as those who would be so rash as to deny the existence of a Supreme Being. In that class it will be seen that not a one would speak with understanding.

Verse 3. Belief in the existence of God is the strongest of motives for a righteous life. By that token we should not be surprised to see the atheists as a class of unrighteous men. These comments are the explanation of the present verse.

Verse 4. The line of thought becomes more specific. The evildoers whom David was considering especially were the persecutors of God's people. *Eat up my people* is a figure of speech, referring to the vicious treatment the unbelievers imposed on the people of the Lord.

Verse 5. Let not the reader be confused about the use of the personal pronouns. This is poetic language and is not bound by the strict rules of whether the pronouns are 1st, 2nd or 3rd person. The verse means that workers of iniquity were fearful when there should have been nothing to be afraid of had they been righteous persons. But since they were determined to injure the servants of righteousness, God had *scattered the bones*, which means the Lord had utterly defeated their purposes.

Verse 6. A general rescue of Israel from all opposition of their enemies is the primary sense of this verse. But in addition to that, the psalmist made a prediction (unconsciously perhaps to him) of the return of the nation from the great captivity, which was fulfilled in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

PSALMS 54

Verse 1. The name of God is worthy and his strength is infinite. With the two attributes of his Being he would be able to save to the uttermost.

Verse 2. *Hear and give ear* are similar expressions. They mean to grant unto David the relief he was desiring.

Verse 3. *Strangers* were those outside of David's group of friends. His *soul* or life was what they were seeking to destroy. *Not set God* means they did not respect God, therefore they would not respect his servant.

Verse 4. David believed God was his helper. One way of helping him was to strengthen his friends in their support of him. See comments at ch. 3: 2 for *Selah*.

Verse 5. *Reward evil* meant to put some form of punishment upon David's enemies. *Cut them off* denoted that the enemies would be prevented from carrying out their plots against David.

In thy truth meant that God's dealing with the wicked enemies would be according to truth, that is, it would be the true way of dealing with them.

Verse 6. It is not enough merely to speak praises to God for his favors. David proposed to make an offering that would cost him something. The motive that was expressed in this verse for sacrificing to God was reverence for his *good name*.

Verse 7. God not only desired to save David from his enemies, but he was able to fulfill that desire through his mighty power.

PSALMS 55

Verse 1. *Prayer and supplication* differ chiefly in degree of intensity. The latter is a very earnest form of the former.

Verse 2. *Make a noise* means to be greatly agitated, not merely to produce a loud sound. The point was that David's troubles were so grievous that he was constrained to express himself with emphasis.

Verse 3. David's earnestness of voice in complaining of his afflictions was caused by a like voice of his enemies. They opposed him both in word and action.

Verse 4. *Terrors of death* is a strong expression of the intense feelings of David caused by his trials. He was not actually expecting death at the hands of his enemies, but the anxiety that was crowding up upon his heart was such as to suggest the extremity of death or the approach to it.

Verse 5. These feelings pertained to David's fleshly nature. His inner self had not given way to doubt as to the continued support from God.

Verse 6. This verse was another expression coming from the natural reaction of David to the heavy oppression from his enemies. It was but according to human nature longing for relief that he thought of the advantages of a bird when being pursued.

Verse 7. A lonely hiding in some far away wilderness would be preferable to the constant irritation that his enemies were causing David.

Verse 8. *Windy storm* is a figure of speech, referring to the tempestuous attacks upon David because of his service to God.

Verse 9. *Divide their tongues* meant to weaken the force of their stormy tirades against David. Those tirades

had caused violence to occur in the city, destroying peace.

Verse 10. The agitation from the enemies of David was ceaseless or *day and night*.

Verse 11. *Deceit* and *guile* are practically the same, and refers to the underhanded methods that were used by the enemies of David.

Verses 12, 13. *It was not an enemy*. That is, it was not one who admitted he was an enemy although in reality he was one. It would be expected that an enemy would seek to injure his victim and such treatment would not cause much surprise. But for such treatment to come from a professed friend would be peculiarly painful.

Verse 14. This verse describes the close association that had been between David and some of the persons who were now acting the part of his enemies.

Verse 15. *Hell* is from a word that has various meanings. One of them is in reference to a state of forgetfulness. David had often prayed for the destruction of his enemies. In this verse he prayed for their complete overthrow. He gave a just reason for this wish; the existence of wickedness in their dwellings.

Verse 16. No earthly help would be effective against the workers of iniquity. David therefore put his trust in God and called upon him for security.

Verse 17. The frequency of David's prayers makes up the subject of this verse. A familiar church hymn is based on this thought, and it was also the practice of Daniel, both before and after the wicked edict signed by the king. (Dan. 6: 10.)

Verse 18. A man might overcome his antagonist in battle and yet be in a terrible condition afterward. But David had been given victory with peace. *Many with me* means that many foes had contended with David.

Verse 19. The sense of this verse is as if it stated the reason why the wicked men did not change their ways; it was because they did not fear God.

Verse 20. *He* applies to the evil characters described in the preceding verse. These men were even covenant breakers, and had raised their hands against the very ones who would have been at peace with them.

Verse 21. The wicked character is still the antecedent of the pronoun. The verse describes a hypocrite who

uses favorable words to hide the evil intentions that are in the heart. By thus misleading the victim he could be held within the grasp of the foe until the opportune time for striking.

Verse 22. This verse is identical in thought with 1 Pe. 5: 7. No human being is able to bear the burdens of life without divine help. The original for *moved* would justify a stronger rendering, such as "to fall." That is better, for a person might be somewhat moved by the opposition of his enemies but yet not be cast down.

Verse 23. But God will cause the wicked men of the earth to be cast down and finally brought to complete ruin.

PSALMS 56

Verse 1. The reader has doubtless observed that David's conflicts with his enemies make up by far the greater portion of the book of Psalms. I know of no special reason for his troubles except his vigorous activities in behalf of the Israelite nation. There were many heathen nations in the land and surrounding territories and they were envious of the success that David was having. He was a successful warrior, yet he relied chiefly on the help of God for victory, hence such prayers as this verse.

Verse 2. The enemies of David outnumbered him, but when God is concerned in an issue numbers do not count; therefore, David called upon the *Most High* for help.

Verse 3. This verse means that David would fear his enemies were it not for his abiding trust in God.

Verse 4. David praised God for the surety of his Word. With the assurance that he had from this divine source, David was encouraged to defy all the powers of the flesh.

Verse 5. *Wrest my words* means David's enemies perverted his statements and gave to them a distorted meaning. That is the kind of tactics that dishonest foes often use. By a misuse of what a man says, his words can be made to have a meaning far different from what he intended.

Verse 6. This whole verse has a simple meaning; David's enemies grouped together to spy on him. When they saw what they thought was the right time they would make an attack on his *soul* or life.

Verse 7. The prayers of David were that his enemies be prevented from "getting away" with their iniquity.

God's *anger* in casting them down would be in the nature of righteous indignation and not in that of petty outbreak of temper.

Verse 8. *Tellst* is from CHAPHAR and defined, "A primitive root; properly to score with a mark as a tally or record, i.e. (by implication) to inscribe, and also to enumerate; intensively, to recount, i.e. celebrate."—Strong. The original for *wanderings* is defined by Strong by the one word, "exile," which refers to the many attempts by his enemies to isolate him by their floods of persecutions. Putting tears in a bottle would indicate they were to be preserved to be considered as a keepsake, in remembrance of some loved one who had shed them. The whole verse means that God notices and remembers the trials and sacrifices his servants experience for His sake.

Verse 9. The mere prayer of David to God would not cause his enemies to turn back or retreat. But such a prayer would bring forth the deliverance from God and that would compel the foes to halt.

Verse 10. The outstanding thought in this verse is the motive for David's praise for the Lord. It was because of his Word, and that had always been a prominent thought with the psalmist, as can be seen in his writings.

Verse 11. Two thoughts are set as opposites of each other. They are trust in God on one side and fear of man on the other.

Verse 12. *Thy vows* means the vows or pledges David had made to God. *Are upon me* means he was not intending to disregard them.

Verse 13. This verse is a recognition of past deliverance from serious evil. On that basis David believed God would again preserve him so that he could continue to serve him among those in the land of the living. In spite of the threatenings from mankind, David was willing and eager to portray his devotion to God in sight of the foes.

PSALMS 57

Verse 1. The bodily parts of God are like those of a human being and not a dumb creature. The comparison to *wings*, therefore, is figurative, and means that as the wings of a bird would provide a shelter, so the Lord would protect David in his trials.

Verse 2. The *cry* was an earnest prayer to God for help. God is the

one who *performeth* whatever is done to protect the righteous from their enemies.

Verse 3. *Send from heaven* signifies the source from which all true help must come. The *mercy* that God will send forth will be according to *his truth*. See comments at ch. 3: 2 for meaning of *Selah*.

Verse 4. *Lions* are devouring beasts and fire is a tormenting, destructive element. *Spears, arrows and swords* are instruments of death. All of these things are used to compare the character of David's enemies.

Verse 5. As a comparison, David exalts God above the *heavens*. The word is plural and refers to the 1st and 2nd heavens. That means the regions of the air and the planets. Then the psalmist adds the earth in his comparison which makes it complete for the material universe. It would have been inappropriate to name the 3rd heaven, for that is where God dwells as a spiritual Being.

Verse 6. A net is a device of a general nature. It can be spread out in some expected path of the victim, and can be hidden from his view. Another means of capturing a victim is a pit, dug in the route to be traveled so that he will not see it until it is too late. It often occurs that the evil designer has laid his plot so long before that he has forgotten about it, and then he will become the victim of his own plot. In every place where *Selah* is used, the reader should see the comments at ch. 3: 2 whether I mention it or not.

Verse 7. *Fixed* means prepared or settled. It denotes that David was ready for whatever might be in store for him in the divine providence. It is a thought similar to the one in 1 Pe. 4: 1.

Verse 8. David was summoning his various resources to express praise for God.

Verse 9. David was inclined to praise God from personal sentiments. He also was not ashamed for others besides his own people to know of his devotion to God; he would praise him among the *nations* which means the heathen. It recalls our minds to the teaching of Jesus in Mark 8: 38.

Verse 10. *Heavens and clouds* are used as things for comparing the greatness of God's mercy. That is, the mercy of the Lord is not only extensive but it is of a high and holy or worthy kind.

Verse 11. The actual position of God cannot be changed by any man. *Be thou exalted* means that David was desirous of seeing God thus exalted.

PSALMS 58

Verse 1. The pronoun *ye* refers to the people who had shown so much unrighteousness. The question form of language here is really a criticism of their pretense to being good when their conduct did not agree with it.

Verse 2. *Weigh* means they would deal out their violence as a merchant would weigh out his goods to the people.

Verse 3. Advocates of "inherited sin" try to find their doctrine in this verse. When a statement is made that cannot be interpreted literally, some figurative or accommodative sense must be given to it. We know that a newborn infant cannot speak at all, therefore he could not *speak lies*. The word *estranged* also proves the writer was not using his language literally. This word means to turn aside or forsake the way. We know that an infant cannot perform anything of that nature. The verse, therefore, means that the tendency of human beings is to follow the fleshly desires, and that they manifest that tendency early in life. We all believe that doctrine, but it has no resemblance to that of the "inherited-sin" variety.

Verses 4, 5. Certain beasts and serpents can be charmed or held spell-bound and thus rendered harmless. There are others that will not listen or pay any attention to any attempts at fascination. The latter is used to compare the enemies of righteousness. They will viciously attack those whose lives are better than theirs, then turn a deaf ear to the protests of the victims.

Verse 6. All of the expressions in this verse are used figuratively. The desire of David was that God would deal roughly with his adversaries.

Verse 7. *Continually* has no word in the original and is really against the thought of the writer. The idea is of something that makes a show of activity for a while, then ceases. A stream that runs continually does not vanish and hence would not compare with the fate that David wished for these wicked enemies. *He* and *his* refer to God and *them* refers to the enemies. David prayed that God would destroy them as with arrows.

Verse 8. All of these verses express the attitude of David toward his enemies. He is signifying his feelings by a number of comparisons. Strong defines the original for *melteeth* by, "disappearance." The appearance of a snail is trivial and short-lived. *Untimely birth* refers to the case where the prematurity of the child caused its death so that it could never see the light of day.

Verse 9. The speed with which the wrath of God was to work against the wicked foes is the thought in this verse. *Thorns* refers to the fuel used to build a fire under the vessel. The foes were to feel the wrath of God in less time than it takes for the pots to feel the heat. The foes will be taken away *both living* (taken alive) by the whirlwind of God's wrath.

Verse 10. The first half of this verse is literal. It is right to rejoice whenever God brings vengeance on wicked men. The last half means the righteous will see the wicked foes brought to the feet of their would-be victims.

Verse 11. The righteous will be able to realize the justice of God against wicked men. Such a sight will be all the *reward* that the servants of the Lord will receive and should be all they would desire.

PSALMS 59

Verses 1, 2. David was not afraid of righteous men. A good man is not in any danger from other good men. That is why we have so many expressions from him asking for deliverance from evil characters.

Verse 3. The *soul* of man as the inner being cannot be injured by human beings (Luke 12: 4, 5). The word is used here meaning the life of David. He declared he was not guilty of any sin that would justify the enmity of the oppressors.

Verse 4. The enemies *prepared* or plotted against David through no fault of his. Had he been guilty of any act of wrong-doing he would not feel justified in calling on God for help as he did so many times with complete satisfaction.

Verse 5. To *visit* the heathen means to bring upon them some severe judgment. God's mercy was never promised to those who were impenitent. It was proper, therefore, for David to make the prayer of this verse. See comments at ch. 3: 2 for *Selah*.

Verse 6. The enemies are compared to dogs or "evening wolves." The com-

parison is to show their wild and greedy character.

Verse 7. The envious, cutting words that lying foes were uttering against David were compared to swords. When a man raves about his victim, he expects someone to hear him, else his *belching* would not accomplish anything. The idea is that he thinks the intended victim will not hear it. Only those will hear (he thinks) who might be influenced against the one who is the target for his shafts of spite.

Verse 8. There is One who hears all that is said and who will confound the plans designed by the wicked against righteous men.

Verse 9. David's faith in his God caused him to look his afflictions in the face. He believed God had the strength to defend his righteous servants.

Verse 10. *Prevent* has a meaning opposite of what it has today. It means literally "to go before" for the purpose of guidance. It therefore means that the mercy of God would help David in his conflicts with the foes.

Verse 11. To *stay* the foes would soon put them out of remembrance. David preferred to have them live, but be scattered and defeated which would enable them to realize their shame and thus be punished more extensively.

Verse 12. No actual bodily harm was coming to David from his enemies. But they were uttering vicious words against him and that irritated him.

Verse 13. To *consume* does not mean to destroy literally, for that would contradict v. 11. David wished God to come against his foes with such unmerciful vengeance that all their plans would be destroyed.

Verse 14. Not having been literally destroyed, but only scattered, the enemies would return to the attack, hoping to accomplish their purpose. (V. 6.) David would relish seeing them do so provided they failed in their intent.

Verse 15. This verse shows the motive indicated by my comments on the previous one. David would find much satisfaction in seeing the disappointment of the "dogs."

Verse 16. The *mercy* of which David would sing was that which he expected on the basis of his service to God. The particular form of the mercy was that which defended him against the persecutions at the hands of his enemies.

Verse 17. *God of my mercy* is significant in that no mercy could be expected from earthly sources. Instead, man was causing the conditions that called for God's mercy.

PSALMS 60

Verse 1. David was speaking for the nation as a whole. The people often provoked the Lord by their sins and received the judgments of God as a punishment.

Verse 2. Not the earth literally was made to tremble, but the people who live on it. They were made to feel the force of God's wrath.

Verse 3. *Hard things* and *wine of astonishment* are figurative phrases referring to the chastisements of God upon his wayward people.

Verse 4. A *banner* is from a word that is defined by Strong as a token. It means that people who fear God are "winners" in the contest against sin and God gives them the "blue ribbon" or token as a first prize reward.

Verse 5. David loved his people and prayed for them. Save with the *right hand* means that the salvation that is provided by the hand of God will be righteous.

Verse 6. *In his holiness* means that the sayings of God are holy in form and thought. The preceding verse was favorable for God's people and the same thought is continued in this. *Divide Shechem* means to divide or deal to Shechem, and *mete out* or deal out to Succoth means to give blessings of God to that place.

Verse 7. The places named belonged to God, hence it was fitting that He deal to them the favors previously mentioned. *Judah is my lawgiver* is a prophecy although the italicized word is in the present tense. The law in the days of David was given and administered through the tribe of Levi. But the time was to come when the law of God would come through Judah (Gen. 49:10; Heb. 7:11-14). So this is another of the many places where an inspired writer interrupted his story to make a prediction that was apparently unrelated to the general trend of his thought.

Verse 8. A *washpot* is an article for very humble use, and a place where one would *cast his shoe* would not be very dignified. God considered *Moab* and *Edom* in that light. In the last clause of the verse the word *Philistia* refers to the land of the *Philistines*.

Because in the marginal rendering is "over" and the lexicon agrees with it. The idea is that God was challenging the Philistines to interfere with his dealings with the two peoples, *Moab* and *Edom*. Of course the challenge was made in irony.

Verses 9, 10. David wrote as one who was to share in the triumph over the city of the Edomites. He asked who was to make such a victory sure. He then answered his own question in the words *will not thou, O God?*

Verses 11, 12. God can help one out of trouble, but it would be in vain to look for assistance from man.

PSALMS 61

Verse 1. A *cry* is an earnest form of prayer.

Verse 2. *From the end of the earth* indicated that David would call upon God from the farthest extent of his difficulties. *Rock* is from an original that Strong defines as a "refuge." A place of safety that was above the area of David's trials was that to which he prayed God to lead him.

Verse 3. *Shelter* has the same force of meaning as *rock* in the preceding verse. In material warfare a *tower* is constructed for two purposes: One is that of a defensive fort, the other is to give opportunity as a "look-out" post to observe the enemy.

Verse 4. There was a literal *tabernacle* but David used the term to indicate the sanctuary of God from a spiritual standpoint. He would maintain an unbroken relationship with God. *Wings* was also used figuratively to mean the overshadowing protection of Jehovah for those under his care.

Verse 5. His *vows* refers to the professions that had been made of service to the Lord. *Hast heard* means that God approved of them and rewarded David for them. The *heritage* means he rewarded David in the same way he had others who feared the Lord.

Verse 6. God did not wish his people to have a king and suffered them to have one over divine protest. However, after letting them be formed into a kingdom he promised to bless the king if he would remember his God in all his ruling.

Verse 7. *For ever* means "during the age." In this connection it means the king would retain his throne as long as he lived. *Mercy and truth* denotes that the mercy of God will be in harmony with the truth.

Verse 8. A part of the *vows* of David was a promise to praise God daily. In doing that he would be fulfilling his religious obligation to God.

PSALMS 62

Verse 1. *Waiteth* means that David calmly relied upon God for salvation, or protection against the activities of his enemies.

Verse 2. Not be *greatly* moved indicates that David did not expect to escape entirely from the oppression of his foes. But it would not be so extensive that he would be overwhelmed or entirely defeated.

Verse 3. This verse was addressed to the enemies of David. He gave them a warning that defeat was in store for them. *Be slain* did not mean that they would be literally killed. It denoted the complete overthrow of their plots. Their prospects for continuance was compared to a *bowing* (sagging) *wall* and a *tottering fence*.

Verse 4. *They only consult* means they pretended to counsel with a good man in order to obtain instruction. But their real motive was to get "inside" information that would give them an undue advantage.

Verse 5. This verse was addressed by the psalmist to himself. *Wait upon God* meant to rely upon God for deliverance from the foe.

Verse 6. This is practically the same as v. 2.

Verse 7. God was his glory in that David would glorify no other Being. *Rock, strength and refuge* have already been commented upon in recent chapters.

Verse 8. Man's trust in God should not be variable. He should rely upon God's help *at all times*.

Verse 9. *Low degree and high degree* refer to the professed ranks of the men. But whatever their stations in life, if they are *laid in the balance*, which means to be put to the test of real merit, their pretensions will be exposed.

Verse 10. The first clause is addressed to men using the wrong means for gain. Even if they should apparently succeed, the success would not justify their vain boasts. If riches should come to a man from righteous sources, yet it would be foolish to become attached to them. The mere obtaining of wealth is not wrong. The means of getting it and the attitude towards it or use made of it is what

counts. Paul taught this lesson in 1 Tim. 6: 10, 17.

Verse 11. *Once* and *twice* are used in a general sense. It means that God had spoken so clearly on the subject that no room for doubt was left. It was evident that the Lord is the source of all true strength.

Verse 12. The strength of God is not used without mercy. Due consideration is always shown to those who recognize the power of the Lord and who strive to be worthy objects of its benefits.

PSALMS 63

Verse 1. The name *God* is used twice and is from two different originals. The first refers to a supreme Being as a ruler; the second has the special significance of a powerful One. David was not actually in want of the necessary things of life. He used such conditions to compare the feeling he had for the need of divine help.

Verse 2. This verse names the things he longed for in the preceding one. It would not be a new experience, for he had seen them in the sanctuary. He wished for a repetition or continuance of the same.

Verse 3. Lovingkindness really is equivalent to life. The comparison means that life without this kindness of God would not be worth living.

Verse 4. *While I live* did not imply that David would be unconscious after the death of the body. It means he would praise God all the days of his life. *Lift up hands* is a gesture of respect for God.

Verse 5. *Marrow and fatness* are materials very desirable for the temporal body. David meant the spiritual blessings of God were as refreshing to his soul as these literal things were to the body.

Verse 6. The spiritual provisions of God gave David "food for thought" even when in the night watches. He made practically the same remark in ch. 1: 2.

Verse 7. *Shadow of wings* is figurative, comparing the shelter afforded by the Lord to that of a large bird. As a birdling would find comfort under the wings of its mother, so David found a feeling of security with his Lord.

Verse 8. *Soul* is used to include the whole being of David. The word is often so used in the Bible. (Gen. 12:

13; Ex. 12: 15; Lev. 4: 2; Ac. 27: 37; 1 Pe. 3: 20.)

Verse 9. *Soul* is used in the same sense as in the preceding verse. *Go into the lower parts*, etc., is figurative, meaning they will go down in shameful defeat.

Verse 10. David's enemies were to be overthrown in battle. *Portion for foes* was said to denote the humiliating destruction awaiting the foes.

Verse 11. David was king in Jerusalem when he wrote this psalm. His success over his enemies was to be accomplished through the help of God. Also all others would succeed who had God as the backing for their undertaking.

PSALMS 64

Verses 1, 2. *Secret counsel* of the wicked enemies of David was what he dreaded most. It is not so difficult to meet soldiers who come out like men into the open and fight manfully. But a cowardly plotter is hard to meet, hence the psalmist implored the help of God in his difficulties. An *insurrection* is an unlawful, disorderly uprising against society and lawful government.

Verse 3. As a man would *whet* his sword in preparation for a conflict, so these enemies of David prepared to speak slanderous words against him. It is necessary to bend a bow in order to cast an arrow. Likewise the foes of David drew their tongues into a tension to discharge the arrows of bitter words.

Verse 4. *Shoot in secret* is like the bushwhacker in carnal warfare. This phrase was used concerning the same actions described in the preceding verse.

Verse 5. David continues his description of secret foes. *Laying snares privily* means they were plotting secretly against David intending to injure him at a time when he would not be suspecting it.

Verse 6. *Search out iniquities* means they were trying to find something on which to accuse David of sin. The inward thought of the enemies is that they wish very much to find something of which to complain.

Verse 7. The *arrow* that God will shoot will be his darts of wrath against the workers of unrighteousness. They will be wounded by having their pride brought down,

Verse 8. The lies of the enemies will be exposed. When that is done they will be shown to be the ones who are really guilty of the evils they charged against David. When people realize the wickedness of David's foes they will *flee away* or evade them in fear.

Verse 9. *Men shall fear* means they will respect God for his wonderful works of righteousness. *Wisely consider* denotes they will take a wise and just view of the actions of God.

Verse 10. A righteous man will always be glad when he sees the good work of God. It will cause him to have increased faith in the power and wisdom of divine providence.

PSALMS 65

Verse 1. *Praise waiteth* has the idea of being held in waiting or reserve for God. *The vow* refers to the obligations that faithful servants of God had agreed to perform. A man will gladly discharge his duties to One whom he considers to be worthy of praise.

Verse 2. *All flesh* is used to include mankind in general. That would mean the high and low, the rich and poor, the learned and unlearned.

Verse 3. The *iniquities* were those of David's enemies. They were making his life miserable with their persecutions. David looked upon his afflictions as a means of keeping him humble, and in that way *purge* or cleanse him from his transgressions.

Verse 4. It was to be understood that God chooses only those who are righteous. That explains why David pronounced a blessing on the man that was God's choice. *Dwell in thy courts* is a figurative reference to the intimate privileges of those whom the Lord loves. The *goodness* or advantages of that intimacy would be fully satisfactory to all who love the Lord.

Verse 5. *Terrible things* means the acts of the Lord that should be feared or revered. The reason they should be so considered is their *righteousness*. *Art the confidence* means God is the one in whom all people of the earth should have confidence.

Verse 6. It is the power of God that controls the parts of the earth. He caused the mountains to be formed as they are and to be maintained through the centuries.

Verse 7. The Lord's power over the sea was demonstrated in the case of Jonah (Jon. 1), and in the time of Christ (Matt. 8: 23-27).

Verse 8. *Afraid at thy tokens* denotes that the people were impressed by the tokens of God's power. *Outgoings* refers to the sources of the daily appearances of daylight and darkness. God so regulates them that the people of the earth rejoice.

Verse 9. *Visitest* means to bestow something on the earth. *River of God* is a figurative reference to the moisture needed for the production of the earth's crops. That is provided by the Lord and hence the figure of speech used here.

Verse 10. This verse is practically the same in meaning as the preceding one. It refers to the provisions of life that are produced by the earth; these good things all come from God. The same thought is given us in James 1: 17.

Verse 11. *Paths drop fatness* indicates that wherever God moves there are blessings to be had for mankind.

Verse 12. Whether the broad stretches of the wilderness are considered, or the little hills of the homeland, the providence of God gives the necessary seasons.

Verse 13. The pastures receive the rain from God which enables them to produce grass for the flocks. The valleys are the smaller areas and are used for the growing of grain. This is made possible by the watering mentioned in v. 10. *Shout and sing* are not used in a literal sense. The good things of life produced by the hills and valleys cause the people to shout and sing for joy. This transition from inanimate to animate things is a form of speech sometimes used in the Bible to give a picture of the goodness of God. See Acts 14: 17 where the heart is said to be filled both with food and gladness; one literal and the other mental.

PSALMS 66

Verses 1, 2. I do not find any original words for the first half of verse one. But the general thought of the paragraph will justify their use. The idea is that men should express their gratitude for the goodness of God by mirthful sounds.

Verse 3. *Terrible* is from the same Hebrew word as "reverend" in ps. 111: 9. It has various shades of meaning including respect and dread. The connection here shows it to have the latter meaning. The enemies dread the power of God and *submit* unto him. The marginal reading says "yield

feigned obedience" and the lexicon agrees with it. The enemies do not sincerely worship God but pretend to be in subjection in order to escape his terrible judgments against the children of disobedience.

Verse 4. The *worship* that all the earth (the people) shall give to God will be by way of adoration for and acknowledgment of the great works in the universe. The passage does not mean to predict universal salvation, for that would contradict too many positive statements of scripture that teach otherwise.

Verse 5. *Come and see* is a phrase used to call attention. It is not necessary to *come* to any particular place, literally, in order to see evidences of God's works.

Verse 6. The subject matter of this verse confirms my comments in the preceding one. The miraculous crossing of the Red Sea had taken place hundreds of years before, yet the people were told to *come and see* it. The meaning is they were to consider it.

Verse 7. The rule of God over the nations is one of power in the sense of strength. The majority of mankind do not permit God to rule their lives in the matter of their moral conduct. But the time will come when all rebellious ones will be brought to judgment. In view of the final judgment of God the disobedient ones are warned not to exalt themselves. See comments at ch. 3:2 for explanation of *Selah*.

Verse 8. Human beings can *bless* God only by acknowledging him as the source of all blessings. This is the truth that justifies the first clause of the familiar Doxology which says: "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow." The same thought is set forth in James 1:17 regarding the only source of good things.

Verse 9. *Soul and life* have about the same meaning as a rule. When they are used in connection with each other as in this verse the first means the vitality of a man and the second is the continuance of that vitality.

Verse 10. Proving and trying was accomplished through the afflictions God suffered to come upon David. *Silver is tried* by putting it through fire to separate the dross from the metal. The process was used to compare the experience of exposure to trial at the hands of the enemies.

Verse 11. This verse is still dealing with the subject of tests brought upon the people of God. It is not difficult to maintain a profession as long as there is no opposition. The real test comes when one is called upon to endure great suffering and danger for the sake of his friends.

Verse 12. *Fire and water* is a reference to a practice resorted to as a test. A person accused of some crime was required to submit to the test to prove his guilt or innocence. He would be thrown into a body of water and if he floated it indicated his guilt. Even a thing like a sea would spew up the guilty one. Or, it he were forced to run through some fire it would not harm him unless he was guilty. Occasionally a sympathetic friend would offer to go through the test as a substitute for him. That gave the origin of the saying "go through fire and water" for another. My authority for this paragraph is in Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, article *ordeal*; and Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia, article *ordeal*. In the case of David and his brethren it was used figuratively. They stood the test because it says *thou broughtest them out*.

Verses 13, 14. There were certain sacrifices that were required by the congregation, and others demanded of individuals. Besides these, a devoted Jew was encouraged to vow to make sacrifices when his circumstances suggested them. David had promised some of such offerings in the midst of his afflictions. God had given him deliverance and now his gratitude prompted the statements of this paragraph.

Verse 15. The sacrifices under the Mosaic system might be classified as the major and minor ones. *Fatlings* were the larger and *rams* were the smaller sacrifices. Also, *bullocks* were the larger and *goats* were the smaller. The thought is that David wished to go the full extent of sacrificial devotions.

Verse 16. *Soul* is used to include the entire person of David. He meant he was desirous of telling others of what God had done for him.

Verse 17. The *mouth and tongue* are both used when addressing the Lord. This form of speech was used to please the sense of variety in emphasis.

Verse 18. To *regard iniquity* means to be favorable toward it. God will

not hear the prayer of one who is in that frame of mind.

Verse 19. On the basis of the foregoing truth David was not guilty for God had heard and granted his prayer.

Verse 20. God was *blessed* in that he was acknowledged to be the source of David's blessings. They were manifested in the form of mercy in the time of his trouble.

PSALMS 67

Verse 1. David personally was the greatest sufferer from the opposition of the enemies, but the nation as a whole often was a victim. The prayers, therefore, were in the plural form for David was very mindful of his brethren. There is a noted example of this fact recorded in 2 Sam. 24: 17.

Verse 2. God's special favor upon the children of Israel would be an evidence to the other nations of the world of His goodness.

Verse 3. *Let the people* is a mild form of the more emphatic thought, calling on the people of the world to praise God.

Verse 4. The *nations* that were not directly of God should be pleased to see the goodness he manifests for his people. After all, even the heathen are under the control of God (Dan. 4: 17; 5: 21), and it should be agreeable to them when they observe the kind of Being who holds their very existence in his hands.

Verse 5. *Let the people* is explained at v. 3.

Verse 6. Ingratitude sometimes brings the judgments of God upon the world. In the days of special providence the earth would refuse to produce the necessities of life. (2 Sam. 21: 1.) But if the people will give God the praise due him they will be assured of the blessings of the earth.

Verse 7. All people will *fear* or respect God when they see the great benefits that he gives them through means of the earth.

PSALMS 68

Verse 1. Military victory over his enemies was a thing for which David often prayed. The Jewish nation was secular as well as religious. It is proper for temporal governments to fight for their defense (John 18: 36), hence it was right for David to express himself as he did in this verse and in many other passages.

Verse 2. The brevity of *smoke* and *wax* was used to compare the fate that David wished for his enemies; they were to disappear without delay.

Verse 3. The righteous people have reason to rejoice when wicked persons are overthrown. If their complete destruction is necessary for the good of others, then it would be right to wish for it to be accomplished through the power of the Lord.

Verse 4. *Rideth upon the heavens* indicates that God is above all things in the universe. *Jah* is a short form of Jehovah and means the "self-Existent or Eternal." Having never had a beginning he is logically the ruler of everything in creation.

Verse 5. God's care for all unfortunate persons is as good as that of a father or a husband. The Lord executes his watchful care for the needy from his holy habitation beyond the skies.

Verse 6. *Solitary* is from YACHYD and "lonely" is a leading word in Strong's definition. In the King James version it has been translated by darling 2 times, desolate 1, only 6, only child 1, only son 1, solitary 1. The word primarily has reference to what is commonly called an orphan. *Families* is from BAYITH and Strong's definition is, "a house (in the greatest variety of applications, especially family)." In the King James version it has been translated by family 5 times, home 25, house 1790, household 52. The idea is that God intended the family home as the proper place in which to care for orphans. The same thought is indicated in 1 Tim. 5: 10. The rest of the verse of this paragraph has to do with the subject of liberty. There are no harder *chains* than those of sin. God will deliver all from them who will obey him.

Verses 7, 8. In this paragraph we have an interesting use of the word *Selah*. The comments at ch. 3: 2 show the word to mean a pause for reflection. It is very fitting to pause in the midst of this passage and meditate on the mighty power of God. It was manifested at Sinai and at many other places.

Verse 9. By sending rain God did *confirm* the promise made in Gen. 8: 22.

Verse 10. *Dwelt therein* means the congregation lived within the blessings which God provided by rain for the country of his people.

Verse 11. This verse states a fact that occurred in more than one instance. God could have inspired all men by his word at the same time had he so desired. Instead, he has always committed his law to certain men and then expected great numbers of others to repeat it among the people of the earth.

Verse 12. Persons of contrasting power are mentioned in order to show God's working is not always according to logical rule. A king might not be able to escape being chased, while the female citizens at home would reap the benefit from his defeat.

Verse 13. *Pots* and *dove wings* are used figuratively to compare the conditions of God's faithful servants while in their afflictions and after they have been rescued.

Verse 14. The antecedent of the first *it* is *inheritance* in v. 9. *White* is not in the original and has no meaning as used here. *Salmon* was a hill near Shechem. Snow falling on the hill would be scattered about. That was used to compare the commotion of kings who had opposed God's people.

Verse 15. *The hill of God* meant the spiritual prominence of God's institution. It was compared to a literal hill in the land of Bashan.

Verse 16. *High hills* was a figurative reference to the high esteem the foes of David had of themselves. He indirectly criticized them for their self-exaltation and warned them in view of the spiritual hill of God in which they should be interested.

Verse 17. *Chariots* were instruments of war and when used figuratively refer to the power of God over his enemies. They would be handled by the angels who are the servants of Heaven. The vast number mentioned is for the purpose of emphasis. *Sinai* is named because it was the place where God's law was given after Moses, the first lawgiver, had ascended to its peak.

Verse 18. After such a reference to Sinai and the important things that issued from it, it was logical to pass from that to the second Moses and tell of the things he did. The Psalmist may not have personally understood why he was inspired to write this verse (1 Pe. 1: 10-12). However, it is a prophecy of the ascension of Christ, after which he too caused an outpouring of power from God. It is quoted

in Eph. 4: 8 and spoken of as being a saying of old time.

Verse 19. The Lord is the giver of all blessings and in acknowledging the fact we *bless the Lord*. God not only supplies us with the things needful for the body, but he is the means of our salvation.

Verse 20. *Our God* is an expression occurring often in the Bible. There were so many false gods advocated by the heathen nations that it was significant for the servants of the true one to designate him by the possessive pronoun. God is the one who has power to give life to the dead.

Verse 21. The *head* and *hairy scalp* indicate the most vital part of a man. The reference to it is to show the complete defeat of the enemies of God.

Verse 22. *Bashan* was one of the heathen districts and was occupied by strong people. To rescue his people from such a hold would show God's great power. Likewise would it be shown were he to save them from the sea.

Verse 23. *Thy foot* means the foot of God's people. Victory over the enemy is the subject of the verse. That was indicated by the dipping of the foot in the blood of the enemy. The humiliating degree of the defeat to be imposed on the enemy was indicated by the prediction that the dogs of the Israelites would lick the blood of the enemy slain. This kind of comparison was made in the case of Ahab. (1 Ki. 21: 19.)

Verse 24. *They* refers to the enemy before whom the wonderful *goings* or acts of God had been displayed.

Verse 25. David was a great man for musical instruments; used especially in service to God. He represented the victory as being celebrated with the music.

Verse 26. God is the *fountain* of all good, whether material or immaterial. The children of Israel had come from that *fountain*, hence they were told to bless God.

Verse 27. Both large (Judah) and small (Benjamin) groups with their *rulers* or leaders had come from God. The same was true of other tribes so they should praise God.

Verse 28. What *strength* these groups had was by the decree of God. David prayed for continuance of that favor to the nation.

Verse 29. The temple was the headquarters of the Lord's kingdom. The recognition of that government was to be done by the kings of the earth. It would be indicated by their *present*s. See the meaning of that in comments at Gen. 32: 13.

Verse 30. The reference to dumb creatures was to show the low estimate David had of his enemies. He prayed for God to rebuke them so completely that they would pay the customary tribute or "present," which they would do with *pieces of silver*.

Verse 31. This verse means that notable persons in Egypt and Ethiopia would soon acknowledge the supremacy of God.

Verse 32 This was rather in the nature of a command or demand. The kingdoms of the earth were called upon to recognize God. See comments at ch. 3: 2 for *Selah*.

Verse 33. *Rideth upon*, etc., was to indicate the over-all jurisdiction of God. In view of that authority the nations were directed, in the preceding verse, to give due praise unto the God of Israel.

Verse 34. The *strength* of God is greater than that possessed by any other being. That strength was contributed to the oversight of Israel. *Clouds* had reference to the regions of creation, and God's strength was manifested therein.

Verse 35. *Terrible* is from YARE and means that God is worthy to be respected for his might. He is able to give *strength* and *power* unto his people. These words have practically the same meaning and are used together for emphasis.

PSALMS 69

Verse 1. *Waters* in symbolic language means afflictions. *Soul* as used here refers to the whole being. David means he is "flooded" with afflictions.

Verse 2. This is along the same line as the preceding verse. *Mire* and *waters* are used figuratively. *No standing* means it is all mire with no solid footing.

Verse 3. These strong expressions are descriptive of the intense feeling David had because of his many persecutions. He had not lost faith in the Lord, but the flesh is weak and often gives way to sighing and lamentation.

Verse 4. *More than the hairs* is a figure of speech used for emphasis. It

is something like Gen. 13: 16; 22: 17. David never did resent any punishment that was due him, but these people were hating him *without a cause*. Although he had been falsely accused of fraud, he gave to his accusers the property they claimed. In other words, rather than cause unnecessary friction he was willing to suffer himself to be defrauded as Paul taught in 1 Cor. 6: 7.

Verse 5. This was an admission of the general weakness of the human being. There was no specific sin of which he was guilty at that time. However, we should note the statement that a man's sins are not hid from God.

Verse 6. To *wait on* God means to rely on him and to expect divine help. David was being shamefully treated by the enemies of righteousness. He was concerned lest the condition might embarrass those who were *waiting* on God and possibly cause them to be hindered in their devotion. The prayer was in behalf of those persons, that they would not let David's afflictions affect them. It was a thought similar to that expressed by Paul in 2 Tim. 1: 8.

Verse 7. David set an example of the courage he desired others to manifest. He had endured the reproaches of the enemies because of his love for God.

Verses 8, 9. Again the inspired mind saw a fitting place to make a prediction of an experience that was to come upon the illustrious descendant of David. Unknown to him (perhaps) he passed from his own experiences to those of Christ, and the prediction is cited in John 2: 16 and Rom. 15: 3.

Verse 10. This means that his enemies *reproached* or made fun of David when they saw him grieving over his persecutions.

Verse 11. *Sackcloth* is a coarse fabric of which gunny sacks are made. It was worn in ancient times when the person was undergoing a period of grief or anxiety. When the enemies saw it they spoke in *proverbs* about it. That is, they made him the target for their jeers and tried to humiliate him.

Verse 12. This verse names persons of two opposite ranks. Those who sat in the gate were representative men because that was the point for diplomatic conversations. Of course it is understood that *drunkards* were of the

very inferior rank. Both of these classes showed disrespect for David in his afflictions or persecutions.

Verse 13. These persecutions did not discourage David from his devotions to God. He continued to make his prayer to the Lord. *In an acceptable time* was said in about the same sense as we mean when we say, "If it be thy will." *Truth of thy salvation* indicates that the salvation coming from God is according to truth.

Verse 14. *Mire and water*, as in previous verses, are used figuratively referring to David's many trials at the hands of his enemies.

Verse 15. This verse is more along the same line as the others mentioned. Let it be noted that David did not ask to escape all difficulty. He prayed only to be saved from being overwhelmed and completely defeated as his enemies intended.

Verses 16, 17. David believed that God was always just in his dealings. But he also believed that God was merciful and it was on that basis that he could expect relief from his persecutions.

Verse 18. David did not mean his *soul* from the standpoint of spiritual danger. He used the word as applying to his present existence; his life had been threatened.

Verse 19. David would not presume to offer information to God. But rather, the form of speech was his way of acknowledging the complete wisdom of the Lord.

Verse 20. The intensity of David's persecutions was being more definitely described. The mind of inspiration was getting ready to pass again to a prediction concerning the great Descendant of David.

Verse 21. This and several following verses are in reference to the persecutions of Christ and also the fate called for upon his persecutors. This present prediction was fulfilled while Jesus was on the cross. See Matt. 27: 34; Mark 15: 23; Luke 23: 36; John 19: 29 for the record of fulfillment of this noted prophecy.

Verses 22, 23. The Jews rejected Jesus and plotted his death. As a result they were destined to be rejected by the Lord. We do not have to guess at the application of this prophecy, for Paul cites it in connection with his remarks about the Jew-

ish nation and the shortcomings charged against it. (Rom. 11: 9, 10.)

Verse 24. This verse is in the form of a prayer, but it is a prediction of the judgment of God upon that wicked nation for its disrespect of the divine law.

Verse 25. The nation as a whole was considered guilty of the death of Christ. However, the agent in the wicked deed was Judas. This prediction also is clearly interpreted in the New Testament. In Acts 1: 20. Peter quoted it when he was preparing to find a man to take the place of Judas as an apostle. The plural form of the pronoun need not confuse us. Judas was the actor for the nation and it was appropriate to speak of the tragedy in that manner.

Verse 26. It was God's will that Jesus be smitten (Isa. 53: 4), but that did not justify the motives of those who fulfilled that part of the Lord's plan. God gave his Son over into the hands of wicked men, then *they persecuted* him with a bitter hatred.

Verse 27. The original for *iniquity* is defined by Strong as, "perversity, i.e. (moral) evil." In the King James version it has been translated by punishment (or iniquity) as well as by just iniquity. Hence this verse is a prayer for God to add the punishment of iniquity to the wicked Jews for their practice of iniquity. The last clause of the verse means for God not to favor them with a reward of righteousness.

Verse 28. This verse practically means for the wicked Jews to be forgotten and left out of the record. That would cut them off from all sharing with the righteous.

Verse 29. *Poor and sorrowful* is a phrase with mixed meaning. The first word is not literal, for David had much of this world's goods. He was poor in that he was "depressed," which is the leading word in Strong's definition of the original. That would give to the last word of the phrase a literal meaning.

Verse 30. Songs and other poetical compositions were a prominent manner with David in expressing his sentiments. *Magnify him* meant to recognize the greatness of God.

Verse 31. Animal sacrifices were required by the law and were pleasing to God. However, they were material things and in comparison did not equal spiritual praise.

Verse 32. The *humble* would include those too poor to present a costly sacrifice like a bullock. But when they saw that God was pleased with such services as sincere praise, which was something that the poorest could offer, then they were made glad. *Heart shall live* means they would have the heart to seek God when they saw that what they had to offer was pleasing to him.

Verse 33. *Despiset* means to belittle or think lightly of another. If the *poor* are in the prison or other distress the Lord will consider their case nevertheless.

Verse 34. Inanimate things like the *earth* and *sea* cannot actually praise God. The thought is that God should be praised because of these works of creation.

Verse 35. *Zion* was the capital of *Judah* and God's interest in them was such that he would defend them against all enemies.

Verse 36. This verse is a prediction that the land of *Judah* would be possessed by future generations. But that was on condition that they *love his name*.

PSALMS 70

Verse 1. *Make haste* is only an earnest plea for divine help.

Verse 2. *Seek after my soul* and *desire my hurt* mean the same thing. The personal injury of David in this life is what he means by such references to his *soul*.

Verse 3. *Aha, aha*, is an expression of ridicule, indicating joy at another's misfortunes. *Be turned back* means for the foes to be stopped in their hateful work.

Verse 4. David was as considerate of the righteous as he was of the wicked. That is, he not only prayed for the defeat of the wicked, but prayed God to cause the righteous people to rejoice. God's greatness cannot be increased by man. *Let God be magnified* means for people to recognize his magnitude by proper words of praise; also by a life consistent with His great love.

Verse 5. *Poor and needy* is explained at ch. 69: 29, and *make haste* is commented upon at the first verse of the present chapter.

PSALMS 71

Verse 1. *Confusion* is from *BUWSH* and Strong defines it, "to pale, i.e. pale, i.e. by implication to be ashamed; also

(by implication) to be disappointed or delayed." David was never much worried at the prospect of physical discomfort. What he dreaded most was the humiliation of being gloated over by his wicked enemies.

Verse 2. *Deliver . . . righteousness* indicates that God would not rescue a man from a difficulty unless he was in the right.

Verse 3. *Habitation* is used figuratively, meaning a secure haven of safety. *Commandment* is from a word that means "appoint" also. The thought is that God had appointed that righteous persons should be delivered from wicked enemies.

Verse 4. All *cruel* men are *unrighteous*, but not all *unrighteous* men are *cruel*. David was being persecuted by men who had both characteristics. But either trait would render a man wicked in the sight of God.

Verse 5. There is very little difference between *hope* and *trust*. The first refers specifically to a strong cord to which a man might cling; the second means a place of refuge; both denote a condition of assurance. David had enjoyed this support *from his youth*. That is, from the time he was old enough to think and be responsible. He did not believe the doctrine of inherited sin.

Verse 6. This verse does not contradict the preceding one. An infant is in no danger on account of sin, but he could be liable to physical harm. God had cared for him and also his mother before she had given birth to the son.

Verse 7. It is hard for the world to understand the courage that is manifested by a true servant of God. David's explanation of it was the fact that he relied upon God for strength. A similar circumstance arose with the apostles. (Acts 4: 13.)

Verse 8. *Praise* and *honor* go hand in hand. The greatest honor any man can have is to be an admirer of God. David, therefore, would praise him all the day long.

Verse 9. This verse is merely another earnest plea for help against the enemy. *Age* has no original as a separate word. It is derived from the word for old. And that word is used in a comparative sense, for David was not "aged" as we commonly use that term, being only 70 when he died. (2 Sam. 5: 4.) The meaning of the

prayer is that he wished God to be with him to the end of his life.

Verse 10. *Take counsel together* is the significant item in the case. A man may not have much difficulty in combatting a single foe, but a confederation of them acting in secret increases the hardship. The secret nature of the conspiracy is indicated by the words *lay wait*.

Verse 11. God allows his servants to be subject to trials to test their faith. Such a situation is often mistaken by the enemy for indifference on the part of the Lord. They will declare that the servant of God has been cast off, and they will seek to take advantage of it in the hopes of overcoming that servant.

Verse 12. Because of the condition described in the preceding verse, David called upon God to help him.

Verse 13. *Confounded and consumed* are strong terms meaning to be completely defeated. Reference to the *soul* was in regard to the general personal life of David.

Verse 14. David's constant trust in the Lord was his greatest quality. During his darkest periods of distress he always turned to God for relief.

Verse 15. *Know not the numbers* was used in the same sense as we say "too numerous to mention." It referred to the manifold instances of God's righteous favors.

Verse 16. David's reliance on the strength of God has a parallel thought in Eph. 6: 10. The latter part of this verse means David would not claim any merit for his own righteousness; only for the Lord's.

Verse 17. *From my youth* is explained at v. 5. *Hitherto* means he had been speaking of the works of God from the time he was old enough to be a responsible thinker.

Verse 18. *Old and grayheaded* is comparative; see comments at v. 9. The central thought of this verse is that, by the help of God David wished to display to all the world the great works of the Creator.

Verse 19. God is not only great with creative power, but all his dealings with man are righteous. David always took delight in praising the Lord for his righteousness.

Verse 20. God showed David these great troubles in that he allowed him to be exposed to them as a test of his faith. *Depths of the earth* refers

to the depression that was caused by the afflictions mentioned above.

Verse 21. True *greatness* consists in being in the favor of God. Jesus taught this truth in Matt. 20: 25-29. David took comfort in the assurance that the Lord would recognize his humble devotion to duty.

Verse 22. Mention of the *psaltery* and *harp* reminds us of one of David's specialties which was instrumental music. God had placed his approval on this service as indicated in 2 Chron. 5: 13, 14.

Verse 23. *Soul* was not used in distinction from the outer man, but was used to refer to the whole living being, just as it is used in 1 Pe. 3: 20. David meant that God had saved him from death at the hands of his enemies. For this redemption he would rejoice and praise the Lord.

Verse 24. The lips might be properly used in singing the praises of God with more attention to the musical quality than to the thought. Such was the leading idea in the preceding verse. In the present one the tongue was to be used for the purpose of language in describing the righteousness of God. To be *confounded* means to be defeated and shamed in the attempts to injure the servant of the Lord.

PSALMS 72

Verse 1. David was king in Jerusalem and he expected his son to reign in his place. Such officials are called upon to render important decisions or *judgments*. That was the reason he prayed for God to give him his divine judgments.

Verse 2. If the favors mentioned in the preceding verse were granted, the good work of this one would be accomplished.

Verse 3. *Mountains and little hills* were used figuratively to denote the extent of the good results that would follow if the preceding conditions were brought about. This extent was indicated by the larger and smaller things in the land.

Verse 4. *Judge the poor* means God would render the proper decisions (through the king) concerning the poor. That class often was slighted because of the humble station they occupied in life due to their financial circumstances.

Verse 5. *They* (the poor) would fear or reverence the Lord because of his goodness to them. No man will live

as long as the *sun and moon* exists. The thought is that as long as these heavenly bodies lasted there would be grateful people to respect God. Incidentally we here learn that the production of human generations on earth will end simultaneously with that of the *sun and moon*.

Verse 6. It should be understood that the tribute being referred to in these verses applies specifically to the king. But that is because he had been enabled to do all these good deeds by the help of God. Therefore it can justly be said that both God and his king are the antecedents of the pronouns. The favors from God through the services of the king are here figuratively compared to showers upon the grass.

Verse 7. Consult the comments at v. 5.

Verse 8. God will favor the righteous king by giving him widespread dominion.

Verse 9. People will be encouraged to come from obscure places to serve such a king. On the other hand, those who persist in opposing him shall *lick the dust* which is a figure denoting their humiliating defeat.

Verse 10. *Tarshish, Sheba and Seba* were towns having kings ruling in them. *Shall offer gifts* means these kings will be induced to offer the usual tokens of recognition. See Gen. 32: 13 and 1 Sam. 10: 27 for comments on this subject.

Verse 11. This has the same meaning as the preceding verse except that it is general in designating who would bring the gifts.

Verse 12. God will not help a man on the mere fact that he is *poor* and *needy*, for those conditions do not prove that he is worthy. The connection shows that David was considering those who had been imposed upon because they were *poor* and therefore were in *need* of help, it being understood that they were worthy characters.

Verses 13, 14. *Precious . . . blood*, etc., shows that *save the souls* does not have reference to the spiritual lot of these people. It pertains to their bodily safety in this world, which had been imposed upon by deceit.

Verse 15. *Given gold of Sheba* is figurative, meaning the good favor that will come to the worthy man who has been oppressed by the wicked.

Verse 16. Corn usually is produced in the valleys, or at best on the side of the mountains or hills only. But the abundance of the crop will be such that it will reach to the tops of them. *Shake like Lebanon* was said to compare the abundance of the products. Lebanon was covered with a luxurious growth that indicated the fertility and prosperity of the country as being very great.

Verse 17. The God who had given the king strength to go forth in service is the subject of the passages in general. His name was not to cease when the sun failed, but man's life on earth will fail then. Hence the comparison to the endurance of the sun was made in view of the extent of man's opportunity to extol the name of God, which will be as long as there are men on earth to extol it.

Verse 18. God is the source of all great things. Whatever man is capable of doing was made possible by the Lord's power, therefore it was said that he *only* did it.

Verse 19. To bless the name of God means to ascribe all blessings to Him. *Amen and Amen* is a phrase meant for emphatic approval of what had been written.

Verse 20. This should not be regarded as David's last prayers to God for we will read more of them. He did not do all of his writing at one "sitting." This verse means he had come to the close of that particular group of devotions. When a congregation pronounces the "benediction" it does not mean it is the last service it will have.

PSALMS 73

Verse 1. Both parts of this verse should be considered. In proportion to their cleanness of heart God was ready to bless Israel.

Verse 2. This refers to some time in the life of David when the trials were almost too much for his endurance; he almost "gave in."

Verse 3. David had seen the success of the wicked and it staggered him.

Verse 4. *Bands* is from an original that means "pain," and *death* is from *MAVETH* and one word in Strong's definition is "pestilence." So the meaning of the verse is that the wicked are "lucky" even in their difficulties. They have enough *strength* to feel firm and do not seem to care for that which others would consider terrible.

Verse 5. This verse is different in its wording but takes the same comments as did the preceding one.

Verse 6. The success of the wicked makes them proud, and in their pride they feel as secure as if they were protected by a chain. The *violence* that would stop a righteous man seems to have been only a protection for these wicked people.

Verse 7. These wicked men were so successful in their wickedness that their eyes could see nothing of interest but their own importance. Their wicked prosperity even exceeded their fondest *heart's wish*.

Verse 8. Such wicked men would speak viciously concerning their own evil conduct against the righteous. They were *lofty* or self-important when they should have been brought low in penitence because of their cruel wickedness.

Verse 9. These wicked men not only practiced iniquity, but talked rebelliously against even the works of creation.

Verse 10. This verse is still speaking of the success of the unrighteous. It implies that people are influenced to go after these evil persons because of their wealth.

Verse 11. *How doth God know* means, "what does God care about what is going on?" They consider that success can be had without any dependence on God.

Verse 12. *Prosper in the world* is a key to the whole matter. These wicked men are prosperous, but it is in the things of the world. It is a foolish way to pass their sojourn on the earth, for after this life the great success will be turned into a dismal failure. Let us here consider the great question of Jesus in Mark 8: 36.

Verse 13. David did not teach that it was useless for a man to be righteous as it concerned the Lord. He meant that all the righteousness that he could practice would be unavailable as far as his enemies were concerned.

Verse 14. Another construction of this verse would be to say that every morning the chastening began and continued all through the day.

Verse 15. *Thy children* means the people of God in general. The chastisement upon David, though brought about by the agency of foes, was from God. Were David to complain too

much about his trials, it would be offensive to the people who might think he should bear his burdens with more patience.

Verse 16. At times it was hard for David to understand what it was all about.

Verse 17. The uncertainty indicated in the previous verse was solved by the action recorded in this. By consulting the Lord in his holy temple David learned *their end*; that is, he learned that the agents of these tests would get their dues.

Verse 18. *Them* refers to the agents mentioned above. They were also brought to punishment because of the motive prompting their persecution of David.

Verse 19. We have many times learned that God used certain evil characters as his chastening rod for his children. But when those characters took much pleasure in the movement God would punish them. (Isa. 10: 5-19.)

Verse 20. When the evil agents are brought to their own punishment they will be aroused as from a pleasant daydream. They will realize that their pleasure at oppressing God's people was short-lived and that their day of reckoning had come.

Verses 21, 22. After seeing the whole transaction through and the purpose of it, David felt rather ashamed for his impatience.

Verse 23. God did not penalize David because of his anxiety, he continued to hold him under divine protection.

Verse 24. *Counsel* means wisdom and instruction. By that David was guided while in the activities of this life. Since he was willing to take such guidance he expected finally to be received in the Glory World. This is another passage that shows that people in Old Testament times believed in another life after death in this world.

Verse 25. A familiar song, "Pass Me Not O Gentle Saviour," includes this verse in its wording. When *heaven* is used in contrast with *earth* it means the 3rd heaven, the place where God dwells personally.

Verse 26. David meant that both his outer and inner beings would fail were it not for the help of God.

Verse 27. *They* means the wicked persons and *thee* means God. Being *far* from the Lord was indicated by

the kind of life they were following. *Go a whoring* means to go lusting after other gods and other unlawful things.

Verse 28. *Draw near* and *trust in* God are put in the same connection. It explains why some people will not seek to be near the Lord; it is because they do not trust in him. One motive David had in trusting in God was that he might *declare his works*. This implies that an unbeliever is not authorized to be a proclaimer of the Word.

PSALMS 74

Verse 1. The statements of this verse should not be taken in the literal sense. They were only an earnest plea for God to grant relief from the heavy distress into which the enemies had thrust David and his people.

Verse 2. The *congregation* had been purchased from Egypt by the death of the firstborn. (Ex. 15: 16; Num. 3: 12, 13.) God *dwelt in Zion* in that the capital of his kingdom and the headquarters of the national worship were there.

Verse 3. *Life up thy feet* meant for God to take his steps toward the place of Israel's desolations. These were not against the temporal interests of the people only, but the *sanctuary* or holy place of worship was being desecrated.

Verse 4. *Ensigns* and *signs* are from the same word and is defined "signal." The verse means the enemy planted his post in the midst of the people of God. Of course they did so unlawfully and for the purpose of overwhelming the people with violence.

Verses 5, 6. The enemies were using violence against the institutions of God. Their actions were compared to those of men attacking the trees in the forest.

Verse 7. This language may be considered in the light of both history and prophecy. Historically it meant the mistreatment the enemies were according the buildings of the people. And it was an omen of what was finally to come upon the temple in the Babylonian Captivity that took place many years later.

Verse 8. In a poetical composition, such as the psalms, we should make allowances for strong statements as an accommodative description of something very striking. The language of

this verse is justified by the terrible havoc caused by the foes.

Verse 9. This verse means there were no signs left of the former greatness of the nation. The literal force of this language should be understood in the light of comments on the preceding verse.

Verses 10, 11. This is just another one of David's anxious prayers for God's help.

Verse 12. David "got hold of himself" and recalled that God had done great things in the past for the universe and the people of the earth.

Verse 13. For a few verses the Psalmist recounted some of the mighty works of God. He went back to the crossing of the Red Sea. *Dragons* is from TANNIYM, and Strong defines it, "a marine or land monster, i.e. sea-serpent or jackal." It is also rendered by whale in the A.V. According to Ex. 15: 8 the waters were congealed or frozen just before the Israelites crossed over. In the rush and crash of converting the water into two separate walls of ice, some of these whales were caught in the movement and had their heads broken.

Verse 14. The flesh of the leviathan would not be the most desirable of food. Yet it might not be too bad for people *inhabiting the wilderness* where one could not be very exacting in his diet. But the main point of David was the fact that this animal, usually too strong to be captured by man (Job 41:1), was overcome by the Lord and thrown over for the use of the natives nearby.

Verse 15. The preceding verse referred to the crossing over the Red Sea. This one occurred at the crossing of the Jordan. By stopping the flow of the river it was equivalent to having cleaved or demolished the fountain supplying the flood (Jordan).

Verse 16. God has complete jurisdiction over day and night. The reader should note that *light* and *sun* are mentioned separately and that light is named first. That agrees with Genesis 1: 3, 4 which shows there was light 3 days before there was any sun. But it does not agree with the "scientists" who say that all light originated with the sun through its vibratory action on the so-called ether.

Verse 17. *Set all the borders* means that God had made the arrangements that have been followed by the earth.

Since God has made *summer and winter* it is plain to see why he could make the prediction of Gen. 8: 22.

Verse 18. Again David was worried about the activities of the enemy. The thing that concerned him especially was their attitude toward God. He put his personal interests secondary to those of the Lord.

Verse 19. *Turtledove* was a sort of "pet name" for the Israelite nation. David was pleading in behalf of the people of God, especially of that portion of them who were poor. It was that condition that encouraged the enemies to oppress them.

Verse 20. God had made more than one *covenant* concerning the people. But the present subject of interest was the treatment being accorded the descendants of Abraham. We therefore would conclude that David meant the one in the first half of Gen. 12: 3. *Dark places* indicates the secret conspiracies of enemies against Israel.

Verse 21. If God should suffer the oppression to continue without relief they would be ashamed or confused. On the other hand, if they were strengthened to overcome their enemy it would cause them to praise the Lord.

Verse 22. *Plead thine own cause* was said in connection with the state of affairs in the nation. That was similar in thought with an expression in ch. 23: 3 where it says that God would lead his servant aright for his own name's sake. By defending the nation against the enemies the foolish man would be stopped in his reproaches.

Verse 23. *Forget not* meant not to let the enemy "get by" with his vile reproaches against the people of God.

PSALMS 75

Verse 1. The existence (not the mere name) of God is the subject of this verse. And the evidence which David cites to prove it is the wonderful works of creation.

Verse 2. *Congregation* sometimes means the citizens of the nation in a general sense, whether in assembly or scattered about in their homes. Just as we would speak about a congregation today, meaning the members of the church wherever they might be located in their homes. David meant the congregation when it had assembled for a hearing. At such time he

promised he would render righteous judgment.

Verse 3. This verse gives a hint of why such an assembly would be formed. It would be because of the confused and disordered condition of the earth's inhabitants. When that occasion should occur David promised to *bear up the pillars* by giving good judgments.

Verses 4, 5. In passing his judgments David admonished men to put away their foolishness. *Lift not up the horn* meant for them not to try showing off their authority.

Verse 6. *South* is rendered "desert" in the margin of many Bibles and Strong's lexicon does the same. Hence only two directions are really mentioned by the writer. The point is that it is vain to rely on any earthly sources for support.

Verse 7. Instead of relying on the human resources, it should be considered that all things are in the hands of God to regulate as he sees fit.

Verse 8. *Cup and wine* are figurative references to the wrath of God against sin. However, the various portions of the contents are used to compare the different fates of the good and the evil persons. The good will be permitted to drink off the red (clear) wine at the top. The dregs or settlements at the bottom of the cup will be all that the wicked will get. The only way they can obtain any wine will be to wring or squeeze out the liquid in the dregs.

Verse 9. David regarded the dealings from God as just and for that reason he would sing praises to him for ever.

Verse 10. With the help of God David proposed to act against the wicked. *Horns* means power and David would destroy that of the unrighteous.

PSALMS 76

Verse 1. Judah was the largest of the 12 tribes, and the capital of the Israelite nation was in that tribe. For that reason David declared that God was known or recognized in Judah. The national worship was centered at that headquarters and that was where people had to go to see the divine exhibitions of power and knowledge.

Verse 2. *Salem* was a short form of Jerusalem (Gen. 14: 18), and *Zion*

was that particular spot in the city where the king had his headquarters.

Verse 3. Victory over a foe was the outstanding desire of David, and he used a great many different expressions to indicate it. A bow would be useless without an arrow, hence it was said that God would *brake the arrows* and other articles of warfare. See the comments at ch. 3: 2 for the meaning of *Selah*.

Verse 4. Here is another indication of the militant mind of David. Among the things he appreciated was the capturing of those who were arrayed against him. He compared such a result to a mountain covered with creatures destined to become victims.

Verse 5. *Stouthearted* were those who thought they were very brave in conflict. They had become a "prey" to the strength of God and had been put to sleep or rendered unable to move a hand further in combat with the Lord's forces.

Verse 6. *Horse and chariot* again refers to war action. *Into a dead sleep* denotes they had been put completely out of action in battle.

Verse 7. *To be feared* meant that all enemies should fear and respect the might of God. Not one of them would be able to withstand the wrath of God when it was displayed.

Verses 8, 9. God is situated in heaven and from there he issued his judgments. These judgments were directed against his foes. When that was done the earth (its people) feared or trembled and was put out of action. But the *meek* or humble ones were rewarded with the good things of the earth.

Verse 10. The wrath of Pharaoh was suffered to be displayed far enough to give God the opportunity for overcoming it. When that had been accomplished then Pharaoh and his host were overthrown and thus proved that the *remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain*. This is the thought that is intended to be expressed in Ex. 9: 16.

Verse 11. *Vow and pay* meant for them to recognize the duty of sacrificing to God and then of fulfilling the promise to do so. *Bring presents* refers to an ancient practice between various ranks of persons and is explained at Gen. 23: 13 and 1 Sam. 10: 27.

Verse 12. *Spirit of princes* means the spirit of pride that urged the

princes to array themselves against God. The kings who do exalt themselves against the Lord will be made to feel his terror against unrighteousness.

PSALMS 77

Verse 1. A person usually cries with his voice, but the expression means that David used his voice in a strong cry for mercy. God heard and granted the prayer.

Verse 2. The general life of David was one of devotion to God. In view of that it was consistent for him to call upon Him when in trouble. *My sore* is rendered "my hand" in the margin which is correct. The statement of David meant he held out his hand in supplication all night because of his sore trials.

Verse 3. Remembering God did not cause David to be troubled. When he was troubled and his spirit was overwhelmed, then he remembered God and prayed unto him.

Verse 4. David was so troubled at times that it kept him from sleeping. His distress was so depressing that he was unable to express himself.

Verse 5. David was a normal human being even though an inspired man when writing or speaking for God. He had his hours of personal sorrow in which he expressed himself from the standpoint of an uninspired man. (See comments at Job 38: 3.) While in one of these moods he got to thinking of the past.

Verse 6. In one of the scenes of the past he recalled that he was able to sing in the night, whereas now he was so sad that he could not even speak.

Verses 7-9. As David contrasted his present state of distress with the joyous ones of the past, he became fearful that the Lord was deserting him. It seemed that God had discarded his former mercies and was displaying his anger instead. With such a scene before the eyes of his memory David again felt indisposed to speak but plunged into a state of meditation which was indicated by the oft-repeated term *Selah*. See the comments at ch. 3: 2 in connection with this paragraph.

Verse 10. The moments of meditation resulted in the realization that David was a human being and had been lamenting over the things that affected his infirmities, but not necessarily his spiritual interests. He then roused himself and recalled other

years when the *right hand* of God was beneath him. When things are said to be done by the right hand of God it means that whatever is done by the hand of God is right; even though it might not always appear so in the eyes of man.

Verse 11. David not only recalled his own personal favors from God, but also the great works in general that had been done.

Verse 12. It is not enough merely to recall the works of God to the mind as incidents; David strengthened the memory by *meditation*. (Ch. 1: 2.) He did not stop with that, but talked about it so that others might be encouraged.

Verse 13. The *sanctuary* does not refer to any certain place or structure. It is from *concordia* and Strong's definition is, "a sacred place or thing; rarely abstractly [meaning a specific name], sanctity." So whatever and wherever the Lord provided for the holy or religious activities of his people, that was where they should come to get the full knowledge of the Lord.

Verse 14. There were many professed gods among the nations which gave occasion for frequent contrasts between the various ones. David exalted the true God on the merits of his wonderful deeds. He *declared* his strength by something more convincing than mere words. He performed things that could be seen by the public and which showed to the eyes and ears of the witnesses that the God of Israel was great.

Verse 15. David again went back to the historic scenes pertaining to Israel's enslavement in Egypt and the redemption therefrom. Jacob and Joseph were given specific mention for significant reasons. Jacob was the father of the nation of Israel, and Joseph was the one among his sons who went to Egypt first and paved the way for the whole family to come. After that God redeemed them all by his *arm*.

Verse 16. This verse refers to the scenes at and in the Red Sea. The waters were not literally *afraid* or *troubled*. It means that fear was caused by them.

Verses 17-20. The closing verse of this paragraph shows that David was still writing about the deliverance of Israel from Egypt by way of the Red Sea. We therefore should take many of the references to the weather con-

ditions in a figurative or general sense. There is nothing in the history of Ex. 14 and 15 that indicates any literal rainfall at that time. The actual event was the opening and closing of the Sea. That mighty deed induced the Psalmist to paint a picture in general of God's control of all the elements of the universe.

PSALMS 78

General remarks. This is a marvelous psalm and is so full of important subject matter that we shall need to study it carefully lest we overlook some of its teaching. Before taking up the several verses, I shall quote a statement of Dr. Marion McH. Hull, whose remarks I fully endorse, as follows: "This psalm is historic, didactic [instructive], and prophetic. It is a marvelous commentary on the Old Testament. It is a great revelation of the stubborn and unbelieving human heart, and also a great revelation of the patience, grace, love, justice, and divine wisdom of God." The truth in the above quotation will be manifest as we study the verses in their order.

Verse 1. David was going to recount many of the events in the history of the nation under him. *Give ear* was a call for attention to what he was about to say. *Law* was used in an extended sense, including any teaching that would be given, whether in the form of commandments or history, intended for their information and admonition.

Verse 2. *Parable* is from a word that may mean a pithy saying; not necessarily a comparison. *Dark sayings of old* means the important expressions about past events.

Verse 3. Most of the things David intended to write about had occurred many years before and had become a matter of record. But the voice of history has to be repeated many times to impress mankind with its importance.

Verse 4. See the comments on the previous verse. The former generations were the direct objects of the *praises of the Lord* whenever their conduct justified them. But when it was otherwise, then they were made to feel the strength of God in punishing them for their sins. David believed that the children of those ancient fathers should be informed about the past for their own admonition. (1 Cor. 10: 11.)

Verse 5. This whole verse refers to the law of Moses. *Jacob* and *Israel* mean the same people, the latter being a special name for the former (Gen. 32: 28). The law was given to the people who were called by these names. And it was intended that this law should be *made known* to the children yet to be born. That was the reason David called upon these children to give attention to him.

Verse 6. The children of one generation were to tell the story to the next generation, etc., and thus it was to be continued down through the years.

Verse 7. The object of all this repetition was that people would learn to hope in God. It was continued thus over into New Testament times. (1 Cor. 10: 11.)

Verse 8. The coming generations were expected to profit by the mistakes of their fathers. The main lesson to be learned was the folly of being stubborn.

Verse 9. *Ephraim* did not refer to the northern kingdom because the place in history of which David was writing was many years before. But the tribe of *Ephraim* was one outstanding group of the descendants of *Jacob* and the writer merely cited it as a typical example of the rebellion of which he was writing.

Verse 10. A covenant is a contract between two or more parties. If either fails to do his part the covenant will be broken. The children of *Israel* failed in their part and thus were guilty as truce breakers.

Verse 11. They did not forget in the sense of having a lapse of memory. They failed to respect the memory of those wondrous works.

Verse 12. The *marvelous things* in Egypt were the 10 plagues miraculously brought upon the Egyptians. *Zaan* was a city in Egypt near which many acts of Moses took place.

Verse 13. *Stand as an heap* refers to the walls of ice in the Sea. (Ex. 15: 8.)

Verse 14. This verse is a direct reference to that unusual cloud that God used between the Egyptians and Israelites described in Ex. 13: 21.

Verses 15, 16. This miraculous supply of water is recorded in Ex. 17.

Verses 17, 18. *Meat* as used here means food in general. There was nothing wrong in the mere desire for food; the sin was in the manner of

the request and the false accusations they made at the time. (See Ex. 16: 2, 3.)

Verse 19. They questioned the Lord's ability to set a table in the wilderness. It seems they had forgotten the mighty works performed for them in the land of their bondage. By such behaviour they showed their lack of faith.

Verse 20. The children of *Israel* seemed bent on complaining in spite of many evidences of God's goodness. They admitted the provision for drinking water, then specified a charge that the Lord could not produce bread and meat.

Verse 21. The *fire* mentioned here refers to the anger of the Lord at the rebellious cries of his people right while enjoying the many divine blessings.

Verse 22. *Believed not* is an outstanding charge against the Israelites in connection with their complaints. Paul took that view of the case in Heb. 3: 19.

Verses 23, 24. The unbelief of the Israelites persisted in spite of the evident goodness of the Lord. *Clouds* and *doors* are figurative references to food and drink.

Verse 25. *Angel* is from *ABRA* and Strong defines it, "mighty (spoken of God)." Young defines it, "mighty." In the A.V. it has been translated by bull 4 times, chiefest 1, mighty 3, mighty one 1, strong 2, strong one 1, valiant 2. Thus the word has reference to the persons supposed to need it and not directly to its composition. To use a popular expression it could be said to have been a "breakfast of champions."

Verse 26. We would not question God's power to bring about a result without using any apparent means, but he frequently employs some agency for his purposes. In the case at hand he saw fit to use a strong wind, something which ordinarily would have no effect in producing a living creature.

Verse 27. *He rained* is a figurative way of saying he sent an abundance. The *feathered fowls* meant the quails recorded in Ex. 16: 13.

Verse 28. This account may be seen in Num. 11: 31, 32.

Verses 29-31. This feature of the case is recorded in Num. 11: 33.

Verses 32, 33. Regardless of the blessings received, the Israelites sinned

by complaining and had to be punished severely. *Vanity* means brief or empty. Because of the sins of the people, God shortened their years and consumed them in the wilderness.

Verses 34, 35. Sometimes the Israelites were brought to their senses by their punishments and would appeal to God for mercy. They were always treated with divine compassion, many times far beyond the claims of strict justice.

Verse 36. *Flattered and lied* are used in the same sense as they should be. There is a great difference between true praise and flattery. The former is a statement about another that is based on some merit that is recognized. The latter is a superfluous use of adjectives intended only to "bribe" another into granting some favor not rightly coming to the flatterer. We know that God was never misled by the flattery, but he suffered them to have "another chance" for the benefit of others. (1 Cor. 10: 11.)

Verse 37. David gave the explanation for their resort to flattery. It was because *their heart was not right*. Such can truly be said of all persons who attempt to accomplish some purpose with another by using flattery.

Verse 38. Were it not for the mercy of God, his justice would cut off the human race when men reached the years of knowledge. But while the divine wrath was displayed for the benefit of the wayward people, God did not completely destroy them; *did not stir up all his wrath*.

Verse 39. The frailty of the fleshly life is considered in James 4: 14. In view of this fact God made many allowances which a strict accounting would not have suffered.

Verse 40. When man is *provoked and grieved* he has an unpleasant feeling. We cannot think of God in Heaven as experiencing any discomfort as we think of such an experience. But let it always be remembered that in speaking to man it was necessary for God to use man's language (Rom. 6: 19). These terms when applied to God mean that in his infinite knowledge and survey of all things he is disposed to regard certain actions of man as exceedingly provoking and grievous.

Verse 41. *Limited* is from TAVAH and means literally to "draw a circle around." It is impossible literally to do such a thing to God, hence we

must seek an accommodative meaning in the present case. When men refuse to accept the full benefits offered to them by the Lord it has the effect of limiting or cutting short those blessings. A case in point is that of Christ in Mark 6: 5.

Verse 42. Here is the old weakness, failing to remember. Just one serious glance back to their deliverance from Egypt should have melted their heart of stone and caused them to bow in humble penitential prayers to God.

Verse 43. This is commented upon at v. 12.

Verse 44. The pronoun *their* refers to the Egyptians and the *rivers* were the Nile and other streams of the country. (Ex. 7: 17-20.)

Verses 45-48. This paragraph is given in the history of Ex. 8 and 9 and commented upon in its proper place in volume 1 of the Commentary.

Verse 49. *Anger, wrath and indignation* are various names for the attitude of God against the rebellion of man. *Evil angels* were not angels who did something wrong. *Evil* means the different afflictions sent on the Egyptians, and the angels were the agents of God for such work.

Verse 50. *Made a way* means that God did not merely express his anger by words. He found ways and means for making the Egyptians feel it.

Verse 51. This is a brief but complete statement of what is recorded in Ex. 12. The inferior nations came from *Ham* (Gen. 9: 25; 10: 6), among whom were the Egyptians.

Verse 52. David contrasted the treatment accorded the Egyptians with that of the Israelites. One group was the people of the Lord and the other was their enemies. We might justly designate one as a flock of sheep and the other as a pack of wolves.

Verse 53. *They feared not* applied to them after God had given them assurance by the agency of Moses. (Ex. 14: 13, 14) This was just at the time of the crossing through the Red Sea, for the overthrow of the enemies is mentioned in direct connection.

Verse 54. The *sanctuary* was the tabernacle that Moses built and the *mountain* was Sinai. It was not *purchased* in the sense of a business deal. One word in Strong's definition of the original is "procure." God procured the mountain with his *right hand*, which means he made a right use of

his hand (or power) to get the mountain into the possession of his people whom he had redeemed from Egypt.

Verse 55. *Cast out the heathen* refers to the conquest of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. The history is in the book that bears his name.

Verse 56. The Israelites failed to appreciate the goodness of God. Kept *not his testimonies* means they did not obey the commandments of the law. For explanation of *provoke* see my comments at v. 40.

Verse 57. *Turned back* denotes that they let their minds go back to the days of their disobedient fathers and imitated their evil deeds. A *deceitful bow* is one that does not shoot in the direction that is indicated by its position; also, one that snaps and breaks just at the time it was expected to send forth the arrow.

Verse 58. See my comments on *high places* at 1 Ki. 3: 2 in volume 2 of this Commentary. *Graven images* were idols carved out of metal or stone to be worshiped.

Verse 59. *When God heard* does not mean that he has to be informed about what is going on. The phrase was used as if it said, "since God heard or knew."

Verse 60. *Shiloh* was the location of the tabernacle in the days of Eli. (1 Sam. 4: 4.) When the Israelites made the wrong use of the ark, God forsook the whole institution so it was never again as important as it had been.

Verse 61. *Captivity* here refers to the capture of the ark recorded in 1 Sam. 4: 11. In the 21st verse of that chapter the dying wife of Phinehas declared that the "glory" had departed when the ark was taken.

Verse 62. The Philistines were the people who captured the ark from Israel. They were suffered also to make a great slaughter among them.

Verse 63. *The fire* of battle destroyed the young men so that the maidens were deprived of marrying them.

Verse 64. *Widows made no lamentation* seems like a strange statement. The explanation is in the sudden or unexpected instance of the death of their priestly husbands. The women were not present at the event and hence had no occasion to lament them.

Verses 65, 66. God will not always suffer his people to be mistreated by the enemy. He finally came to the

rescue and delivered them. *Smote . . . hinder parts* indicates the enemies were on the run and were smitten as they fled.

Verse 67. *Joseph* and *Ephraim* are used in the same sense since the one was the son of the other. The kingdom had not been divided when David lived, but he was a prophet and wrote of future events as if they had taken place.

Verses 68, 69. *Zion* was the most important spot in Jerusalem. The city was in the possession of the tribe of Judah, hence that was the chosen religious headquarters.

Verse 70. *David* as an inspired writer spoke of David as a young man engaged in caring for sheep.

Verse 71. The young shepherd was called away from the work of caring for the literal flocks. The new work was to feed or tend the spiritual and national flock. That flock was the children of Israel, the name derived from their founder Jacob.

Verse 72. *Integrity of his heart* means his heart was entirely devoted to the welfare of his people. His *skilfulness* was made sure by the guidance of Him who had already declared him to be a man "after his own heart" (1 Sam. 13: 14).

PSALMS 79

Verse 1. The *heathen* were the idolaters that were continually opposing Israel. Many of the remarks of David could have been said at various times in the history. He wrote both as a prophet and historian. The strange people of the surrounding nations were envious of Jerusalem and used every opportunity for injuring the holy city.

Verse 2. Those who were slain in battle were not even given decent burial. Their bodies were left to become food for wild beasts and birds.

Verse 3. Bloodshed was so great that it was compared to the flowing water as an illustration of emphasis.

Verse 4. The defeat and injustice inflicted upon the nation of Israel should have caused witnesses to sympathize with them. Instead, they ridiculed them and treated them with contempt, holding them up to scorn.

Verse 5. This verse is one of David's earnest prayers for divine help. God had declared that he was jealous (Ex. 20: 5), which meant he would not tolerate any sharing of his people's

affections with another interest. The nation had not yet gone off after idolatry, but it had been negligent to some extent in duty to the Lord. David did not protest the chastisement but was pleading that it might be eased up.

Verse 6. While David did not deny the guilt of his people, he still believed that the other nations were much worse. He prayed that God would put the weight of his wrath on them who had not so much as recognized his name.

Verse 7. It was bad enough for the nations to commit idolatry. But they went further and damaged the land of the true people of God.

Verse 8. The plea of David did not deny the guilt of the former generations. He asked that they be now passed by and that the mercy of God *prevent* (assist or go before) them in the time of distress.

Verse 9. Again David did not deny any guilt but pleaded for mercy. He based his prayer on the *glory* and for the sake of the Lord's *name*. For the argument with reference to the name of the Lord see the comments at ch. 23: 3.

Verse 10. David always dreaded to be put to shame by the heathen. If the children of Israel should be punished very extensively, these enemies might laugh and say their God had failed them. In view of that motive the Psalmist called for a demonstration of God's power in the sight of his injured people.

Verse 11. Some of the Jews had been unjustly subjugated to the power of the enemy which made them virtual prisoners. David's prayer was that God would hear the cry of these oppressed ones. Some of them were being held under condemnation of death and the plea of the Psalmist was for their rescue.

Verse 12. The word *neighbors* was not used in the sense of persons in a friendly relation. It meant those who were living near the Israelites and who took advantage of the opportunity to insult the people of God. *Sevenfold* is figurative, meaning for God to deal out a complete revenge upon these *neighbors*.

Verse 13. *Sheep of thy pasture* is an endearing term as well as one that implies a state of dependence. Sheep are loveable creatures, and also are such that must be provided with food and protection by their master. They

are appreciative when kindness is shown to them. Accordingly, the Lord's sheep would gladly show their love for their master to the generations around them.

PSALMS 80

Verse 1. Having referred to the Israelites as sheep in the preceding chapter, David here termed the Lord as a shepherd. Joseph was not the head of the nation, but he was the son who first lived in Egypt and through whose means the whole family settled there. It was fitting, therefore, that he be referred to in this affectionate way. He is thus mentioned in other parts of the Bible. Besides the one in the present verse, he is referred to in Ex. 1: 8; Ps. 78: 67; 8: 1; Amos 6: 6; Ob. 18. *Between the cherubims* had reference to the objects on the mercy seat where the high priest met with the Lord on the great day of atonement. (Ex. 25: 18-22.)

Verse 2. Ephraim and Manasseh were sons of Joseph, who was considered in the preceding verse. This is not a repetition of that statement, for he alone was named there. In this place the next generation is considered and thus the writer names 3 of the separate tribes. The whole idea is that David wished for God to give full recognition to the nation from every standpoint.

Verse 3. *Face to shine* is a figurative signal of the favorable countenance of God. It would indicate that the trials to which the Lord had subjected his people would be discontinued or at least be made lighter.

Verse 4. This is one of the supplicating petitions that David often presented to God. *God of hosts* means he is at the head of vast numbers of warriors and other servants who were ready to do the will of their Commander.

Verse 5. God will see that his people are supplied with food, but they must eat it in connection with hardships when the Lord sees fit to chastise them in that way.

Verse 6. The *neighbors* or surrounding nations looked upon the hardships being endured by the Israelites and regarded them as conflicts among themselves. They would naturally be elated over seeing what they thought was internal trouble and would laugh.

Verse 7. This is a practical repetition of v. 3.

Verse 8. This is a parable between the Israelites people and a vine. If a man purchased a vine it would be useless to him unless he planted it. In order to have a place for the vine he would first have to clear his ground of other plants. And so the Lord cleared the ground (land of Palestine) of objectionable plants (the heathen), then placed his own plant (the Israelite nation) in a position to grow.

Verse 9. The parable is continued as a vine would require. There was enough room to plant the vine when the children of Israel crossed over into Palestine. But it was necessary to have more space, hence David says *thou preparedst room*. This was done by the work of Joshua in overthrowing the 31 kings. (Josh. 12: 24.)

Verse 10. As a thrifty vine would spread until it covered the hillside, so the nation of Israel grew until it occupied the whole land.

Verse 11. The extent to which the vine reached is specified in this verse. The sea was the Mediterranean and the river was the Jordan.

Verse 12. David continued his remarks in the language of the parable. Vineyards were enclosed by hedges for protection (Matt. 21: 33; Mark 12: 1). To break down the hedge would be to expose the vineyard to the ravages of the enemy. The Psalmist was using this to compare the exposure of Israel to the oppression of the heathen which God did for the purpose of chastisement.

Verse 13. These wild beasts were used to compare the heathen nations about the country whose savagery had been felt by the Israelites.

Verse 14. Again David did not deny the justice of the punishment. He only pleaded for mercy by asking God to *visit this vine*. That meant to bestow some relief on the people of the Lord by pushing the enemy back.

Verse 15. *Right hand planted* means it was *right* for the nation to be established by the *hand* of God. Since the Lord had made the vine strong *for himself*, he surely would be inclined to come to its rescue.

Verse 16. The strong terms used referred to the vicious treatment that the heathen had imposed on the nation. David recognized it as a punishment from God, for he lays it to *the rebuke of thy countenance*.

Verse 17. I have explained that the *right hand* of God means that the things done by the *hand* of God are *right*. On that basis a man who is favorable toward God's right hand would be a good man. Such a man might expect that God would give him his hand in the way of support for his life of righteousness.

Verse 18. David promised not to forsake the Lord if he would give him his hand for guidance. *Quicken us* meant to encourage and enliven them by his favors, thus inducing them to call upon the name of the Lord.

Verse 19. This verse is practically the same in thought as vs. 3, 7.

PSALMS 81

Verse 1. A *joyful noise* means an expression that is more than a mere sound. It must have that which indicates an intelligent appreciation of the goodness of God. This idea is also indicated by the fact of the *noise* of singing. Something more than sound is required when one sings; especially when it is used for the purpose of praise.

Verse 2. The *psalm* would be the literary composition that expressed praise to God. And this was to be accompanied by the musical instruments named here.

Verse 3. The religious months were ushered in by the new moon. (1 Sam. 20: 5, 6, 24, 27.) At such times the devout Jews blew a trumpet. (Lev. 23: 24.) This service was to be attended to regularly, *in the time appointed*, regardless of any special favors that might have been received. But there was reason to engage in those exercises with special fervor because of the benefits they had received. Not least of those benefits was the miraculous deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

Verse 4. The references that show this *statute* and *law* were cited above.

Verse 5. The pronouns *he* and *I* refer to God. *Joseph* is used in the same sense as I explained it at ch. 80: 1. One word in Strong's definition of the original for *understood* is "recognition." The verse means that God looked into the situation in Egypt and heard language that he refused to recognize or approve. That language consisted in such as was used against Joseph (the Israelites) in commanding them to labor in rigorous toil and bondage.

Verse 6. This verse is a direct historic statement referring to the work that was done through Moses and Aaron. The *pots* were baskets or other vessels used in carrying heavy loads of material for the work of their severe labor in making brick, etc.

Verse 7. *Thou* (Israel) calledst in trouble and *I* (the Lord) delivered thee. This deliverance was done through Moses and Aaron. *Secret place of thunder* refers to the Lord as the source of thunder and all other wonders. He it was who responded to the cry of Israel. In spite of the merciful help from God the Israelites soon forgot and had to be *proved* or tested. That was done in the case of shortage of drinking water as recorded in Ex. 17. See comments at ch. 3: 2 for *Selah*.

Verse 8. The basis on which God would logically exhort Israel to hear him was the fact that they were *his people*. He would *testify* to them, which is from a word the means to repeat something that had been said before.

Verse 9. The repetition referred to in the preceding verse was the commandment against idolatry. This was first spoken to them at Sinai (Ex. 19 and 20).

Verse 10. The children of Israel were indebted to God for their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Gratitude should have prompted them to hear what their deliverer had to say. The *mouth* is the inlet for material food and the word was used figuratively to compare the inlet for spiritual food. *Open thy mouth wide* meant for them to open their hearts to the full reception of the truth.

Verse 11. *Would none of me* was a brief way of saying that Israel would not receive any of the Lord's instructions regarding their conduct of life.

Verse 12. God never used physical force to get a man to live right as far as his personal life was concerned. The only means he ever used was teaching, and if he would not accept it to regulate his life thereby he was left to himself. After that the full responsibility for the results would be at the feet of the disobedient person.

Verses 13, 14. God never asks man to do more than the human part. Had the Israelites done what they could against the heathen nations, God

would have completed the work by driving the enemy entirely out of the land.

Verse 15. *Submitted* is translated "yielded feigned obedience" in the margin of some Bibles and the lexicon of Strong agrees with it. The heathen would pretend to be convinced by the terror of God's dealing with them, but *their time* (of feeling the wrath of God) would go on unendingly regardless of their hypocritical *submission*.

Verse 16. There is a "switch" made in the pronouns; *them* now refers to the Israelites. Had they hearkened to the words of God he would have given them the best of blessings. *Rock* is from *tsua* and according to the Standard Bible Dictionary the word is "used for that which is hard, barren, and unfruitful." The phrase *honey out of the rock* means that God is able to produce the choicest food from even a barren source. Such wonderful care would the Lord have taken of his people had they been faithful and proved themselves worthy of such attention from Him.

PSALMS 82

Verse 1. *Standeth* means to be stationed or established. One part of Strong's definition of the original for *judgeth* is "to govern." The clause means that God's power and right to govern is above that of all other rulers.

Verse 2. David was speaking for God and to the rulers among the Israelites. They were accused of rendering unjust decisions, and of being swayed by the personal influence of wicked men because of some special advantages offered to them.

Verse 3. A poor man may be wrong; but it is also wrong to accuse a poor man falsely and to take advantage of his dependent circumstances.

Verse 4. This language shows that David was not pleading for these men merely because they were poor. *Deliver* implies a condition of oppression and the plea was for their deliverance from it. It was also indicated that their state of oppression had been thrust upon them while they were *needy*.

Verse 5. *They* still meant the leading men in the nation of Israel. In their blind thirst for power over others they were shutting themselves off from the knowledge of God's great works. We should not forget, how-

ever, that, while the first application of these exhortations was to the leaders, the nation as a whole was guilty for suffering things to go on as they were going. Hence the passage as a whole should be applied to all the Jews.

Verse 6. This verse was cited by Jesus in John 10: 34 in his controversy with the Jews. *Ye are gods* is explained by the second clause of the verse. Every member of a family wears the name of that family. If a family name is Smith then everyone in that family is a Smith. The family name of which David was writing was God; therefore each Jew was a God, seeing he was one of the *children of the Most High*. God is the family name of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. That is why Jesus is called "God" in Acts 20: 28.

Verse 7. Their being members of a divine family would not save them from human punishment if they conducted themselves like wicked men.

Verse 8. God has rightful control over all things and nations. Therefore David pleaded with him to judge the earth; that is, bring some judgment or punishment upon all unrighteous persons of the earth.

PSALMS 83

Verse 1. The three parts of this verse make up another of David's many supplications to God. He was concerned over the activities of the enemies about him.

Verse 2. *Thine enemies* indicates that David regarded the opposition from the foes as being in reality against God, although the contact was made directly against David usually. God and David and the people over whom he was king were united in purpose. Because of this relationship, any action directed against either of the parties to the unit was considered to be against the others.

Verse 3. *Crafty counsel* means they had consulted together for the purpose of devising some underhanded plot against the Lord's work. *Hidden ones* means God's protected ones; those in His divine and special care.

Verse 4. The enmity that usually manifested itself in those days was from the heathen nations around the land of Israel. They were envious of the success of the people of God and

wished, chiefly, to overthrow their national forces.

Verse 5. Individual planning against a righteous cause is always wrong. That kind of evil is much worse when done by a group of persons confederated for the purpose. These confederates had come together in secret meetings and were united in their plots.

Verse 6. *Tabernacles* are places for housing groups of people for various purposes. When used figuratively the word means the groups of the *Edomites*, who descended from Edom (Esau). The *Ishmaelites* came from the son of Abraham and Hagar. The *Moabites* were descendants of one of the sons of Lot. The Hagarenes were people who descended from the same source as the Ishmaelites, but were a specific group of such descendants who took the name of their ancestor Hagar.

Verse 7. These were all groups of the heathen nations that were arrayed against David and the people of the Israelite nation.

Verse 8. *Assur* was another form for the *Assyrians*, and they were *joined with them*. That means that these people had *holpen* (helped) the other nations against Israel. See the comments at ch. 3: 2 for explanation of *Selah*.

Verse 9. The Midianites withstood Israel on their journey to Palestine (Num. 31), and God helped the Israelites. *Sisera* and *Jabin* shared a like fate (Judges 4).

Verse 10. *Became as dung* means they were debased to the state of refuse. But refuse serves a good purpose for the benefit of the earth, and these nations were made to serve for some benefit to the people of God.

Verse 11. The men named were leaders of some heathen nations living in Palestine in the time of the judges. The account of Gideon's victory over them may be seen in the book of Judges, chapters 7 and 8.

Verse 12. The men named in the preceding verse were boastful and thought they would do great harm to the Israelites. Their threats of victory, however, were turned into defeat. David thought back over the history of those times and prayed that a like defeat might come to his enemies who were opposing his service to God.

Verse 13. *Wheel* is from *GALGAL* and Strong's definition says: "A whirlwind; also dust (as whirled)." The thought of David was that God would whirl or fling the enemies away as so much dust. His other comparison was that God would blow them out of the way as *stubble* or any straw is driven before wind because of its lightness.

Verse 14. Other comparisons were made to the effect that fire has upon material. The wrath of God would be the fire and the enemies the wood to be consumed.

Verse 15. We generally think of *persecute* as meaning unjust rough treatment; the original word does not necessarily mean that. Strong defines it, "To run after (usually with hostile intent)," but nothing is said about its being done unjustly. An officer would have the right to chase a man who was wanted for misbehaviour. David regarded his enemies as wicked people and prayed God to pursue them with just vengeance.

Verse 16. The motive that David expressed for wishing shame on the enemies was a good one; that they might be led to seek the name of God.

Verse 17. To be *confounded* means to be disappointed and defeated. The motive David had for this wish was similar to the one expressed in the preceding verse, and it will be stated in the following verse.

Verse 18. The motive to which reference was made was that men might learn about the true God. They were to know that he alone had right to the name *JEHOVAH* which means, "(the) self-Existent or Eternal." The nations of the world had their heathen gods, but many of them had been made by the hands of the worshipers. The God whom the Israelites worshipped existed independent of all external forces.

PSALMS 84

Verse 1. *Amiable* means loving or pleasant. There was but one national tabernacle when David wrote his psalms, while the word here is plural. The thought is that it is always pleasant to be in the house of the Lord.

Verse 2. This verse practically repeats the thought of the preceding one, but it is expressed as an earnest wish for those tabernacles. It is like the sentiment which David wrote in Ps. 122: 1.

Verse 3. The reference to the *sparrow* and *swallow* is figurative and shows the interest God has for the most humble creature. See the teaching of Jesus in Matt. 10: 29.

Verse 4. Verse 1 stated that the tabernacles of the Lord were pleasant. In harmony with that fact the present verse would declare it to be a *blessed* (happy) thing to dwell in the house of the Lord. Such a situation would induce the ones therein to praise Him who was the builder of that house and who gave it the blessings contained.

Verse 5. *Strength in thee* is the same thought that Paul expressed in Eph. 6: 10. The last word of the verse has no word in the original. The first part of the verse would justify the pronoun "thee," with the understanding that it means God.

Verse 6. *Baca* is defined by Strong by "weeping." It is uncertain whether this was a literal valley. I shall quote the explanation given in the Standard Bible Dictionary: "Valley of Weeping RV. But there is no trace of a real valley bearing the name. May refer to a group of balsam trees which because such trees exude (shed) beads of gum resembling tears was called Valley of Weeping. In any case in Ps. 84, the phrase figuratively but plainly points to the typical experience of sorrow turned into joy." Article, *Baca*. I believe this comment is correct and endorse it as my own.

Verse 7. The antecedent of *they* will be found in vs. 4-6. *From strength to strength* means they get stronger as they go. That fact is accounted for by their devotion to God in Zion, the headquarters of the religious life of the nation.

Verses 8, 9. This is one more of David's earnest prayers for divine help. *God of hosts* denotes that all true protection is in Him. Kings or other officials only are literally anointed. Figuratively it means those whom God has chosen as his own.

Verse 10. David describes his preference for spiritual things by using contrasts. One is between being a doorkeeper and an occupant. He would prefer the former if it were in the house of his God, rather than being an occupant in an institution of wickedness. The second contrast will explain what is meant by the first. It means that David regarded one day in the house of God as being

worth more than a thousand days in the tents of wickedness.

Verse 11. A *sun* gives light and warmth, and a *shield* is a means of protection. *Grace* and *glory* means that the favor which God bestows will be right and therefore will be truly glorious. It is significant that only *good* things are assured. Man often asks for things that would not be for his own interests; God will not bestow such things upon any man. Another thing to observe is that even the *good* things will be given only to *them that walk uprightly*.

Verse 12. Again we see that the Lord is over the *hosts* which means a company of soldiers or other forceful persons. It would be logical, therefore, that the man who trusted in such a Being would be *blessed* or *happy*.

PSALMS 85

Verse 1. *Captivity* does not always mean a literal imprisonment, but also applies to any state of distress. David was an inspired writer and could deal with the national captivity which was then hundreds of years in the future. But his remarks were equally true of past conditions of the country in which God redeemed the land from the oppression of the enemies, such as the experiences recorded in the book of Judges.

Verses 2, 3. We may rightly think of this paragraph in a general way, because God is always ready to pardon his servants when they comply with his terms of pardon. It we make specific application to the national captivity and return therefrom it will call for the same conclusion. The particular *iniquity* of which the nation of Israel was guilty was idolatry. After they had spent 70 years in the land of their captors they were completely cured of idolatry, and of course the Lord then had *forgiven the iniquity*. This interesting subject will be given thorough attention in the study of the prophecies, some of which will appear in the present volume of the Commentary.

Verse 4. *Turn us* means to reverse the condition of distress that the enemies had brought upon the nation. God's *anger* was manifested by using the enemy as an agent for the correction of His people.

Verse 5. David once more was pleading for mercy. He did not deny their

being deserving of chastisement, but pleaded for relief from it.

Verse 6. *Revive us again* means to enliven them by the encouragement of divine forgiveness; this would result in the rejoicing of the people of Israel.

Verse 7. The prayer for *salvation* did not mean that David and his people were in an unsaved condition in regard to their soul. It had reference to being saved or rescued from their national enemies; the people who wished them harm.

Verse 8. *God* and *Lord* have some distinction in their meaning. The first is from EL and means "a strong Being." The second is from יְהוָה and is defined by the lexicon of Strong as follows: "(the) self-Existent or eternal," and was the Jewish national name of God. David was thinking of Him not only as a Deity of strength, but as the God over the nation of Israel. *Saints* and *people* referred to the same persons; but the first meant they were righteous, the second meant they constituted a people in the sense of a nation. They had been favored of God and the Psalmist exhorted them not to repeat the mistakes they had made before and which had been condemned of God.

Verse 9. The blessings of God are offered upon conditions. It is here connected with fear or reverence for Him, and it will bring glory to the land of Israel.

Verse 10. This verse brings out the same thought expressed in the preceding one, and in a very specific form by pairing the condition and its results in two phases. *Mercy* and *truth* form one pair, *righteousness* and *peace* form the other. The first word in each pair is the condition on which the second will be granted. The reference to *peace* suggests the teaching in James 3: 17.

Verse 11. *Earth* and *heaven* are parts of the material universe, representing opposite ends of it. The thought is that the good things of God will be distributed generally for those who obey the Lord, who is the maker of all good things.

Verse 12. The stipulation was again made that what the Lord gives is *good*. The good things of this life are what the Psalmist had in mind, for he specified the *increase* of the *land*.

Verse 13. If man's righteousness is displayed *before him* (God), then he shall *set* or establish man in the steps of righteousness. (ch. 37: 23; 119: 133.)

PSALMS 86

Verse 1. *Bow down* means for God to open his ear toward the prayer of David. *Poor and needy* referred to his condition of sorrow and distress.

Verse 2. *Soul* is used in the sense of a living and breathing person. *Preserve and save* are used in the same sense, meaning to rescue and protect from the encroachments of the enemy. *Holy* means that David was one of God's own servants and by reason of that fact was entitled to divine care.

Verse 3. *Mercy* was asked for in regard to his persecutions. When David *cried* for mercy it meant he prayed earnestly for the favor of God.

Verse 4. *Soul* refers to the whole being as used here. By reducing the persecutions against his body, David would be able to have contentment of mind.

Verse 5. A devoted servant of the Lord is always ready to acknowledge his human weakness. A request for pardon does not always imply some specific sin has been committed. Jesus taught his disciples to ask for pardon on a general principle (Matt. 6: 12), and David was praying from that standpoint.

Verse 6. See the comments on v. 1 and apply them here.

Verse 7. *Day of trouble* again referred to the distress caused by David's enemies.

Verse 8. David contrasted both the personality and works of the true and the false *gods*. The *gods* were the objects of worship that were held sacred by the heathen.

Verse 9. The prediction here made was fulfilled in both the temporal and religious sense. The alien nations were to recognize that of Israel; the whole world, also, was to hear the Gospel and furnish men and women to accept it. (Gen. 12: 3; Isa. 11: 9; Matt. 28: 19; Rom. 10: 18; Col. 1: 23.)

Verse 10. The original word for *God* has a more general application than the one for *Lord*. It embraces all personages that are worshiped or obeyed. It is also defined as a term of comparison between persons and offices of dignity. With all these ideas in mind, David rejected all beings in

the universe in favor of the God whom he served. That is, he rejected all others but the one and declared that he was *God alone*.

Verse 11. In this verse David connects *teaching* with *walking*, which is what he also teaches in ch. 37: 23; 119: 133. No man can know the proper way to walk before God without divine instruction.

Verse 12. The names *Lord* and *God* may be used interchangeably for the Supreme Being without any injustice to either. However, there is a distinction in the definition of the originals. With a few exceptions the first is from YEHOVAH and it occurs several thousand times in the Old Testament. Strong's definition of it is, "(the) self-Existent or Eternal; Jehovah, Jewish national name of God." The second is from ELOHIM and Strong defines it, "gods in the ordinary sense; but specifically used (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of the supreme God; occasionally applied by way of deference to magistrates; and sometimes as a superlative." I believe it will be well also to quote from Smith's Bible Dictionary on this most important subject, as follows: "God (good). Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures two chief names are used for the one true divine Being—ELOHIM, commonly translated *God* in our version, and JEHOVAH, translated *Lord*. Elohim is the plural of Eloah (in Arabic *Allah*); it is often used in the short form *EL* (a word signifying *strength*), as the EL SHADDAD, *God Almighty*, the name by which God was specially known to the patriarchs. Gen. 17: 1; 28: 3; Ex. 6: 3. The etymology [origin] is uncertain, but it is generally agreed that the primary idea is that of *strength, power of effect*, and that it properly describes God in that character in which he is exhibited to all men in his works, as the creator, sustainer and supreme governor of the world. The plural form of Elohim has given rise to much discussion. The fanciful idea that it referred to the *trinity of persons* in the Godhead hardly finds now a supporter among scholars. It is either what grammarians call the *plural of majesty*, or it denotes the *fullness of divine strength*, the *sum of the powers* displayed by God. Jehovah denotes specifically the one true God, whose people the Jews were, and who made them the guardians of his truth. The name is never applied

to a false god, nor to any other being except one, the ANGEL-JEHOVAH, who is thereby marked as one with God, and who appears again in the New Covenant as 'God manifested in the flesh'."

Verse 13. *Hell* is from an original that is used in various senses in the Old Testament; one is that of a state of great depression or forgetfulness. The enemies of David would have forced him into such a state had it not been for the mercy of God. Soul is used with reference to David's general being and earthly life.

Verse 14. Pride may be manifested in various ways, and one of them is to be envious of another's success. David's enemies could not bear to see him in such favor with God, so they formed their *assemblies* (conspiracy meetings) in the hopes of ruining his soul or life. The last clause of the verse means the enemy acted in disregard of the Lord as if he did not take notice of what was done to his servants.

Verse 15. *Compassion, gracious, long suffering and mercy* are all so much alike in meaning that it is not necessary to define them separately. The general meaning is that God is very considerate of those who are unjustly oppressed. The Psalmist used the four words for the purpose of emphasis.

Verse 16. *Turn me* denotes a reversal of David's condition of distress. He humbly refers to his mother as the handmaid of God, and for her sake asks for God's favor.

Verse 17. David did not need any special *token* to produce his own faith. He asked for it that his enemies might be forced to see that in opposing David they were opposing God. He wanted his foes to see that God had *holpen* (helped) his servant David against his enemies.

PSALMS 87

Verse 1. *His* refers to the Lord who was named in the last verse of the preceding chapter. *Holy mountains* is figurative, meaning that the Lord has founded his institutions on a high plane, far above the characteristics of the world.

Verse 2. This is another use of contrasts similar to that in ch. 84: 10. The words contrasted are *gates* and *dwellings*, and *Zion* and *Jacob*. Gates would ordinarily be inferior to dwellings, and Jacob (the people in gen-

eral) would be inferior to Zion which is the capital of the nation. David means that the Lord prefers the capital of the nation above the nation aside from the capital. That is appropriate, for a nation without the right kind of capital would be weak.

Verse 3. *Things* is not in the original as a separate word. *Glorious* is from KABED, and Strong defines it, "numerous, rich, honorable; to make weighty." *City of God* refers to Zion, the capital of the nation, and headquarters of the religious activities of God's people. The verse means that many and important things may, and have been said of that wonderful city of God. See comments at ch. 3: 2 for *Selah*.

Verse 4. The preceding verse said that important things had been said or *spoken* of Zion, which referred to the capital city of God. Among them was the fact that even outside territories were benefited by that city; that is, by the good influences radiating from it. Some of those places are named in the verse. *Rahab* (a poetical name for Egypt), and Babylon were to be mentioned as places that had been benefited by Zion. God would mention it to *them that know God*. *Philistia* or Philistines (from which came the name "Palestine" for the country in general), Tyre and Ethiopia were all benefited by Zion. *Man* is not in the original and is not useful to the sense of the verse. The clause means that *this* trio of places (just mentioned) was *born* or received good effects *there* (Zion).

Verse 5. To be *born* in Zion does not mean that the men had their bodily birth there. The idea is that they received their opportunity for accomplishing things from that source. Zion was to be *established* or made secure by the *highest*, meaning God.

Verse 6. When the Lord makes his list (*writeth up*) of men whom he will recognize, he will include those who had been connected with Zion.

Verse 7. *Singers* and *players* were different persons yet both were to be reckoned in the number. No one man has all of the talents or does all of the service to God. *Springs* means sources of good things. David declared that Zion was the source of all his favors.

PSALMS 88

Verse 1. See the comments at ch. 86: 12 for *Lord God*. *Salvation* is used here to embrace every benefit that

David had ever received from God or expected ever to receive. His immediate concern, however, was salvation from the persecutions of his personal enemies who were daily seeking to rob him of his peace of mind.

Verse 2. *Come before thee* means for his prayer to be admitted into the recognition of God. *Incline thine ear* means about the same as to be "open unto their prayer" as expressed in 1 Pe. 3: 12.

Verse 3. *Soul and life* are used in the same sense, meaning David's earthly existence. His enemies were so bitter against him that his life was in danger.

Verse 4. *Pit* is used figuratively, referring to a condition of forgetfulness. By continual oppression of David, the enemies were threatening to reduce his *strength*.

Verse 5. *Free* means he was left alone and forsaken as a man would be were he in his grave. God does not actually forget anything as we commonly use that word. *Rememberest no more* is used as meaning that God does not have any dealings with the body while it is in the grave. The last clause of the verse means the same as the thought expressed in connection with *rememberest*.

Verse 6. David did not charge God with directly dealing with him in the manner described. He knew that it was only in the sense of testing him by suffering his enemies to oppress him. This was indicated by a figurative use of the words *pit, darkness and deeps*.

Verse 7. The *waves* were the surges of *wrath* that God suffered to come over David. It was such a solemn period of meditation that he called for the use of the punctuation term *Selah*. See ch. 3: 2 for the explanation of the word.

Verse 8. In times of trouble one's professed friends sometimes desert him. It happened that way to David when he was tormented by his persecutors. His friends held him at a distance so that he could not *come forth* into their company as before.

Verse 9. This verse is a pitiable picture of David's state of mind through his afflictions. He spent much of his time in supplications.

Verse 10. The implied answer to these questions is "no." See the comments on v. 5 which shows that if God is going to do something for a

man it will be before his body dies and is placed in its grave where nothing will be done in this age.

Verse 11. This verse calls for the same answer as the preceding one.

Verse 12. *Dark and forgetfulness* refer to the state of death. David knows that he cannot be helped against his enemies after he has passed from this life.

Verse 13. One meaning of the original for *prevent* is "to precede." David meant that in the morning he would offer a prayer to precede the favors he expected to get from God through the day.

Verse 14. This is another of David's plaintive appeals to God. *My soul* referred to his life in general. His distress was so great that he felt as if he had been cast off from the face of the Lord.

Verse 15. *Thy terrors* referred to the terrible afflictions that God suffered the enemies to impose upon David. They were so bitter that he was distracted at times.

Verse 16. Again David was using strong language to express the bitterness of his experiences. *Cut me off* means he was undone and cast down in despair.

Verse 17. Water is often used figuratively to compare the volume of afflictions overflowing one. Those imposed upon David were like a continuous flood.

Verse 18. See comments at v. 8 for the explanation of this.

PSALMS 89

Verse 1. The wording of many of the psalms of David was based on his condition of mind. The condition of his mind was caused largely by whatever experiences he was having or considering. The preceding chapter was based on his experiences of distress. The present one is devoted to the pleasant experiences of the Psalmist, and to consideration of the goodness and greatness of God.

Verse 2. *Faithfulness* when applied to God means he is true to his promises. *Established . . . heavens* means the Lord carries out his word to the highest extent.

Verse 3. David speaks for the Lord by using the first personal pronoun *I*. He had chosen David for a special purpose and had made him a sworn covenant.

Verse 4. This verse promised a fleshly favor that would have been fulfilled had the seed of David been faithful. The throne in Jerusalem would have been maintained until the end of the Jewish age, since "age-lasting" is the meaning of *for ever*. It was fulfilled spiritually because Christ was the seed of David and his kingdom is to be everlasting according to the prophecy in Dan. 2: 44.

Verse 5. David now writes of God in the second person. *The heavens* shall praise the Lord in the same sense as was said in ch. 19: 1. *Thy faithfulness* refers to God's promises which he has always kept and always will.

Verse 6. There is only one word in the Old Testament for heaven, whether the 1st, 2nd or 3rd one is meant. However, no man anywhere can be compared to God, hence the word here can be applied to the three heavens. This verse is the basis of part of a familiar church hymn which says: "Whom have I on earth beside Thee? Whom in heaven but Thee?" The implied answer to the questions is in this passage.

Verse 7. *Fear* is from ARATS which Strong defines by, "to awe or dread." *Reverenced* is from the noted YARE which Strong defines by, "to fear; morally to revere." Since both words are used in the same sentence, the distinction between them should be observed. The first means that men should be afraid to do wrong and thus bring down upon them the wrath of God. The second means that God should be respected for his great goodness to the children of men.

Verse 8. *Hosts* means an army or other group of strong men. See the comments at ch. 86: 12 for the distinctive meaning of *Lord God*.

Verse 9. God's power over the sea was demonstrated when he brought the children of Israel safely through it. See cases in Ex. 14 and Jonah 1.

Verse 10. *Rahab* is a poetical name of Egypt. The verse refers to the victory which God gave the Israelites over Egypt in the time of Moses and Aaron.

Verse 11. *The heavens* are the 1st and 2nd heavens in the material universe. God created them and can justly claim them as his own. *World* is from TEBEL and defined as follows: "the earth (as moist and therefore inhabited); by extension the globe;

by implication its inhabitants."—Strong. The verse as a whole embraces the same idea as expressed in Gen. 1: 1, referring to the various parts of the universe.

Verse 12. Coming to consideration of the material earth, David specifies its divisions north and south, also some of its mountains; Tabor and Hermon. *Shall rejoice* means that rejoicing will be caused by the blessings brought through these creations.

Verse 13. *Arm* figuratively means strength, and *hand* means the art of using that strength. *High is thy right hand* means that things done by the hand of God are right and also that they are high in their classification.

Verse 14. *Justice* is defined in the lexicon as "the right," and *judgment* is defined as "a verdict." *Habitation* is from an original that is defined "a fixture, i.e. a basis." The whole clause, therefore, means that the throne of God is a fixed place where right verdicts are rendered. *Mercy AND truth* is a phrase that is very significant. God never extends mercy to a person unless it can be in accordance with truth.

Verse 15. *Blessed* or happy are they who know or who accept the joyful sound. It means the sound coming from the source described in the preceding verse. To walk . . . the light means about the same as the teaching in 1 John 1: 7.

Verse 16. To rejoice in the name of the Lord means to have joy because of what that name brings to one who may wear it. True exaltation comes through a righteous life. It was in view of that principle that Jesus said what he did in Matt. 23: 12.

Verse 17. This means that righteous people glory in the strength that comes from the Lord. Paul said he gloried in the cross of Christ. (Gal. 6: 14.) When *horn* is used figuratively it means power or influence. All true power must come from God.

Verse 18. There is perfect safety in the Lord. This is because he is our king and hence can reign for the benefit of the subjects of the kingdom.

Verse 19. The following verse will show that *holy one* in this verse is David. *Spakest in vision* means the Lord revealed something to David, which also means that he was inspired to write a part of the Bible. *Mighty* refers to the power and courage that David showed after he was

chosen from among the people to be a king over them.

Verse 20. All men taking an office as ruler were anointed with olive oil. However, the Lord anointed David figuratively by bestowing on him the divine blessing.

Verse 21. The first clause of the verse means that David would be established or made secure with the hand of the Lord. The second clause means practically the same as the first, only that the Lord's *arm* instead of his *hand* is used as the support.

Verse 22. This verse was an assurance that David's enemies would not be suffered to *exact* or take toll from him.

Verse 23. The foes of David would be considered as the foes of God. Because of this they were to be overthrown in the presence of David.

Verse 24. The *faithfulness* of God means his actions of keeping his promises. *Horn* means power of influence. Through the name of the Lord this power would be exalted for David and he would become great among the nations.

Verse 25. *Set his hand* denotes that David's power was to be assured; that it would extend to the (Mediterranean) sea and the (Euphrates) river. This was practically the same promise that was made to Abram (Gen. 15: 18), and which was actually fulfilled in David's son (1 Ki. 4: 21).

Verse 26. *He* refers to David who was to receive the promise of power mentioned in the preceding verse. *Cry* is not a call of distress or disturbed state of mind as it often means. It is from an original that means to accost or address someone by name. In the present verse it means that David will be encouraged to address the Lord by the endearing name *father* and the respectful name *God*, recognizing him as the rock or basis of his salvation.

Verse 27. *Firstborn* is used in a complimentary sense, meaning that God would place David in the highest rank of importance. That would be in accordance with the estimate he had of him before he was made king. (1 Sam. 13: 14.)

Verse 28. Saul had done so wickedly when he was king that the mercy of God was denied him finally. David was a righteous king and was rewarded for it with God's mercy and

the loving favor of the Lord followed him through his reign.

Verse 29. *His seed* had reference to Christ who was often called the seed of David. (2 Sam. 7: 12; Isa. 11: 1; Jer. 23: 5, 6.) The throne or kingdom of that seed was to be an everlasting one. (Dan. 2: 44.)

Verses 30-32. The favors of God are promised on conditions. The children or descendants of David, whether fleshly or spiritual, must follow in the righteous steps of their noted ancestor to enjoy the blessings of God. If they do not, they are to feel the *rod* of correction from the same God whom David served.

Verse 33. Will not *utterly* take implies that some degree of severity would be felt by David, but the lovingkindness of the Lord would not all be taken from him. *Faithfulness* means the keeping of one's promise.

Verse 34. A *covenant* is a contract or agreement between two or more parties. But if one party to a covenant break his word it breaks the covenant. God will never fail to make his word good, but man often breaks his word and that releases God from his agreement. But as for God, he will never fail in his part nor change his word.

Verse 35. An oath is an agreement or other statement that is backed up by the dignity and authority of some being greater than the one making the oath. There is no greater Being than God, therefore he must back up his oath by the greatness of his own personality. That quality is his holiness and it means that the promises of God are as sure as is the fact of his holiness.

Verse 36. This verse is the same in meaning as v. 29.

Verse 37. *Moon* and *heaven* are referred to for the same purpose as in ch. 19: 1. See the comments at ch. 3: 2 for the meaning of *Selah*.

Verse 38. In a partial degree this verse had been fulfilled when David wrote it. But as a prophecy it was to be fulfilled by the national captivity recorded in 2 Ki. 17 and 25. God was wroth with his people because of their idolatry.

Verse 39. This is to be understood practically in the same sense as the preceding verse. *Made void* means that God declared that his covenant was void or of no effect. The cause of it was the failure of the servant

to keep his part of it. See the comments at v. 34 on this point of the subject of keeping a covenant.

Verse 40. *Hedges* refers to the fortifications by which Jerusalem was protected. Because of the sins of the nation God was to suffer the enemy to break through the fortifications and take the city that was the capital of the nation.

Verse 41. *Spoil him* means the wealth of the nation was to be taken by the enemy. See the fulfillment of this in 2 Ki. 24: 13.

Verse 42. It was right to bring the hand of Israel's enemies against him because of his sins. This is the meaning of *right hand* as used here.

Verse 43. The unfavorable experiences described in this and several other verses were brought upon the Israelites because of their disobedience. God granted the enemy to have success against the arms of His nation.

Verse 44. The throne of the king in Jerusalem was to be overturned. The prediction was fulfilled in 2 Ki. 25.

Verse 45. The days of man's youth should be his most vigorous ones. But the people of God's nation were met with reverses and felt the hand of divine correction.

Verse 46. David now changed his subject and began his appeal for mercy. He does not complain that his people had been unduly chastised, but pleads for a lessening of it.

Verse 47. David realized the frailty of human life and cited that as a basis for his prayer to God. The same thought is given us in James 4: 14.

Verse 48. Not only is the life of man short at best, but no man can escape death when the time comes. Such a thought should cause us to pause and reflect, hence David used the term *Selah* which is explained at ch. 3: 2.

Verse 49. David never did seriously question the constant goodness of God. This verse is merely a plaintive appeal for the divine help in the times of distress. *In thy truth* indicates that he did not doubt the genuineness of God's promises, for if they were made in truth they would not fail.

Verse 50. *Reproach of thy servants* means that the enemies aimed their reproaches at the servants or people

of God. And those darts of reproach were especially directed against the bosom of David because of his position of prominence.

Verse 51. *Wherewith* means that by the mentioned reproaches the enemy's darts had affected the kingdom, seeing that David had been anointed king over it.

Verse 52. *Blessed be the Lord* means that he was to be adored and praised. This adoration was due Him for all of his goodness. *Amen and amen* is a phrase with no added meaning to what the word would have if used only once. It was repeated for the sake of emphasis and denoted a firm approval of what had been said. The definition of the word in both the original and in the English is, "so be it."

PSALMS 90

General remarks. A considerable number of "authorities" say that this psalm was composed by Moses and was included in the collection of David's writings. They do not seem to be very positive about it. Even as substantial a work as the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia is willing only to say that it "is ascribed to Moses, and may be his." I offer these remarks in fairness to the readers who may take them for what they are worth. But regardless of whether David or Moses wrote this chapter, it was written by an inspired man and I shall comment on it as such and will notice the many and great truths therein which are of interest to all or should be.

Verse 1. The original for *dwelling place* is defined "a retreat." The idea is of a place where one can be always safe and comfortable against the storms of life. *Lord* is from אֱלֹהִים and Strong's definition is, "The Lord (used as a proper name of God only)." Since *God* means the "supreme Being" and has always existed, he would have been a safe retreat in all generations.

Verse 2. The existence of the Creator prior to the work of creation is the thought in the beginning of this verse. The writer does not stop with that, but declares the divine existence to have been from *everlasting to everlasting*. Materialists and other critics of the Biblical doctrine of endless punishment make light of the idea that *everlasting* could mean endless. They ask how there could be two

of them if one of them is endless. In this they expose their own shortsightedness as well as their ignorance of the subject in general. If the existence of God is endless (everlasting), it follows that His existence would be endless in both directions, or, *from everlasting (past) to everlasting (future)*. The original for God in this place means strength or might. The sum of meaning of this verse is, therefore, that God has always existed and always will. That he is a Being of might and hence was able to create the mountains and everything that pertains to the earth.

Verse 3. *Destruction* is from a word that means "to be crushed" in spirit; to be made contrite or penitent for one's sins. That is why the rest of the verse shows that God calls for the penitent one to *return* to Him.

Verse 4. God has always existed and always will. What we call "time" is only the measurement of part of that endless duration, measured by the movements of the heavenly bodies. Were it not for those movements we would not know any difference between a "day" and a "year." Since God is not limited by these movements, what we call a thousand years does not mean any more to God than what we call a day. That is the reason Peter said what he did in 2 Pe. 3: 8.

Verse 5. The frailty and comparative shortness of man's life is the general subject of this psalm. Of course, said frailty is made evident by the statements on the boundless might and existence of the Lord and God of all creation. The pronoun *them* refers to man. There are three illustrations in this verse to show the weakness and brevity of man's existence on the earth. He is as helpless as a feather would be in the path of a flood. His life is like a sleep that soon comes to an end, and his stay here is as temporary as the grass of the field.

Verse 6. This verse continues the thought in the preceding one. As grass is permitted to live only through a day, figuratively speaking, so man's life on the earth soon closes. This thought is expressed also in James 1: 10.

Verse 7. These remarks are not directed against any particular person nor concerning any specific conduct of man. They are in consideration of the general situation of mankind since the sin of our first parents. The

anger and wrath of God was provoked by the first sin which was induced by Satan. Because of that event, man was cast out of the garden and doomed to be *consumed and troubled* by the ills of creation.

Verse 8. This verse means that none of man's actions are hidden from the Lord. Even the thoughts of the heart are seen by Him. (Heb. 4: 13.)

Verse 9. The fleeting shortness of human life is still the main subject. The *wrath* of God refers to the first sin and the attitude that was declared by the Lord against man over it. As a result of that circumstance, the human family passes through the days of its existence as something that is being spent. *Tale that is told*. The first word is the only one that is in the original. It is from HEGEH and Strong defines it, "a muttering." In other words, our life is as transient as a momentary musing or meditation that ends with a sigh. I will quote from Edward Gibbon, author of the famous *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. He was a skeptic as to the Bible, but was a master of English and a truthful writer as a historian and commentator on human life. He so forcefully agrees with the inspired writer as to the shortness of this life that I wish the reader to have his statement which is as follows: "A being of the nature of man, endowed with the same faculties, but with a longer measure of existence, would cast down a smile of pity and contempt on the crimes and follies of human ambition, so eager, in a narrow span, to grasp at a precarious and short-lived enjoyment. It is thus that the experience of history exalts and enlarges the horizon of our intellectual view. In a composition of some days, in a perusal of some hours, six hundred years have rolled away, and the duration of a life or reign is contracted to a fleeting moment; the grave is ever beside the throne; the success of a criminal is almost instantly followed by the loss of his prize; and our immortal reason survives and disdains the sixty phantoms of kings who have passed before our eyes, and faintly dwell on our remembrance. The observation that, in every age and climate, ambition has prevailed with the same commanding energy, may abate the surprise of a philosopher; but while he condemns the vanity, he may search the motive, of this universal desire to obtain and

hold the sceptre of dominion." Chapter 48. I trust my reader will exercise the patience to study this quotation carefully until he has grasped the meaning of its statements. The question with me is how a man who could make such an observation on the facts and then write so majestically about them, could turn away from the Sacred Text and live and die as a skeptic.

Verse 10. All of the things which David says of man's experiences pertain to his life as a human. They do not even consider, much less contradict the truths that refer to his spiritual life. The Psalmist was a great believer in God and said much about his joy and happiness in the divine service. But the frailty and uncertainty of everything that is not connected with a life for God is what is being considered generally in this and other verses. David did not make the statement here as a decree of God on the length of human life. It was rather an observation as to the rule, and the facts of history will bear out the statement of the verse.

Verse 11. This verse means that man generally underestimates the full effect of God's anger against sin. Only in proportion as men *fear* or respect God will they recognize and fully acknowledge the divine wrath.

Verse 12. *Number our days* means to place the proper value on our time; if we do we will not idle it away. We will apply ourselves to those studies and activities that will make us wise and useful in matters that are profitable to all.

Verse 13. This is another of the earnest supplications for divine mercy. Again we observe that no complaint is made as to the justice of the correction that has been placed on God's people. The request is for it to be lessened through mercy.

Verse 14. This is another plea for mercy and for it to come *early* or speedily.

Verse 15. This means a request for relief that is according to the distress that had been suffered. In other words, to counteract the days of affliction with a like number of happy days.

Verse 16. The writer wished the Lord to bring about the work of relief requested. He also wished it to be made so evident that not only the present generation, but the following

ones could realize its existence and be led to appreciate it.

Verse 17. One definition of the original for *beauty* is "agreeableness or delight." The prayer is that God would remove the distress of chastisement and give his servants an agreeable experience instead. It should be understood that *the work of our hands* means the righteous works to be performed under the mercy of God. The request is that all such works would be *established* or accepted by Him.

PSALMS 91

Verse 1. For the authorship of this chapter see "general remarks" at beginning of ch. 90. *Secret place* means a place of refuge or safety. He that is content to dwell in the protection of God will *abide* or always have the benefit of it. It will be like a *shadow* or relief from the heat of distress.

Verse 2. The idea of divine refuge is still the leading one of the writer. He regarded God as the true source of protection and therefore he would trust in Him.

Verse 3. A *fowler* is a trapper who sets a trap or snare for his victims. When used figuratively it refers to men who seek to overcome the innocent by underhanded methods. God will keep his righteous servants and help them to avoid the snares if they will heed the divine instructions. *Noisome pestilence* means the unpleasant and harmful conditions that the enemy might seek to create for the servants of God.

Verse 4. A comparison is made to a parent bird that protects its young under the shelter of its wings. The structure of the wing will furnish a protection like an armor, and the feathers will furnish warmth and nestling comfort. *Shield* and *buckler* are articles of protection against attack from an enemy. God will give perfect protection to all who accept His truth and mold their lives thereby.

Verse 5. The antecedent of *thou* is the person described by *he that dwelleth*, etc., in v. 1. The verse means that actual danger (*arrow*) or the fear of it (*terror*) will never affect the one who puts his trust in the Lord.

Verse 6. This verse is similar in thought to the preceding one. *Pestilence* or disease sometimes attacks one in the night, and speedy destruction may come to him in the day. But

neither will defeat the one who relies on the help of God.

Verse 7. This verse denotes the safety of those who put their trust in the Lord. Great numbers of the enemy will not count as any more dangerous than would a few to those who have God with them. Paul taught this same idea in Rom. 8: 31.

Verse 8. Those who trust in God will see the *reward* or fate of the wicked, that it will be a just and awful punishment.

Verse 9. *Thou* means the person to whom the writer is addressing his assurances. Such a person who makes God his dwelling place will share the same protection as the writer of this verse, and will find shelter in the same refuge.

Verses 10. This verse is practically the same in thought as many of the other verses of the chapter. It refers to the complete security of all who trust in God.

Verses 11, 12. A promise in the form of a prophecy can be so worded as to have more than one application. The general theme of the several verses of this chapter is the security to be had in the Lord. That is true of all men in general, but this paragraph has been given specific application to Christ in Matt. 4: 6 and Luke 4: 10. It is true that Satan is the one who made the application, but Christ did not take any exception to the reference that Satan made to it. Attempts have been made to show that Satan added to the passage. But he did not add any words that would have altered its meaning, neither did Jesus accuse him of it. The perversion of which Satan was guilty was his misapplication of the passage. The proviso on which the protection was given required that the subject be one who is true to God. But a person who would tempt Him would not be true and therefore could not claim the promise.

Verse 13. The *lion* and *adder* are used figuratively to compare the extent of deliverance that God will give those who trust in him. The *dragon* means some kind of dangerous monster like a sea-serpent.

Verse 14. The several pronouns in this verse should be properly connected or confusion will result. *He*, *his* and *him* means the man who loves God; *me*, *my* and *I* refer to God. *Set him on high* means that God will give true exaltation to those who do

right. It is the same thought that is expressed in James 4: 10.

Verse 15. The same connections should be made of the pronouns in this verse as were made in the preceding one. God promised to hear the call of his righteous servant. He will honor the servant by delivering him from his troubles.

Verse 16. No specific span of life is guaranteed to the man of God. It is an assurance of being preserved so that his days would be extended. The *salvation* that was promised to the devoted servant referred to his rescue from the hand of his enemy.

PSALMS 92

Verse 1. Good deeds do not always consist in outward actions that make a show. The Psalmist classes the giving of thanks unto the Lord among good deeds; also the singing of His praises is included in good deeds. After all, if a person is sincerely disposed to remember the goodness of God he is likely to serve him in practical matters.

Verse 2. Another good deed is to display the lovingkindness of God. *Morning* and *night* represents the beginning and ending of a day. The force of the verse is to promise a continual devotion to the Lord for his goodness.

Verse 3. *An instrument of ten strings*. All of these words are from *ason* which Strong defines, "ten; by abbreviation ten strings, and so a decachord." The phrase means to make a chord of ten sounds. The *psaltery* was a stringed instrument especially designed for use in accompaniment with the human voice. The *harp* was an instrument of ten strings and the expression evidently was intended as a repetition of the beginning of the verse for the sake of emphasis. All of this is easily understood when we recall that David was a specialist in the making and using of musical instruments.

Verse 4. David had said (ch. 19: 1) that the heavens declare the glory of God. By that same token the works of God would gladden the heart of mankind.

Verse 5. The works of God are as great as his thoughts. Isa. 55: 8, 9 declares the thoughts of God are as high as the heavens, and the present verse states that they are deep. We thus have the two extremes, height

and depth, to compare the greatness of God's mind and contrast it with that of man.

Verse 6. *Brutish* means dull or stupid, and a *fool* has about the same meaning. Such an individual will not be impressed by the greatness of God's works.

Verse 7. This verse denotes the deception in the strength of the wicked people of the earth. It is like grass that springs forth in the morning dew, but withers as soon as the sun strikes it. This idea also is set forth in James 1: 11. The show or display of the unrighteous people will not endure when the final test is made.

Verse 8. Many persons can be and have been in high position at certain times of special advantage. The great contrast between all other beings and the Lord is that He is high *for evermore*.

Verse 9. It is significant to observe how the Psalmist describes the *enemies* of the Lord who consist in the workers of iniquity. The description and motive for it is praiseworthy; that it is not merely because men happen to be unlikable to God that he considers them his enemies, but it is because they are unrighteous in life.

Verse 10. When *horn* is used figuratively it means power and authority. David was a faithful servant of the Lord and therefore could expect to have divine support. Oil was literally poured on the heads of those who were being placed in a position of dignity. It came to be used figuratively of those who were to be honored with any unusual blessings that brought them overwhelming joy and gladness.

Verse 11. David lived in an age of warfare and had to fight his enemies with the weapons of bodily conflict. For this reason he frequently referred to the subject with earnestness, and prayed for the success of his arms. Moreover, he expected to have such prayers granted and rejoiced greatly over the same.

Verse 12. The *palm tree* was one of the most important of trees in Palestine. It furnished food and material for various other uses. It lived and grew for a century in many instances and was hence a tree with many uses. The *cedar* also had many uses, and one of its chief characteristics was its being evergreen. Both of these trees are used to compare a true serv-

ant of God in his responsibility to his Creator.

Verse 13. The comparison to trees is continued in this verse. *House of God* is a phrase referring to the service to Him in general. Those who are *planted* or established in that service will flourish as do the trees described above.

Verse 14. In the service of God there is no such thing as "old age" in the sense of infirmity. The older (in literal years) one becomes in that service the stronger he becomes and the more able he will be in producing fruit unto the Lord.

Verse 15. *To show* is a phrase that means the Psalmist had made the foregoing statements for the purpose of showing the uprightness of the Lord. Because of that great quality the Lord would become the *rock* or foundation of all of David's hopes.

PSALMS 93

Verse 1. *Lord* is from a word that is defined "self-Existent." Such a Being would certainly have the right to reign. To be *clothed with majesty* means to be dignified and great in every good sense. It would also be expected that such an One would be strong and able to *establish* or make firm the whole world.

Verse 2. The Lord has existed always and hence his throne has been established of *old*. That means that He has been in authority and control *from everlasting*; that his reign never had any beginning.

Verse 3. This verse may be taken both literally and figuratively. The mighty oceans are subject to the control of God. It is true also that *floods* of distress have frequently swelled up to threaten the servants of the Lord.

Verse 4. This verse should be considered in the light of the preceding one. It declares that God's supremacy over all imposing objects and conditions is evident, whether the seas of the earth or the billows of afflictions rolling up to threaten the security of the righteous.

Verse 5. The *testimonies* are the declarations of the Lord that have been tried and have stood the test. *Becometh* is from נֶאֱמַר and Strong defines it, "to be at home." The thought is that holiness is fitting and perfectly at home in the house of the

Lord. This is very significant, for it would be out of place to see a profession of holiness in a place not belonging to the Lord. It would be like "a jewel of gold in a swine's snout." (Prov. 11: 22.)

PSALMS 94

Verse 1. *Vengeance* usually has a harsh sound for our ears and we might be inclined to wonder why it would be attributed to God. The impression is due largely to abuse of the word. The term primarily means "Punishment inflicted in return for an injury or an offense."—Webster. Improper or spiteful treatment of one who is even guilty of wrong would be wrong also, but that is not required by the meaning of the word. And furthermore, even the proper form or degree of vengeance must be administered by one having authority for doing so. The Psalmist here declares that God is the one to whom such right belongs. Paul taught the same thing in Rom. 12: 19. The Psalmist in our verse is calling upon God to show his vengeance upon the wicked enemy.

Verse 2. In the preceding verse David set forth the right of God to bring vengeance on those who deserved it. In this he calls upon Him to use that authority against the *proud*. The original for this last word means not only that the persons are vain of themselves, but also are impudent over it toward others.

Verse 3. This is another of David's earnest prayers for the Lord's judgments upon his enemies. And again we should observe that he does not imply any injustice from the Lord in suffering some affliction to come, but desired it not to continue long.

Verse 4. The boastful sayings of the enemies seemed to worry the Psalmist more than any considerations as to his personal discomfort.

Verse 5. David was concerned for the people of the nation rather than for himself. This spirit of unselfishness was an outstanding quality of this great man. See a demonstration of it in 2 Sam. 24: 17.

Verse 6. It is noteworthy that David's complaints against the evil-doers did not consist in mere general assertions. Had that been the case it would have given the impression that his motive was only a personal dislike for them. Instead, he specified

their acts of violence against the innocent and helpless people.

Verse 7. These wicked people were so foolish as to think they could hide from God. Such a thought has ever been a common one with man. It was first demonstrated by Adam and Eve when they thought they could hide from God behind the trees. (Gen. 3: 9.)

Verse 8. *Brutish* is from BAAR and Strong defines it, "a primitive root; to kindle, i.e. consume (by fire or by eating)." David compares the enemies of his people to the ravenous beasts because of their oppressive and destructive conduct.

Verse 9. This verse goes back to v. 7 which showed the foolish notion that man could hide from God. The very ears and eyes by which the evil-doers were practicing their wickedness were made by the God whom they thought to evade. If He could give to man such organs he certainly could limit their use and not be misled by them.

Verse 10. The same form of reasoning is contained in this verse as was used above. It had been frequently shown that God could punish the heathen, and therefore he surely would bring severe judgment on those who afflicted the righteous.

Verse 11. *Vanity* means foolish and unavailing schemes of man. The Lord thoroughly understands it all and will bring it to nought.

Verse 12. Afflictions are sent frequently for the purpose of correction. That is the meaning of *chasteneth*, and Paul taught the same in 1 Cor. 11: 32. Not all treatment for disease is pleasant to the patient, but a man would be very unwise who refused the treatment because of its unpleasantness. Another thought in this verse is that chastisement is not always of a physical nature. It consists also in the exhortations and admonitions in the law regarding duty and punishment for neglect of it.

Verse 13. If the innocent victim will endure and profit by his chastisement, he will then be given divine relief. His enemy will finally be cast down into the *pit*, which means a condition of forgetfulness and disgrace.

Verse 14. When the Lord punishes his people it is for their good and not that he intends to cast them off. The people are *his inheritance* which means they belong to Him. He cer-

tainly will not bring afflictions on them in the sense of forsaking them.

Verse 15. *Judgment* here means that a merciful decision will be rendered by the Lord for the righteous. When that is done it will have a good effect on other people who are upright in heart. When they see the outcome of the Lord's plan of instructions, they will be inclined to *follow it* or profit thereby.

Verse 16. Here is another characteristic attitude of the Psalmist. In his distress over the activities of evil-doers he longs for the fellowship of others in his efforts at curbing them.

Verse 17. *Almost* is rendered "quickly" in the margin of some Bibles and the lexicon agrees with it. The thought is that without the help of God, man would be unable to accomplish anything in the midst of uncertainties that surround him.

Verse 18. In times of danger and uncertainty, the Lord's help assures to his servants the support that could come from no other source.

Verse 19. Amid the many things that occupy the mind of God's servants, there is one thought that stands out above others, and that is of the comforts that the true servants may expect from Him.

Verse 20. This verse is in question form but is positive in thought. It means that iniquity and righteousness have no fellowship with each other.

Verse 21. The antecedent of *they* is the group that *frameth mischief* in the preceding verse. A single act of wrong is bad enough, but conspiracy in sin is worse. The ones whom David was considering were doing that kind of evil actions.

Verse 22. The first clause of this verse is literal; the second is figurative. God is a virtual *rock of refuge* for a righteous man.

Verse 23. The Psalmist went back to the enemies again. *He* means God who will bring upon *them*, the enemies, the fruit of their own iniquity. Evil workers may seem to prosper for a time, but finally will be brought to feel the folly of their deeds.

PSALMS 95

Verse 1. *Joyful noise* is one of David's expressions for singing lively praises to God for his great goodness to the children of men. *Rock of our salvation* means that the Lord is the

foundation for all help that would bring salvation to mankind.

Verse 2. Man is always actually in the presence of the Lord. The thought is that they would make a formal action before the face of the Lord to express thanks.

Verse 3. The terms *Lord* and *God* are used in one sentence which recognizes the distinction between them. The first means the self-Existent Being and the second designates him as a Being worthy to rule with authority.

Verse 4. *Deep places and strength of the hills* are figures to express the scope of the knowledge and power of the Lord.

Verse 5. God made the sea and land and they are rightfully his.

Verse 6. In view of the facts mentioned in the preceding verse, the Psalmist bids his people kneel and worship the Maker of all things.

Verse 7. The relationship between "people" and "God" would explain why David had called upon the former to kneel before the latter. *Sheep of his hand* denotes that the people were in the hand of God who cares for them as a shepherd cares for his flock. In view of these important facts the people are exhorted to hear the voice of the great Shepherd and follow him faithfully wherever he leads.

Verses 8-10. These verses are grouped in one paragraph because they pertain to the same thought, and because they are quoted in the New Testament as a single passage. (Heb. 3: 7-11.) It has reference to the time of 40 years when the children of Israel were going through the wilderness. Through all that period the Lord was provoked by the stubborn behaviour of the nation. It was especially the leaders of the congregation who incited the others to rebel. *Not known my ways* means they had not recognized the right ways of life as directed by the Lord. They preferred to have their own way and were continually raising the banner of revolt.

Verse 11. The most specific act of rebellion is recorded in Num. 14: 1-4 where they made the rash statement that they wished to die in the wilderness. That provoked the Lord so greatly that he decreed the death of those leaders in the wilderness, the thing they foolishly requested to happen. *Not enter into MY rest*. This introduces a very interesting subject, that of the 3 rests of God. The matter

is treated in Hebrews 3 and 4 where the language clearly shows that 3 different "rests" are considered and each of them is called "my rest." They refer respectively to the 7th day of the week, the national rest in Canaan and the final rest in Heaven. Each of them is called "my rest" because God originated them.

PSALMS 96

Verse 1. *New song* does not necessarily mean that the composition is new. But the people were to sing it anew with fresh vigor.

Verse 2. We may bless the name of the Lord by acknowledging the happiness that comes through the holy name. The simple mention of the name of God is enough to fill a true servant with delight. We may *show forth* the salvation that comes from the Lord by declaring it in words and by producing its fruit in our lives.

Verse 3. The *heathen* means the foreign nations with whom the people of God would come into contact. They should not be ashamed to speak forth the praises for their God as being far above all other objects of worship. And it is not enough merely to assert that the God of Israel is greater than all, but the proof should be called to the attention of all. That would consist in the *wonders* of the universe that were the work of His hands. (Ch. 19: 1.)

Verse 4. We should keep in mind that the word *Lord* means the self-Existent One who never had any beginning. The fact explains why he is *greatly to be praised*. His name came to be used as the Jewish national name for their object of worship, hence David declared that he is to be *feared* (reverenced) above all other gods.

Verse 5. *Idol* is from ELIYE which Strong defines, "good for nothing, by analogy, vain or vanity." In the King James version it has been rendered by *idol*, no value, and thing of nought. Even the planets and other things of the universe, which were worshiped by the heathen, were "vain" as far as creative power was concerned. On the other hand the God of David was the Creator of those very things.

Verse 6. *Before* is used in the sense of being near and it means that *honor* and *majesty* are to be seen wherever the Lord's presence is known. By the same token the qualities of *strength* and *beauty* are to be found in the holy institution or sanctuary.

Verse 7. Man cannot actually contribute strength to the Lord. But he can give his acknowledgment that strength and glory belong to Him. The Psalmist bids all *kindreds* or groups of people to make such acknowledgment.

Verse 8. Actions speak louder than words. It is not enough to speak of the devotion due to the Lord. The proper way to exhibit that feeling for the Lord is to contribute something of value to the divine service.

Verse 9. *Beauty* is defined in Strong's lexicon as "decoration," and *holiness* is defined as "sanctity." The thought is that sanctity or righteous conduct is a genuine ornament. The Psalmist would have his people worship the Lord under such an attitude. All people of the earth are told to *fear* or respect the Lord of the Israelites.

Verse 10. The *heathen* were the foreign nations surrounding the land of the Israelites. They were to be made to understand that the Lord, not the dumb idols, must be recognized as king and ruler of the world. And it was to be affirmed that the rule of this great Being would be righteous, hence the whole world was assured of the firmness of all things because they were to be supported by the divine foundation.

Verse 11. All of the things named in this verse are inanimate and hence cannot exhibit the emotions mentioned. But intelligent creatures everywhere can and should feel the sentiments because of all that the Lord has done in heaven and earth.

Verse 12. The comments on the preceding verse will apply to this.

Verse 13. The rejoicing should be in the presence of the Lord since he is the creator of all things named. *He cometh* means the judgment of the Lord will come upon the earth. That judgment will consist in righteous punishment upon the world of wicked people, and all of His decrees will be according to truth.

PSALMS 97

Verse 1. Either joy or grief may be brought to a people through the king, depending on his manner of rule. From that great truth the Psalmist formed the concise but clear phrases in the first part of this verse. *Isles* is used in its general sense, "a habitable spot." The clause means that wherever the

inhabitants of the earth live they have reason to rejoice for the righteous rule of the Lord.

Verse 2. *Clouds and darkness* often impress us as something depressing. The idea is that even such conditions are subject to His control. *Habitation* is from a word that means a fixture or basis. The statement denotes that the throne of the Lord is established on a foundation of righteousness and judgment.

Verse 3. The *fire* refers to the consuming force of God's wrath against wicked men.

Verse 4. Fire and lightning are similar in nature, yet they were used in two senses. The first was used in the preceding verse as a consuming force, and in this verse the second word was used as an agent of illumination. The truth of this enlightenment made the earth's people to see the majesty of God and to fear or have respect for the dignity of that truth.

Verse 5. Of course the melting of the hills is figurative. The people living in the hills were prostrated by the august demonstrations of God's power.

Verse 6. See the comments at ch. 19: 1.

Verse 7. To be confounded means to be confused and defeated. Such an end was wished upon the worshippers of idols. All *graven images* were *idols* but not all idols were graven images. These last were things carved out of stone or other materials and worshiped as gods. Idols would be anything, whether man-made or natural, that were worshiped as gods. *Worship him* means to worship the Lord.

Verse 8. *Zion* was a prominent part of Jerusalem where David had his headquarters. It came to be called the "City of David," and finally was referred to generally as meaning the institution of the Lord. *Daughters of Judah* means the people of Judah or of the kingdom of which the capital was Zion.

Verse 9. Physical and spiritual exaltation was the subject in the mind of the Psalmist. God is above the earth as to rank or order of existence, and above the idol gods as to spiritual importance.

Verse 10. It is impossible to love and hate the same thing. Likewise it is impossible to love two things that are

opposite in their character. Jesus taught this in Matthew 6: 24. On the basis of this truth, David calls upon those who profess to love the Lord to prove it by manifesting hate for evil. God will preserve the *souls* of the saints, but they may be subjected to affliction as to their bodies. Yet if they are faithful through it all they will finally be delivered.

Verse 11. *Sown* means to be spread abroad. The statement means that the righteous will be provided with light or guidance. This instruction will bring them gladness because they are upright in heart.

Verse 12. The first 4 words in this verse are identical with some in Phil. 3: 1. There is no rejoicing promised to any who are not in the Lord and who are not thankful to Him. Any apparent cause of rejoicing out of the Lord is a deception and will bring the persons misled thereby to the brink of disappointment.

PSALMS 98

Verse 1. *New song* is explained by the comments on Ch. 96: 1. *Right hand* and *holy arm* means that the things done by the Lord are right and holy, deserving praise.

Verse 2. *Salvation* is used in a general sense and includes the many favors that had been bestowed on the nation of Israel. Those benefits had been so evident that the heathen or surrounding nations had observed them.

Verse 3. God never forgets anything in the sense we commonly use the word. *Remembered* means that God considered his past favorable treatment of the house of Israel and decreed to continue the same. That treatment of his people was so evident that the people of the earth had been made to recognize and acknowledge it.

Verse 4. *Noise* in the first instance is not in the original, so the sentence means for them to make expressions of joy for all the goodness of God. In the second sentence the word means "to break out in joyful sound." —Strong. The people were bidden also to sing their praises unto the Lord.

Verse 5. David made and used many kinds of musical instruments. He sometimes used them alone and at other times he used them to accompany a song of praise to God. In this verse he called for the latter use of the harp in service to the Lord.

Verse 6. In this verse the Psalmist means two more of his instruments and bids his people use them in praise to the Lord. An added motive for praising the Lord is indicated by the mention of him as King.

Verse 7. The roaring of the sea should be heard as the voice of praise to the Lord. He made the sea and the world and is entitled to all praise for all such wonderful works that exhibit his creative power.

Verse 8. *Floods* and *hills* are inanimate objects; but their importance should cause universal gratitude in the minds of all intelligent creatures.

Verse 9. *Before the Lord* connects this verse with the preceding one on the subject of gratitude for the works of creation. The present verse adds the thought that the Lord *cometh* (when occasion requires) to judge the earth. His judgment will be righteous, for it will be with *equity* which means with fairness. It has always been true that God is no respecter of persons. (Acts 10: 34.)

PSALMS 99

Verse 1. *Tremble* means to respect the Lord and fear to do that which would violate His reign. *Between the cherubims* is a reference to the objects on the mercy seat in the tabernacle. The high priest appeared at that place on one day of the year to communicate with God on behalf of the congregation. (Ex. 25: 17-22.) *Earth be moved* means practically the same as *tremble* in the first part of the verse.

Verse 2. To be *great in Zion* indicates that the greatness refers to the Lord's position of authority. Zion was the headquarters of the kingdom and the seat of government. That position explains how the Lord was *high above all the people*.

Verse 3. We might be somewhat confused at the idea of the Lord's name being both *terrible* and *holy*. It will be of interest to know that the first is from the same original as "reverend" in ch. 111: 9. The word occurs about 300 times in the Hebrew Bible and has a wide range of meaning. In the present verse it means the name of the Lord is worthy to be respected because it is holy.

Verse 4. Kings sometimes use their strength for evil purposes, but the Lord is a king who delights in righteous judgment. *Equity* means fairness,

and the Lord executes his authority in such a way that every man receives his own share. *Jacob* is used to denote the nation of Israel who descended through that great patriarch.

Verse 5. Man cannot actually promote the Lord. The statement means to recognize the exaltation of Him and praise him because of it. God is in Heaven and man is on the earth, which is said to be the footstool of God. (Isa. 66: 1; Matt. 5: 35.) It means that while man is on the earth he should worship the Lord in humility.

Verse 6. David cited three special servants of God; Moses was the law-giver, Aaron was high priest and Samuel was the first national prophet. All of these great persons worshiped God in humility and were favored by Him. Certainly, then, all other persons should "prostrate fall" at the foot of the throne.

Verse 7. This verse refers to the events at Sinai when God came down in a cloud and revealed his word to Moses and Aaron. They showed their respect for that word by faithfully observing its ordinances.

Verse 8. The connection shows that David was referring to the idolatry committed at Sinai. God caused 3000 Israelites to be slain on account of their *inventions* (the golden calf), but he then blessed the nation.

Verse 9. *Exalt* is explained at v. 5. *Holy hill* means Zion where the headquarters were located materially. In its spiritual sense it means the institution of God through which divine worship was offered.

PSALMS 100

Verse 1. *Noise* is not in the original but *joyful* is. The clause means to express joy unto the Lord for all his acts of kindness to the children of men. *All ye lands* means all the people of the earth, for they had all been benefited by the Lord's favors.

Verse 2. We should not offer service to the Lord in the spirit of necessity, or just because we think we have to. It is true that we must serve Him if we expect the reward, but it should be considered a happy privilege to render service to Him who has made us and caused us to be what we are. These remarks apply to man's general relationship to God. The second clause of the verse refers especially to his conduct when in the religious attitude.

At that time it is appropriate to honor the Lord in song, that being a part of the exercises performed in public worship.

Verse 3. The distinctive meanings of *Lord* and *God* should be observed in the first clause. For the critical information on the subject see my comments at ch. 86: 12. David uses the distinction between the words as a basis of an exhortation. The thought is that the One who always existed is the one who only has the right to be the object of worship. Such a thought should have prevented the Israelites from worshipping the heathen gods. Furthermore, the Creator of our being certainly is entitled to all of our devotions. *Sheep of his pasture* signifies that God is able to nourish us. But that is not all; for if we are the sheep of *His* pasture, we have no right nor need to feed in any other pasture.

Verse 4. A gate is an entrance to a city and a court is an enclosure for the vicinity of a king or other dignified person. If a human being is permitted to enter into a city of the King of Heaven, and to go even as far as into the final enclosure of his palace, then thanksgiving and praise should be forthcoming.

Verse 5. Many good men are merciful at times, but the mercy of the Lord continues. The truth of the Lord will stand the test of all time. That truth does not change, but will bless the generation that exists now and will be alive through the time of the generations yet to come and continue its blessed effects on all who accept it.

PSALMS 101

Verse 1. *Judgment* is used here in its fundamental sense of justice. The word means a decree or verdict that is according to the facts in the case, and whether the sentence is supposed to be favorable or not. But in such cases where the strict justice would require an unfavorable sentence, the mercy of God would modify it. That is why the Psalmist would sing of both. For the blended attributes of God the song of praise was to be offered as an expression of sincere gratitude.

Verse 2. The preceding verses showed that God tempers justice with mercy. However, there must be some indications of worthiness before the mercy will be extended. The Psalmist recognized that principle and promised to behave himself accordingly,

which would constitute a perfect way. On the condition of his devotion David appealed to God for divine assistance and direction in the chosen course.

Verse 3. The promise of this verse refers especially to the sin of idolatry. David hated that evil and pledged himself not to place any idol before him as an object to be worshiped or adored in any sense.

Verse 4. *Froward* means perverse or stubborn and David declared he would not have such a heart. He also determined not to *know* or recognize a wicked person.

Verse 5. Slander is always wrong, but it is worse when done *privily*, which means to do done "behind one's back." If any such man came under the knowledge of David he was to be cut off. There is not much difference between the meaning of *high* and *proud*. The second refers to the condition of the heart, and the first shows how that condition affects the outward attitude. David gave his word that he would not tolerate such a man to be in his presence.

Verse 6. To *be upon* means to look with favor upon the faithful, and see that they have opportunity for dwelling in the land under the protection of the king. But the Psalmist would not accept service from those whose way of life was not right.

Verse 7. *Deceit* is one form of a lie and David would not harbor such a character. With all of the fault to be found with the Psalmist for his sin with another man's wife, he was truthful when confronted with the facts. He was a lover of truth and could not endure the sight of an untruthful man.

Verse 8. *Early* has no word in the original in this verse. *Destroy* is from a word that is defined by Strong, "to extirpate." *The city of the Lord* means the capital city and David proposed to defend it by destroying all of the wicked enemies.

PSALMS 102

Verse 1. This verse is an example of the supplication form of prayer. The simple word "prayer" means merely an address or request offered to God. A supplication is a request in more urgent and earnest terms.

Verse 2. This verse is similar to the preceding one except that it specifies the subject of the supplication. The Psalmist is worried over the