

## STUDIES IN PSALMS

Almighty does not put his power into commission, to be used at any creature's pleasure. It is well he does not. This is not to deny that there is a charm in the promises of God, but it is to protest that their true charm comes from treating them not as mere charms, but as the living words of a living God.

But this psalm furnishes another lesson: it puts before us, with all the vividness of an object-lesson, the importance of setting the various commands and promises of Scripture side by side, that we may gather their true sense and make of them a legitimate application. The final stanza of this psalm comes before us with an especial appealing force, because it purports to give us Jehovah's own direct words, revealing the response of his love to his servant's love: *Because on me he hath set his love.* Being at the same time the close of the psalm, it is in every way fitting that this stanza should be invested with any explaining and harmonising power needed for practical guidance. From this point of view, note especially, that Jehovah himself prepares his loving servants for the possibility that—after all the promises which have gone before—they may yet come into *distress*. for such a temporary non-fulfilment of his promises, Jehovah holds himself responsible—*with him will I myself be, in distress.* He makes our distresses his own. He bears the burden of his unfulfilled promises. He says: "Wait! and I will more than fulfil them all." And then to Grace he adds *Glory!*

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. "Two things are clear". What are they?
2. Who is the possible author or writer?
3. Why say psalms 91 is an appendix to 90?
4. How was verse 7 made to apply to David? Who applied it?
5. The verses Satan applied to our Lord (Matthew 4:5-7) Rotherham applies to someone else. Who? Why?
6. Rotherham has some good words on the superstitious use of this psalm. What is said? Discuss.

## PSALMS 92 to 97

### DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

A Service of Song for a Sabbath Day.

## PSALMS 92 TO 97

### ANALYSIS

Psalm 92: Personal Song—Probably by a King.

Psalm 93: Jehovah Proclaimed King.

Psalm 94: Prayer for Vengeance on the Lawless.

Psalm 95: Invitation—"O Come!" "Come in!" Warning: "Harden not your Hearts!"

Psalm 96: The Land called upon to Sing to Jehovah, and to Proclaim his Kingship to the Nations.

Psalm 97: Third Proclamation—Decisive Results, by way of Joy, Fear, Conviction, Shame, Homage, Thanks, Exhortation and Triumph.

## PSALM 92

(Lm.) Psalm—Song—For the Sabbath-day.

- 1 It is good to give thanks to Jehovah,  
and to make melody<sup>1</sup> unto thy name O Most High!
- 2 To declare in the morning thy kindness,  
and thy faithfulness in the nights:<sup>2</sup>
- 3 With an instrument of ten strings and with a lute,<sup>3</sup>  
with murmuring music<sup>4</sup> on a lyre.
- 4 For thou hast made me glad Jehovah by thy doings,  
in the works of thy hands will I ring out my joy.
- 5 How great have grown thy works Jehovah!  
how very deep have been laid thy plans!
- 6 A man that is brutish cannot get to know,  
and a dullard cannot understand this:—
- 7 When the lawless bud like herbage,  
and all the workers of iniquity have blossomed  
It leadeth to their being destroyed for ever.
- 8 But thou art on high<sup>5</sup> to the ages O Jehovah!
- 9 For lo! thine enemies Jehovah,  
For lo! thine enemies shall perish,  
scattered abroad shall be all the workers of iniquity.<sup>6</sup>

1. Or: "to sweep the strings."

2. So Dr.; "night-seasons"—Del.; "dark night"—(plural of intensification)—Br.

3. Ml.: "with ten and with a lute."

4. "with murmuring sound"—Dr.; "with skilful music"—Del.

5. Ml.: "a height." "Exaltedness"—Del.

6. Or: "mischief" ("naughtiness"—Dr.). Cp. 94:4, 16, 23.

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- 10 But thou wilt uplift like those of a wild ox my horn,  
I am anointed<sup>7</sup> with fresh oil;  
11 And mine eye shall gaze on my watchful foes,  
of them that rise up against me as evil-doers mine ears  
shall hear,  
12 The righteous like the palm-tree shall bud,  
like a cedar in Lebanon become great.  
13 Transplanted into the house of Jehovah  
in the courts of our God shall they shew buds.  
14 Still shall they bear fruit in old age,  
full of sap and of bloom shall they be:  
15 To declare that upright is Jehovah,  
my Rock with no injustice in him.  
(Nm.)

## PSALM 93

(Nm.)

- 1 *Jehovah hath become king<sup>8</sup>*—in majesty hath he clothed  
himself,  
Jehovah hath clothed himself—with strength hath he girded  
himself:  
surely he hath adjusted<sup>9</sup> the world—it shall not be shaken.  
2 Established is thy throne from of old,<sup>10</sup>  
from age-past time art thou.  
3 The streams have lifted up O Jehovah,  
the streams have lifted up their voice,  
the streams lift up their crashing:  
4 Beyond the voices of many waters,  
more majestic than the breakers of the sea<sup>11</sup>  
Majestic on high is Jehovah.  
5 Thy testimonies are confirmed with might,  
to thy house befitting is holiness,—  
O Jehovah! to length of days.

(Nm.)

7. "The passage is doubtful"—O.G.

8. "Is now king"—Del. "Hath proclaimed himself king"—Kp. The same  
1 Ch. 16:31; Pss. 47:8, 96:10, 97:1, 99:1; Isa. 24:23, 52:7.

9. So it shd. be (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn.

10. Ml.: "from then."

11. So Gt.

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PSALM 94

(Nm.)

- 1 O GOD of avengings<sup>12</sup> Jehovah!  
O GOD of avengings<sup>12</sup> shine forth!
- 2 Lift up thyself thou judge of the earth:  
bring back a recompense on the proud.
- 3 How long shall lawless ones Jehovah,  
how long shall lawless ones exult?
- 4 They pour forth they speak arrogancy,  
vain-glorious are all the workers of iniquity.<sup>13</sup>
- 5 Thy people O Jehovah they crush,  
and thine inheritance they humble;
- 6 The widow and the sojourner they slay,  
and the fatherless they murder;
- 7 And say—"Yah seeth not,"  
and "The God of Jacob perceiveth not."
- 8 Understand ye brutish among the people,  
and ye dullards when will ye comprehend?
- 9 He that planteth the ear shall he not hear?  
or that fashioneth the eye not look on?<sup>14</sup>
- 10 He that correcteth nations not shew what is right,—  
he that teacheth men knowledge?
- 11 Jehovah knoweth the devices of men,  
for they themselves are a breath!<sup>15</sup>
- 12 How happy the man whom thou correctest O Yah,  
and out of thy law dost instruct:
- 13 That thou mayest give him rest from the days of misfortune,  
till there be digged for the lawless one a pit.
- 14 For Jehovah abandoneth not his people,  
and his inheritance doth he not forsake;
- 15 For unto righteousness shall judgment<sup>16</sup> return,  
and be following it all the upright in heart.
- 16 Who will rise up for me against evil-doers?

12. Or: "dire vengeance."

13. Or: "mischief." ("Naughtiness"—Dr.), and cp. 92:9 and vers. 16, 23.

14. "Have power of sight"—O.G.

15. Or: "are vapour."

16. Or: "sentence."

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who will make a stand for me against the workers-of iniquity?<sup>17</sup>

- 17 Unless Jehovah had been a help to me soon had sunk into silence my soul!
- 18 If I say—"Slipped hath my foot!" thy kindness Jehovah! stayeth me.
- 19 In the multitude of my disquieting thoughts<sup>18</sup> within me thy consolations delight my soul.
- 20 Can the throne of engulfing ruin be allied to thee, which frameth mischief by statute?<sup>19</sup>
- 21 They make a raid on<sup>20</sup> the life<sup>21</sup> of the righteous one, and innocent blood they condemn.
- 22 Nay! Jehovah hath become for me a lofty retreat, and my God my rock of refuge.
- 23 Nay! he hath brought back on themselves their iniquity,<sup>22</sup> and through their own evil will he exterminate them,—exterminate them will Jehovah our God.

(Nm.)

## PSALM 95

(Nm.)

- 1 O Come! let us ring out our joy to Jehovah, let us shout to the rock of our salvation;<sup>23</sup>
- 2 Let us come to meet his face with thanksgiving, with psalms let us shout unto him.
- 3 For a great GOD is Jehovah, and a great king above all messengers divine:<sup>24</sup>
- 4 In whose hand are the recesses<sup>25</sup> of the earth, and the summits of the mountains belong to him:
- 5 Whose is the sea and he made it, and the dry land his hands formed.

17. Or: "mischief." ("Naughtiness"—Dr.). Cp. ver. 23.

18. As in 139:23.

19. "Under the pretext of right"—Del.

20. "They gather themselves in bands against"—Dr. "They rush in upon"—Del.

21. U.: "soul."

22. Or: "mischief." ("Naughtiness"—Dr.). Cp. ver. 16

23. Dr: "our rock of safety."

24. See 8:5. Heb.: 'elohim.

25. "Lit. places to be explored; cf. Job 38:16"—Dr. Gt.: "distant parts"—Gn.

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- 6 Come in! oh let us bow down and bend low,  
oh let us kneel before Jehovah our maker;
- 7 For he is our God,  
and we are the people of his hand and the flock of his  
shepherding.<sup>26</sup>
- Today if to his voice ye would but hearken!
- 8 "Do not harden your heart as at Meribah,  
as in the day of Massah in the desert:
- 9 When your fathers put me to the proof  
tested me although they had seen my work.
- 10 For forty years loathed I that<sup>27</sup> generation,  
and said—'A people going astray in heart are they,  
even they have not known my ways:'
- 11 So that I swear in mine anger,  
'Surely they shall not enter into my place of rest!'"
- (Nm.)

PSALM 96

(Nm.)

- 1 Sing ye to Jehovah a song that is new,  
sing to Jehovah all the land:
- 2 Sing to Jehovah bless ye his name,  
proclaim the glad-tidings from day to day of his victory:<sup>28</sup>
- 3 Tell among the nations his glory,  
among all the peoples his wondrous works.
- 4 For great is Jehovah and to be highly praised,  
Fear inspiring is he above all messengers divine;<sup>29</sup>
- 5 For all the gods<sup>30</sup> of the peoples are nothings,<sup>31</sup>  
But Jehovah made the heavens.
- 6 Majesty and state<sup>32</sup> are before him,

26. So *Gt. Cp.* 79:13, 100:3. *M.T.*: "people of his shepherding and flock of his hand."

27. So it shd. be (w. *Sep.* and *Vul.*)—*Gn.*

28. Or: "salvation."

29. *Heb.*: 'elohim. *Cp.* 8:5. Clearly some 'elohim are more than "nothings."

30. *Heb.*: 'elohim. The addition "of all the peoples" is deemed enough to turn the scale in translating.

31. "Nothingnesses"—*Dr.* "Idols"—*Del.* (who thus comments: "nothings and good-for-nothings, without being and of no use.")

32. "Glory and grandeur"—*Del.*

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- Strength and beauty<sup>33</sup> are in his sanctuary.
- 7 Ascribe unto Jehovah ye families of the peoples,  
ascribe unto Jehovah glory and strength :
- 8 Ascribe unto Jehovah the glory of his name,  
bring ye a present<sup>34</sup> and come into his courts :<sup>35</sup>
- 9 Bow down unto Jehovah in the adornment of holiness.<sup>36</sup>  
be in birth-throes<sup>37</sup> at his presence all the earth.
- 10 Say among the nations—“*Jehovah hath become king* :<sup>38</sup>  
Surely he hath adjusted the world, it shall not be shaken,  
He will minister judgment unto the peoples with equity.”
- 11 Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice,  
let the sea thunder and the fulness thereof :
- 12 Let the plain exult and all that is therein,  
Yea<sup>39</sup> let all the trees of the forest ring out their joy :—
- 13 Before Jehovah for he is coming,<sup>40</sup>  
for he is coming<sup>41</sup> to judge the earth :  
He will judge the world with righteousness,  
And peoples with his faithfulness.

(Nm.)

## PSALM 97

(Nm.)

- 1 *Jehovah hath become king*<sup>42</sup>—let the earth exult,  
let the multitude of coastlands rejoice.
- 2 Clouds and darkness are round about him,  
righteousness and justice<sup>43</sup> are the foundations of his throne :
- 3 Fire before him proceedeth,  
and setteth ablaze round about his adversaries.
- 4 His lightings illumined the world,

33. “The word used here denotes glory which is also a decoration or ornament (Is. 60:7, 19)”—Dr.

34. Heb.: *minhak*. “Viz, to secure admission to His presence. Cf. 2 Sam. 8:2, 6, Judg. 3:18 end”—Dr.

35. Some cod. (w. Aram.) : “come in before him”—Gn.

36. Cp. 29:2.

37. Cp. 77:16.

38. See 93:1, 97:1, 99:1.

39. So *Gt*.

40. So (participle) Del. “Is come”—Dr. and others.

41. In some cod. this clause is not repeated. Cp. 1 Ch. 16:33—Gn.

42. As in 93:1, 96:10, 99:1.

43. Or: “judgment.”

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the earth saw and was in birth-throes:<sup>44</sup>

- 5 The mountains like wax melted at the presence of Jehovah,  
at the presence of the Lord<sup>45</sup> of the whole earth:
- 6 The heavens declared his righteousness,  
and all the peoples saw his glory.
- 7 Put to shame are all they who were serving an image,  
who were boasting themselves in nothings:<sup>46</sup>  
all messengers divine<sup>47</sup> bow ye down to him.
- 8 Zion heard and was glad,  
and the daughters of Judah exulted,—  
Because of thy righteous decisions<sup>48</sup> O Jehovah.
- 9 For thou Jehovah art Most High over all the earth,  
greatly hast thou exalted thyself above all messengers  
divine.<sup>47</sup>
- 10 Ye lovers of Jehovah! hate ye wrong.  
He preserveth the lives<sup>49</sup> of his men of kindness,  
from the hand of lawless ones he rescueth them.
- 11 Light hath arisen<sup>50</sup> for the righteous one,  
And for such as are upright of heart gladness.
- 12 Be glad O ye righteous in Jehovah,  
and give thanks unto his Holy Memorial.

(Nm.)

## PARAPHRASE

### PSALM 92

#### *A Song To Sing On The Lord's Day<sup>1</sup>*

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

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

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

44. Cp. 96:9.

45. Heb.: 'adon.

46. "Nothingnesses"—Dr.

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

48. Or: "thy judgments."

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

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

1. Literally, "for the Sabbath day."



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### PSALM 93

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

3 The mighty oceans thunder Your praise.

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

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

### PSALM 94

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

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

2. Literally, "anointed with fresh oil."

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

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

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

6, 7 They murder widows, immigrants, and orphans, for "The Lord isn't looking," they say, "and besides, He<sup>1</sup> doesn't care."

8 Fools!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## PSALM 95

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

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

1. Literally, "the God of Jacob."

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3 For the Lord is a great God, the great King of<sup>1</sup> all gods.

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

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

6 Come, kneel before the Lord our Maker,

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

8 Don't harden your hearts as Israel did in the wilderness<sup>2</sup> at Meribah and Massah.

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

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

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

### PSALM 96

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. Literally, "above."

2. Exodus 17:7.

1. Literally, "enter His courts."

2. Or, "in the priestly robes."

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

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

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

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

### PSALM 97

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12 May all who are godly be happy in the Lord and crown<sup>1</sup> Him, our holy God.

## EXPOSITION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## PSALMS 92 TO 97

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

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

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



## STUDIES IN PSALMS

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

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

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

### PSALM 92

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

### PSALM 93

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

### PSALM 94

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

## PSALMS 92 TO 97 AND 98 AND 99

### PSALM 95

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

### PSALM 96

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

### PSALM 97

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

## PSALMS 98 and 99

### DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

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

### ANALYSIS

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

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

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## PSALM 98

(Lm.) Psalm.

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