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EXPOSITORY PREACHING VALUES
FROM
THE BOOK OF PSALMS

By

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A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SACRED THEOLOGY
in
The Biblical Seminary in New York

New York, N. Y.
May 1946

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To mother,
who gave me
the first insight
into the Holy Scriptures,
this thesis is
lovingly dedicated

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GIFT OF THE AUTHOR

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

EXPOSITORY PREACHING VALUES
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject

1. The Subject Stated and Explained.

The problem of this study is to determine certain expository preaching values which are distinctive in the Book of Psalms. In accomplishing this purpose such qualities of the Psalms as are adaptable to successful homiletical usage in our twentieth century preaching will be set forth.

Throughout the entire study the following definition of expository preaching will be used as the basic foundation upon which any homiletical statements or conclusions will be made:

"Expository preaching is the setting forth of the truths contained in any scriptural passage as to justly reflect the teachings of that passage. It is not merely scriptural preaching but the preaching of a particular scripture. It magnifies the truth of that particular passage as well as the general truth and teaching of the scripture which true scriptural preaching emphasizes. As such, expository preaching involves these elements concerning any scriptural passage studied: the theme, the development of thought, the balance of truth or truths, the atmosphere, and the purpose of the author."¹

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1. Definition used by Dr. Ralph Key in his class in Biblical Homiletics at the Biblical Seminary in New York.

From this definition, it can be readily seen that expository preaching could be based upon a large passage of Scripture such as a section or a book of the Bible, or upon a smaller passage such as a chapter, a paragraph, a verse, or even a clause or word. An inductive study of the Book of Psalms, however, will show that each individual psalm has a particular message which can be the basis for a practical modern day sermon. Therefore, in this study, as much as possible the psalms will be dealt with as individual entities. This type of treatment will not in any way devalue the use of clauses, verses, or paragraphs from the Book of Psalms as preaching texts, but will show the more important aspect of getting the message of the psalm as a whole, which is the basic background for preaching from any smaller portion of the psalm.

2. The Subject Justified.

The importance of this study is amplified as the striking testimony of history to the value of the Book of Psalms as a part of the Holy Scriptures is considered. A few representative examples scattered throughout the twenty centuries of the Christian Church will show the invaluable reputation which the Psalms have had as a part of Holy Writ.

In the early primitive church, one of the qualifications for being admitted to the superior orders of the clergy was the memorizing and saying of all of David's Psalter by heart.¹

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1. Sermon on the Whole Duty of the Clergy by Bishop Taylor, Works (Eden's edition), Vol. VIII, p. 507, quoted by J. Stewart Perowne: The Book of Psalms, Vol. I, pp. 18-19.

Bishop Ambrose in the fourth century declared that

"although all divine Scripture breathes the grace of God, yet sweet beyond all others is the Book of Psalms. History instructs, the Law teaches, prophecy announces, rebuke chastens, morality persuades; in the Book of Psalms we have the fruit of all these and a kind of medicine for the salvation of man."¹

Dr. Martin Luther, the dramatic Protestant reformer, called the Psalter "a Bible in miniature in which all things which are set forth more at length in the rest of the Scriptures are collected into a beautiful manual of wonderful and attractive brevity."²

Dr. J. Stewart Perowne, noted nineteenth century commentator on the Psalms, has stated that "no part of the Scripture unless it be the Gospels, has had so large an influence in moulding the affections, sustaining the hopes, and purifying the faith of believers."³

In the early part of this present century, Rowland L. Prothero, who has written the outstanding work entitled The Psalms in Human Life, makes this statement regarding the Book of Psalms:

"Here are gathered not only pregnant statements of the principles of religion, and condensed maxims of spiritual life, but a promp-
tuary of effort, a summary of devotion, a manual of prayer and
praise--and all this is clothed in language which is as rich in
poetic beauty as it is universal and enduring in poetic truth."⁴

With the value of the Book of Psalms set forth so vividly
by the voice of history, they should be understood and appreciated by
all Christians. However, the testimony of Bible teachers indicates

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1. 'Opera' (Venet. 1748), Vol. ii, Commentary on Psalm I, quoted by
H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell: The Pulpit Commentary, Psalms,
Vol. I, pp. xi-xii.
2. A. F. Kirkpatrick: The Book of Psalms, p. cvi.
3. Perowne, loc. cit. pp. 18-19.
4. Rowland L. Prothero: The Psalms in Human Life, p. 2.

that today there is a great lack of understanding and appreciation for the Psalms by both the ministry and the laity of the Church. The answer to this problem is not that the Psalms are neglected entirely in the Christian Church; for hardly a Sunday passes but what the average American congregation uses some of the Psalms in their worship services--either as responsive readings or scripture lessons, as prayers or litanies, as hymns or anthems, or another form of worship liturgy. In funeral, wedding, and marriage ceremonies, choice passages of the Psalter are often read or quoted. Likewise for private devotions, the layman and even the minister will often hurriedly read a psalm at the beginning or end of a busy day. In fact, the Psalms are probably the most read and used of Biblical literature.

Where, then, is the answer to this problem? It could be in the fact that the Psalms "have been neglected in modern preaching."¹ Library shelves and collections of sermons on the Psalms are striking testimony to this glaring fact.² When the minister does take a sermon text from the Psalms it is too often the basis for a "topical" sermon for which the scriptural passage or text is little more than a "motto" or a "springboard." How much more meaningful the whole service of worship and personal Christian experience would become if people understood the great spiritual truths of the Psalter. It is the author's conviction that practical expository preaching, as already defined,³ will contribute to a better understanding and ap-

.

1. William H. Leach: Sermon Hearts from the Psalms, p. 5.

2. Ibid.

3. Ante., pp. 2-3.

preciation of the Psalms.

Throughout this study as the practicability of the Psalms for present day preaching is portrayed, it is with a sincere and prayerful desire that the Book of Psalms will become more than just a beautiful Scriptural collection, that it will become alive in the hearts of both author and reader, and that it will spring up to bear fruit in the Christian ministry for our Master.

3. The Subject Delimited.

In this study no attempt shall be made to make an exhaustive treatment of the entire Psalter, as a study of that type would fill many volumes. Rather, certain representative psalms will be studied for the purpose of showing expository preaching values. Neither is it a purpose to treat exhaustively the psalms under consideration, but rather to whet the homiletical appetite of both author and reader for valuable and profitable study and treatment in practical preaching use.

Furthermore, this is not intended to be a detailed discussion of the numerous problems arising in such a study of the Book of Psalms such as textual, contextual, chronological, and theological, except as necessitated by the specific passage being studied. But rather the method is to conduct the minister and prospective minister into the beautiful homiletical palace of the Hebrew-Christian Psalter¹

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1. The name "Hebrew-Christian Psalter" is used because of its Hebrew origin and because of its high renown by both Jewish and Christian Churches. This expression used in class lectures on the Psalms by Dr. Vartan D. Melconian.

itself--"there to wonder about its rooms, and to look upon its glories, to breathe its gracious atmosphere, and to learn to talk with the 'Lord of the place.'"1

B. The Method of Procedure

The next chapter (II) will show the homiletical values found in the most outstanding literary characteristics of the Psalms.

Chapter III will deal with the application of the Psalms to present day living with a special emphasis upon the life situations from which they arise, the timeless character of the Psalms as illustrated in their influence upon human life down through the centuries, and the use of the Psalms for special preaching occasions.

Chapters IV and V will be concerned primarily with the subject content of representative psalms, the former showing how man's devotional expression to his God serves as a means of growth in Christian living, and the latter how the Psalms have the necessary spiritual and psychological appeals which are essential for Christian evangelism.

Chapter VI will summarize and conclude this study.

C. Sources

The main sources for this study will be a select bibliography suitable for a minister's use in expository preaching from the Psalms. Since this study will be for the most part inductive, the American Revised Version of The Holy Bible will be the basic source.

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1. John Edgar McFadyen: The Messages of the Psalmists, p. viii.

Of the many commentaries on the Book of Psalms, Alexander Maclaren's works in the Nicoll Expositor's Bible, C. H. Spurgeon's monumental work entitled The Treasury of David, J. Stewart Perowne's The Book of Psalms, and A. F. Kirkpatrick's The Book of Psalms have been found to be the most helpful for expositional purposes.

For the story of the Psalms in the history of the Christian Church and other illustrative materials, Rowland E. Prothero's The Psalms in Human Life, A. Saunders Dyer's Psalm-Mosaics, and John Ker's The Psalms in History and Biography are classics.

For a practical and brief introduction to the Psalter, Charles H. Morgan's The Psalms as Daily Companions, and John Edgar McFadyen's The Messages of the Psalmists are very helpful.

Because of the nature of this study, the homiletical arrangements will be the author's original work unless otherwise designated.

Credit for valuable helps and suggestions must also be given to Dr. Vartan D. Malconian, under whose direction the author sat as a student in a semester course on the Book of Psalms at the Biblical Seminary in New York. It was the inspiration received from this course that created the motivating interest in this thesis study.

The type of expository treatment used throughout this study is largely the result of sitting under the teaching of Dr. Ralph Key in his classes in Biblical Homiletics, also at the Biblical Seminary.

CHAPTER II

THE LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PSALMS
AS
A PREACHING VALUE

CHAPTER II
THE LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PSALMS
AS
A PREACHING VALUE

A. Introduction

The Book of Psalms is a collection of lyric religious poetry which expresses the individual author's emotions and feelings "as they are stirred by the thought of God and directed God-wards."¹ The uniqueness of the Psalter is in its combination of outstanding religious and literary quality. From a religious viewpoint, it has been called the "Bible within the Bible" and the very "heart of the Bible."² From a strictly literary viewpoint, it is said to contain "all the elements and characteristics of the best Hebrew poetry."³ And Hebrew poetry, even considered apart from its unique religious value "can justly claim its place among the great literatures of the world."⁴

It was this superb and excellent combination of religious and literary quality which inspired the great John Milton in speaking of the Psalms to say, "But those frequent songs throughout the law and the prophets, not in their divine argument alone, but in the very art of composition, may be easily made appear over all the other

.

1. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. ix-x.
2. Ibid., p. xiii.
3. James Robertson: The Poetry and Religion of the Psalms, p. 156.
4. McFadyen, op. cit., p. 13.

kinds of lyric poesy to be incomparable."¹

The purpose of this chapter is to show how the minister can take advantage of some of the striking literary features of the Psalms and use them as a help and aid in homiletical preparation. The literary characteristics which will be discussed are variety of subject matter, brevity, natural division, repetition, and imagery.

B. The Value of Varied Themes and Topics

One of the first impressions received in scanning the Book of Psalms is the variety of subject matter dealt with. Closer study will reveal a wide range of themes and topics which are as varied as the experiences of human life,² yet all treated in the light of religion.³

As Kirkpatrick points out,

"Some are directly addressed to God, as petition or thanksgiving or praise; some are the communings of the soul with God, expressing its faith, its hope, its love, its needs, its fears, its aspirations, its joys, its triumphs; some celebrate the marvellous works of God in nature and history; some reflect upon the perplexing problems of life and their relation to the divine government of the world; but God is as it were the sun around which all revolves, and His light and heat illuminate and animate the whole."⁴

It was because of this wide variety of moods and emotions expressed that John Calvin called this book "an anatomy of all the parts of the soul, every emotion of life being represented as in a mirror."⁵

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1. A. Sauners Dyer: Psalm-Mosaics, p. 5.

2. Robertson, op. cit., p. 174.

3. McFadyen, op. cit., p. 15.

4. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. x.

5. John Calvin: Commentary on the Book of Psalms, Vol. I, translated by the Rev. James Anderson, p. xxxvii.

Likewise, Paul Gerhard wrote:

"The Psalms is a theatre, where God allows us to behold both Himself and His works; a most pleasant green field; a vast garden, where we see all manner of flowers; a paradise where we see the most delicious flowers and fruits; a great sea, in which are hid costly pearls; a heavenly school, in which we have God for our Teacher; a compend of all Scripture; a mirror of Divine Grace, reflecting the lovely face of our Heavenly Father, and the anatomy of our souls."¹

But even with this wide variety of moods, emotions, and subject matter in the Psalms, it is very difficult to classify them topically. Many topical classifications of the Psalter can be found and can be made, but none of them will be entirely satisfactory;² for

"thanksgiving and petition, reflection, and imprecation, are subtly interwoven into the texture of many a psalm; and there are few psalms which could not with more or less propriety, find their place within several groups."³

Thus, to determine the central theme of any particular psalm for purposes of expository preaching is not always the easiest thing. Yet, careful and accurate study will show surprising results. Here are some suggested preaching topics from a group of selected psalms and based upon their central themes:

"Two Kinds of Men" - Psalm 1.

"What Do We Mean By Divine Providence?" - Psalm 9.

"When We Are Sick" - Psalm 41.

"A Cry Against Injustice" - Psalm 58.

"The Warning of History" - Psalm 78.

"Overcoming Spiritual Homesickness" - Psalm 84.

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1. Dyer, op. cit., p. 5.
2. Robertson, op. cit., p. 175.
3. McFadyen, op. cit., p. ix.

"Christian Citizenship" - Psalm 87.

"A Christian Politician" - Psalm 101.

"Living Religion" - Psalm 115.

"The Harvest of Joy" - Psalm 126.

"Hope in Forgiveness" - Psalm 130.

"The Hallelujah Chorus" - Psalm 148.

These are only twelve topics out of a possible one hundred and fifty which could be used in preaching from the Psalms as individual wholes. The minister who is desirous of having variety in preaching will find the Book of Psalms a rich source of suggestion and exposition.

C. The Value of Brevity

Even the casual reader of the Psalms will be impressed by the brevity which is characteristic of a majority of them.

One of the problems of expository preaching from most of the passages in the Bible is to get the right context of the passage used-- what precedes and what proceeds it. Preaching without regard to the context is a sin of modern preaching. This danger can likewise exist in preaching from the Psalms, especially in using verses or paragraphs from some of the longer ones; but there are many of the shorter psalms which are like priceless gems tucked away in this valuable book, and which provide excellent material for expository preaching. The minister can take a passage of five verses, twenty-five verses or more, and can treat it homiletically without having to dig the garden

on both sides of it.¹

In preaching from the shorter psalms, the central theme is easily ascertained and the sermon maker can proceed with his outline without having to be burdened down or lost in many minute details. Preaching from such psalms, moreover, will enable the minister to give a proper place to the healthy use of his imagination without doing injustice to the Biblical context.

Psalm 13 contains six verses and is doubtless the language of David, "that much tried man of God, and is intended to express the feelings of the people of God in those ever-returning trials which beset them."² For preaching purposes it could be entitled "Rejoicing in Sorrow" with these two main divisions:

I. Its Difficulty

II. Its Possibility

Psalm 131 contains only three verses and has been called "one of the most beautiful in the whole book."³ It is concerned with the simplicity of a child and the honest expression of an unaffected humility.⁴ The minister might entitle it "A Child-Like Faith" with these simple divisions:

I. What It Is Not

II. What It Is

Psalm 133 likewise contains three verses and is an exquisite

.

1. There might be possible exceptions to this as some scholars feel that certain psalms were originally combined as one.
2. C. H. Spurgeon: The Treasury of David, Vol. I, p. 169.
3. Perowne, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 385.
4. Ibid.

little gem which has been said to have the "fragrance of a lovely rose."¹ Its inscription, "The Excellency of Brotherly Unity," well names its central theme. Bishop Perowne in speaking of the theme of this psalm says,

"Nowhere has the nature of true unity--that unity which binds men together, not by artificial restraints, but as brethren of one heart--been more faithfully described, nowhere has it been so gracefully illustrated, as in this short ode. True concord is, we are here taught, a holy thing, a sacred oil, a rich perfume, which flowing down from the head to the beard, from the beard to the garment, sanctifies the whole body. It is a sweet morning dew, which lights not only on the lofty mountain-peaks, but on the lesser hills, embracing all and refreshing all with its influence."²

This psalm would make the basis for a splendid pastoral sermon directed to the church and might be entitled "Dwelling Together in Unity" with these divisions:

I. Present Benefits

II. Future Benefits

These examples which have illustrated the value of brevity have been chosen from some of the shortest psalms. Many psalms of longer length, however, fall in this same category and should be a challenge to any minister interested in expository preaching.

D. The Value of Natural Division

Although the Psalms are not considered to be logical treatises,³ and even though as referred to previously, some of the

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1. Perowne, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 394.

2. Ibid.

3. Mc Fadyen, op. cit., p. ix.

psalms practically defy topical classification because of their varied content;¹ yet, many of the psalms divide themselves into very natural divisions. This of course is a definite value to the minister, for oftentimes he can follow the main divisions of the psalm as the main divisions of his sermon outline.

Both Psalms 15 and 107 are excellent examples of this natural division characteristic, although in form and length they are quite different.

Psalms 15 is noted for its simplicity and "properly speaking, it has no strophes or divisions,"² but there is a logical sequence which will give the minister a skeleton upon which he may hang the body of a sermon. The psalm begins with two questions directed to God: "Who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle?" and "who shall dwell in thy holy hill?"³ Then following is the answer to these questions-- a description of a man who can draw near to God and live in His presence.⁴ Finally in conclusion, there is given a wonderful promise to those meeting these qualifications.⁵ For preaching purposes, the minister might call this psalm "The Question and Answer Method" with the following natural divisions as a suitable sermon outline:

I. The Questions

II. The Answer

III. The Additional Promise

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1. Intra., p. 12.

2. Perowne, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 162.

3. Psalm 15:1.

4. Psalm 15:3-5a.

5. Psalm 15:5b.

Although Psalm 107 contains forty-three verses it has been called by Barton "one of the most perfect songs in the Psalter,"¹ and he further says, "It has an exordium and a finale and the body of the Psalm is divided into four strophes, each of which deals with peculiar perils by land and sea bringing men into extremity."² If the minister chooses to follow this psalm in its logical and natural development, he will have before him a model sermon outline³ consisting of a theme, an introduction, four main headings, and a conclusion, which might be something like this:

Theme: "An Exhortation to Praise God"

Introduction (1-3)

- I. For Guidance As One Having Been Lost (4-9)
- II. For Freedom As One Having Been Imprisoned (10-16)
- III. For Healing As One Having Been Sick (17-22)
- IV. For Protection As One Having Been Shipwrecked (23-32)

Conclusion (33-43)

Most of the psalms can be divided into definite sections such as these, although they are not always evident at a casual glance or with a surface method of study. When the minister is able to determine the natural divisions of the psalm being studied, he will find his sermonizing much easier. At times he may wish to

.

- 1. C. H. Morgan: The Psalms as Daily Companions, p. 53, quoted from Barton, Vol. II, p. 164.
- 2. Morgan, op. cit., p. 53.
- 3. This is taking for granted that many details will be omitted. The structure is the important thing here.

rearrange the order of division and at times he may wish to omit a division or divisions; but usually, the order given by the Psalmist will be the most effective.

E. The Value of Recurring Ideas and Thoughts

The psalms which do not easily divide themselves into natural divisions are characterized by a repetition of key ideas and thoughts. The reason for this is well stated by McFadyen as follows:

"The Psalms . . . are the expression of the emotion of unusually sensitive spirits, and the emotions are sometimes subtly transformed, like the clouds that change their color as they hang in the light of the setting sun."¹

Thus in certain psalms is found a repetition and interweaving of doubts and hopes, despair and faith, complaining and rejoicing, and optimism and pessimism.²

Many ministers have steered away from the Book of Psalms as preaching material because of this characteristic--too many details, too much similar and repetitious subject matter, and a seeming confusion of organization. But what a shame that such potential preaching material should be neglected! The careful student of the Psalms will find in this characteristic of repetition a wonderful flexibility in preparing sermon outlines. Also, in the parallelisms within the individual verses, the minister will find a literary device which is typical of Hebrew poetry that will be the means of making more intelligent to him the central theme of

.

1. McFadyen, op. cit., p. ix.

2. Psalm 42 is a good example of this characteristic.

the psalm.¹

In handling this type of psalm, however, it must be remembered that not all the material in the psalm, neither all the outstanding thoughts or ideas, must be used in expository preaching. Neither must they be used in the order in which they are given. The important thing is to seek for balance of truth which can be ideally gained by a selective process which will now be illustrated.

At first reading, Psalm 31 which is a psalm of petition seems to be just twenty-four verses of disorganization. Its atmosphere is that of a varied emotion and "it is not to be wondered as if the verses bid defiance to all logical order."² Scholars, however, have attempted to divide it in various ways,³ but these divisions are rather artificial and would be difficult for the minister to use in sermonizing, especially if he should confine himself to these set divisional units and in the order given. How much more flexible this psalm will become for the minister if he will note and classify the main recurring thoughts and ideas which are scattered throughout the entire psalm.

For example, here are some of the key ideas which are

.

1. Robertson, op. cit., p. 61. "The parallelism which is the outstanding feature of Hebrew poetry, demands in many cases the repetition of the thought in varying expressions, and in every case leads to some modification of the expression in one member of the verse to correspond with a variation of the thought in another. So marked is this characteristic that an attentive regard to the parallelism often helps the expositor over a difficulty that arises from the obscurity of an expression in one clause, a clearer expression of the thought being usually found in the other."
2. Spence and Exell, op. cit., p. 231.
3. Cf. McFadyen, op. cit., pp. 219-221.

repeated:

(1) A note of distress and danger.

verse 4 "a net laid privily for me"

verse 7 "my affliction and my soul in adversities"

verse 9 "I am in distress"

verse 10 "life spent with sorrow and years with sighing"

verse 11 "bones wasted away"

verse 12 "I am like a broken vessel"

verse 13 "they desired to take away my life"

verse 22 "I am cut off from before thine eyes"

(2) A note of petition that springs from the heart.

verse 1 "deliver me in thy righteousness"

verse 2 "Bow down thine ear unto me"

verse 3 "lead me and guide me"

verse 4 "Pluck me out of the net"

verse 9 "Have mercy upon me"

verse 15 "deliver me from the hand of mine enemies"

verse 16 "save me in thy lovingkindness"

verse 17 "let the wicked be put to shame"

(3) A note of rescue and security.

verse 1 "In thee do I take refuge"

verse 3 "Thou art my rock and my fortress"

verse 4 "thou art my stronghold"

verse 5 "Into thy hand I commend my spirit"

verse 8 "thou hast set my feet in a large place"

verse 14 "But I trusted in thee"

verse 19 "Oh how great is thy goodness"

verse 21 "for he hath showed me his marvelous lovingkindness"

verse 22 "thou heardest the voice of my supplication"

verse 23 "Jehovah preserveth the faithful"

This type of treatment opens up the passage for an unlimited homiletical usage. With the topic "A Real Christian in Distress," the following simple sentence outline might be used effectively as a sermon exposition of this psalm:

- I. A real Christian may at times suffer extreme distress.
- II. A real Christian in distress has a course of action.
 - A. Based on God's faithfulness.
 - B. Expressed in petition of faith.
- III. A real Christian victorious in distress has a vital testimony.

Thus, the minister will see that beneath the surface of this psalm is "an order which is full of helpful teaching, by which when perceived, the beauty of the psalm will stand revealed, as otherwise it could not."¹ This is likewise true of many of the other psalms which the minister might use as sermon material.

F. The Value of Imagery

The Book of Psalms is struck through and through with the

.

1. Spence and Exell, op. cit., p. 231.

most vivid and beautiful descriptive language. It is alive with common, yet very interesting figures of speech which give the reader the impression of an artistic panorama passing before him, and he often finds himself being transported into the very experience of the psalmist, himself. McFadyen, in comparing the Psalter with the other literatures of the world says, "It combines a simplicity which they seldom equal with a brilliant but chastened imagination which is all its own."¹

From the beginning where the righteous man is likened to a tree planted by the rivers of water² and the unrighteous man is likened to the chaff which the wind blows away³ until the end where a majestic band of musical instruments sounds forth its symphony of praise to almighty God,⁴ the Book of Psalms abounds in the most striking pictures. In the second Psalm, God is pictured as sitting in the heavens laughing as selfish people plot against Him.⁵ In the forty-fifth Psalm, "the only marriage song in the Psalter shines with all the brilliant splendor of the East."⁶ And in the one hundred and twenty-sixth Psalm, the tear stained sower is transformed into a joyful reaper.⁷

The psalmist is undoubtedly at his best, however, in his descriptions of nature. At one time the reader is in a tempestuous

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1. McFadyen, op. cit., p. 13.
2. Psalm 1:3.
3. Psalm 1:4.
4. Psalm 150:1-6.
5. Psalm 2:4.
6. McFadyen, op. cit., p. 14.
7. Psalm 126:5-6.

and stormy atmosphere as nature starts back in fear, as the sea flees, as the rivers roll back, and as the hills tremble at the presence of God.¹ At another time the reader is in a quiet and peaceful atmosphere as righteousness and peace kiss each other when truth springs out of the earth,² or as the gracious shepherd leads his flock beside the still waters.³ Again the reader is enhanced by scenes of startling beauty as the wilderness springs forth into joyous beauty and as the pastures and valleys are clothed with flocks and fields of grain as the all-caring God passes by.⁴ Truly, in the Book of Psalms "the earth is Jehovah's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein."⁵

As the minister studies the Psalms on the look out for beautiful imagery and with a little use of his imagination, he will find that passages previously veiled will take on intelligent meaning. Lack of understanding will be superceded by a genuine appreciation, and those psalms which seemed impossible to treat homiletically will have an alluring and attractive quality.

Psalms 29 with its beautiful imagery is an excellent example of what the Book of Psalms offers for the healthy use of the imagination. Let the minister picture himself looking out over the Mediterranean Sea from an elevation along the Palestinian shore, possibly Mount Carmel. He hears a low rumble far to the west⁶ as a

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1. Psalm 114:1-8.
2. Psalm 85:10-11.
3. Psalm 23:2.
4. Psalm 65:11-13.
5. Psalm 24:1
6. Psalm 29:3.

thunderstorm rises slowly over the Mediterranean and then sweeps inland with increasing fury, majesty, and power.¹ He watches the progress of the storm as it hits the north country and the cedars of Lebanon begin to break and fall. As the wind rages through the forests of the highlands, the mountains have the appearance from the distance of skipping calves and young wild oxen. The thunder and lightening is now coming in regular intervals.² Suddenly the storm turns and sweeps into the south country and the wilderness shakes with the impact. It is so terrific that the cattle give premature birth to their young. The woodlands are stripped bare as the cyclonic wind cuts its path through them. It seems that everything in heaven and in earth is saying "Glory" because of the majesty and power of God as seen in the thunderstorm.³ Then as the storm ceases and the calm comes again the psalmist and the minister stand in profound awe and wonder as they reflect upon the regulative power of the Eternal King and are assured that "Jehovah will give strength unto his people; Jehovah will bless his people with peace."⁴

The minister should be so saturated with the language of the Book of Psalms that the figures and pictures found there will become a natural part of his spiritual vocabulary. Whether in preaching or in prayer, whether using an illustration from another psalm or painting a vivid illustration from the psalm being used--this is

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1. Psalm 29:4.
2. Psalm 29:5-7.
3. Psalm 29:8-9.
4. Psalm 29:11.

the kind of language that people like to hear, and at the same time it will leave with them lasting impressions of spiritual value. This kind of language is appealing--it is tasty, it is audible, it is visible, and it can be touched!

G. Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, some of the unique and striking literary characteristics of the Book of Psalms have been discussed as preaching values. The themes and topics of the Psalms which are as varied as the experiences, moods, and emotions of human life are well adaptable for preaching topics and provide a rich source of suggestions for variety in preaching materials. Many of the psalms are noted for their simplicity and brevity. Such passages can be preached from without a laborious contextual treatment and without the danger of getting lost in details. Also, many of the psalms fall naturally into sections or divisions which can become the main parts of the minister's outline. Then a large number of the psalms are characterized by a repetition and recurrence of key ideas and thoughts. Such a characteristic is not a disadvantage to the minister but an advantage; for it lends itself to a flexibility in sermon outlining through a selective and arranging process. The beautiful imagery of the Psalms is an aid to new understanding and appreciation, and at the same time provides a spiritual vocabulary which can not be excelled.

Thus, the literary characteristics of the Book of Psalms are some of the gateways through which the minister might make a homi-

letical approach. This is not the only method. Neither are these all of the literary characteristics or all of the preaching values to be derived from them. But this is the beginning of a process that should interest and challenge any sincere minister of the Word of God.

CHAPTER III

THE ADAPTABLE QUALITY OF THE PSALMS
FOR PRESENT DAY APPLICATION
AS
A PREACHING VALUE

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A. Introduction

Expository preaching must be tied in with the life and times of the present day if it is to have a practical appeal. What does the Book of Psalms offer which adapts itself to present day application? A modern writer has answered this question in a general way by saying that "the Psalms are free from the fetters of space and time, and therefore are at home in America in the twentieth century as much as in the Roman Empire in the first."¹

This chapter will deal specifically with such qualities of the Psalms which make them the "perpetual companions of human hearts"² and thus rich in preaching value. The emphasis will be primarily with the practical life experiences from which the Psalms arise, their special use in the lives of great men and women, and their appropriateness for special preaching occasions. Selected examples will be given to illustrate these qualities.

B. The Practical Experiences From Which the Psalms Arise

It is because of the many practical life experiences dealt

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 10.

2. Ibid., p. 5.

with in the light of religion that the Psalms speak so directly to the human heart. The one all encompassing problem that the Book of Psalms is concerned with is the unceasing conflict between right and wrong, good and evil, righteousness and unrighteousness, the godly and the ungodly. As Robertson points out,

" . . . we have in them the conflict between the right and the wrong on the largest scale--a conflict which is as old as the dawn of conscience, and has taken more and more definite shape as conscience became enlightened and as experience of man and of the world was extended. But they are not poems descriptive of the conflict: they are the sighs or the shouts, the prayers or the praises, of the men actively engaged in the conflict. And so in all succeeding ages they have appealed to the hearts of men who have still the same combat to wage, and they are as fresh to-day as when they were first composed."¹

Many scholars have lost themselves in trying to determine the author, or the exact circumstances, or the surrounding in which a particular psalm was written. There is definite value in that type of study if it is not labored to extremes, but the thing which should be the chief concern is not so much the day or the hour, or even the spot at which the psalm was composed, but the kind of inner experience which made such composition possible. And this experience or mood or situation is usually given in the psalm itself.²

Kirkpatrick divides the Psalter into three parts: Book I including Psalms 1-42, Books II and III including Psalms 42-89, and Books IV and V including Psalms 90-150. He then makes this statement:

"By the character of the contents of the three divisions, speaking broadly and generally, the Psalms of the first division are

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1. Robertson, op. cit., p. 355.
2. Ibid., pp. 220-221.

personal; those of the second, national; those of the third, liturgical. There are numerous exceptions, but it is in the first division that personal prayers and thanksgivings are chiefly to be found; in the second, prayers in special times of national calamity and thanksgivings in times of national deliverance; in the third, Psalms of praise and thanksgiving for general use in the Temple services."¹

These divisions and classifications are all tied together and overlap to a certain degree; yet a survey of the Psalter does indicate that the psalms generally arise from practical life situations which are either experiences concerned with the individual himself, or the nation of Israel, or the religion of Israel. Although it is impossible to speak of one type of experience without referring to the others, they do differ sufficiently to warrant separate treatment in this study for purposes of present day application.

1. Experiences of an Individual.

Many psalms are especially suitable for personal application and will appeal to a wide and varied group of people because in them man

"is pictured under every condition of this life: a king, a royal bridegroom; a soldier; a fugitive hunted in the wilderness; a stranger, suspected and oppressed; a friend and acquaintance, slandered and betrayed; a captive exile, having no heart to sing his loved psalms in a distant land; a sick sufferer, tossing on a hard couch through the night watches; a citizen, honest, clean and incorruptible; a sailor, buffeted and storm driven; a farmer, rejoicing beside the full threshing floor; a happy householder, with wife and children about the table; a pilgrim, with the memory of sweet lodging places on the way to Zion; a time forgetting, absorbed worshipper in the central sanctuary of his people."²

In situations such as these and many more, sometimes be-

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1. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. lviii.
2. Morgan, op. cit., p. 7.

cause of adverse circumstances and sometimes because of pleasing circumstances, man reflects upon the great problems of human life. Some of these are:

"What is Man?" - Psalm 8.

"What is the Destiny of the Righteous and the Wicked?" - Psalm 11.

"Why Does Evil Prosper?" - Psalm 12.

"Why Does God Seem so Far Away?" - Psalm 13.

"Who Will Dwell With God?" - Psalm 15.

"Where is Security?" - Psalm 37.

Then also, in these varied conditions of life man is confronted with all the feelings and emotions of his human soul, which Calvin designated as "those tumultuous agitations wherewith the minds of men are wont to be tossed" and which "the Holy Ghost hath here represented to the life."¹ Some of these are fears, anxieties, worries, doubts, griefs, and sorrows on the dark side of life and hopes, aspirations, assurances, determinations, comforts, faith, security, and blessedness on the bright side.

Oftentimes the psalm arises out of an experience of trouble in which the psalmist calls upon God and finds an answer to his need. In some psalms such as 42 and 43 the troubles are many and varied, for here is found a man suffering the anguish of loneliness, the anguish of reproach, and the anguish of a confused mind; yet the psalmist finds victory in taking his troubles to God and is able to say, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me?

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1. Calvin, *op. cit.*, p. xxxvii.

Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the help of my countenance and my God."¹

Other examples of psalms arising out of troubles are:

"A Prayer for Mercy in Time of Grief" - Psalm 6.

"A Prayer for Righteous Judgment" - Psalm 7.

"A Prayer for Healing" - Psalm 41.

"A Prayer Against Unrighteous Judges" - Psalm 58.

"A Prayer for Pardon and Restoration" - Psalm 130.

"A Prayer for Deliverance from Persecution" - Psalm 142.

With all the troubles and problems which face man in the present day, the application of the Psalms by the Christian minister to the individual will be a message which will appeal and live; for "in their doubts, struggles, and aspirations, those ancient men are very near us, and they speak to us with an accent that is strangely modern."²

2. Experiences of a Nation.

In the Book of Psalms, the nation of Israel and its fate are never lost sight of and at times the predominant considerations are entirely national.³ For example, Psalm 78 seems to grow out of the national experiences of Israel from the bondage in Egypt⁴ until the reign of King David;⁵ Psalm 105 is concerned with the story of

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1. Psalm 42:5, 11; 43:5.

2. John Edgar McFadyen: Ten Studies in the Psalms, p. ix.

3. Robertson, op. cit., p. 177.

4. Psalm 78:12.

5. Psalm 78:70-72.

the nation from the time of God's covenant with Abraham¹ until the conquest of the promised land;² Psalm 106 grows out of experiences of the nation from the Exodus out of Egypt³ until the Babylonian captivity;⁴ Psalm 114 deals primarily with the Exodus and Psalm 136 is concerned primarily with the wanderings in the wilderness.

These psalms deal with the past history of the nation. Others are concerned with the king as the national leader⁵ while still others have an emphasis upon the capital city of Jerusalem.⁶

The historical psalms emphasize two main aspects--the faithfulness of God and the unfaithfulness of man. This faithfulness of God is seen in His lovingkindness and mercy as He has guided the affairs of the nation. The unfaithfulness of man is seen in his many acts of forgetfulness, neglect, stubbornness, and rebellion as the historical events of this chosen nation are recalled by the psalmist. But in these psalms "there is no boasting of national greatness, no assumption of glory to themselves or to their forefathers for all that the past has to show of prosperity."⁷ But rather, "the virtue which the psalms of history imply on the part of the people is cooperation, responsiveness, obedience . . ."⁸ When the historical times of the nation are bright, the psalmist is in joy and thanksgiving; when the historical times of the nation are evil, the psalmist is very sad. The at-

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1. Psalm 105:9.

2. Psalm 105:44.

3. Psalm 106:7-8.

4. Psalm 106:47.

5. See Psalms 18, 20, 61, 72, 101, 110.

6. See Psalms 122, 128, 147. Robertson, op. cit., pp. 190-191.

7. Robertson, op. cit., p. 180.

8. Morgan, op. cit., p. 63.

titude and spirit of the psalmist is well expressed in Psalm 115:

"Not unto us, O Jehovah, not unto us, But unto thy name give glory,
for thy lovingkindness, and for thy truth's sake."¹

Some of the lessons of history from the Psalms which might
be applied to the nation are:

- (1) Importance of keeping God first with the promise of security
and prosperity for obedience, but the warning of terrific
judgment for disobedience.
- (2) Importance of learning from the mistakes of the past.
- (3) Importance of having national unity.
- (4) Importance of the national capital being not only a political
center but also a religious center.
- (5) Importance of having leaders with character and leadership
quality.
- (6) Importance of steering clear of foreign entanglements.
- (7) Importance of teaching and instructing each generation in
the ways of God in dealing with the nation.

Today, when historical events are moving so swiftly and
with the United States as a leading world power, the Christian min-
ister can well apply the lessons of history from the Psalms to our
nation in both its domestic and foreign policy.

3. Experiences of Temple Worship.

To the ancient Hebrews, their national life was closely
associated with their religious life and it is impossible to talk
about their nation without talking about their religion. Yet there

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1. Psalm 115:1.

are many psalms which seem to have been inspired by some experience definitely associated with the Temple in Jerusalem which was the religious sanctuary of these people.

As already stated in this chapter, many of the psalms especially in the latter part of the book, were probably written for liturgical use in the Temple,¹ and come out of the author's worship experiences. These psalms of praise and thanksgiving offer excellent material for preaching themes on corporate worship.

But there are other choice psalms which grow out of temple experiences of the author and have a practical application for the Christian Church today. For example, Psalm 24 deals with the presence of God as the "King of Glory" entering and filling the sanctuary. Psalm 84 depicts the longing of the temple worshipper for the sanctuary with these beautiful words: "For a day in thy court is better than a thousand, I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."² In Psalm 122, the entering worshipper proclaims his joy: "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of Jehovah."³ Psalm 116 is concerned with the public vows of the worshipper while Psalm 133 deals with the unity of the worshippers. Those working in Jehovah's house are remembered in Psalm 134 while Psalm 132 is a prayer for Jehovah's blessing upon His house. All of these psalms reflect the dominant attitude of the

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1. Intra., p. 30.
2. Psalm 84:10.
3. Psalm 122:1.

worshipper which is well stated in Psalm 93, "Holiness becometh thine house O Jehovah, for evermore."¹

The Book of Psalms is full of material which is applicable to the minister and the members of his congregation as they together endeavor to build the Kingdom of God through the agency of the Church.

C. The Timeless Character of the Psalms as Shown by Illustrations in the Lives of Great Men and Women.

In no better way is the perennial vitality of the Psalms indicated than in the way they have influenced the lives of men and women down through the centuries of the Christian Church.² In Chapter I of this study attention was called to several testimonials which indicated the inestimable value of the Psalms,³ but at this place, the value of the Psalter will be seen in a practical illustrative way.

1. The Whole Span of Church History.

Roland Prothero has made a collection of some of the countless instances in which the Psalms have guided, controlled, and sustained the lives of people in all the years of human history. In the introduction to this careful study he says,

"In the Psalms the vast hosts of suffering humanity have found, from the time of Jonah to the present day, the deepest expression of their hopes and fears. As our Lord himself died with the words of a psalm upon His lips, so the first martyr, Stephen, had used the words thus hallowed. So, also, in prison at Philippi, Paul and Silas encouraged themselves by singing psalms throughout the night. It was by the Psalms that the anguish, wrung from tortured

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1. Psalm 93:5b.
2. L. Maclean Watt and J.E. M'Fadyen: The Study Bible, Psalms, edited by John T. Stirling, p. 115.
3. Ante., pp. 3-4.

lips on the cross, at the stake, on the scaffold, and in the dungeon, has been healed and solaced. Strong in the strength that they impart, young boys and timid girls have risen from their knees in the breathless amphitheatre, thronged with its quivering multitudes, and boldly faced the lions . . . With the Psalms upon their tongues, myriads have died--now in quiet sick-rooms, surrounded by all who have loved them best in life--now alone, and far from home and kindred--now hemmed in by fierce enemies howling for their blood. Thus in the Psalms there are pages which are stained with the life-blood of martyrs, and wet with the tears of the saints; others, which are illuminated by the victories of weak humanity over suffering and fear and temptation; others, which glow with the brightness of heroic constancy and almost superhuman courage. Over the familiar words are written as it were in a palimpsest, the heart stirring romances of spiritual chivalry, the most moving tragedies of human life and action."¹

In this book and also those by Ker and Dyer which were introduced at the beginning of this study,² the minister will find illustration after illustration of how certain psalms or verses from the Psalms have "written a new record for themselves in the experience of many Christian men and women, and in some of the most remarkable movements of the church and of the world."³ It is this characteristic that "makes them the most catholic element in all the varieties of worship found in every country and clime, among them that name the name of Christ."⁴ Prothero illustrates the Psalms in a chronological presentation of Church History, whereas Dyer and Ker illustrate them individually in their numerical order.

2. Specific Incidents.

In order to show the minister the unlimited possibilities

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1. Prothero, op. cit., pp. 6-7.
2. Ante., pp. 4,8.
3. John Ker: The Psalms in History and Biography, pp. 7-8.
4. Ibid., p. 11.

in this type of illustrative material, some specific examples from selected psalms will now be given.

a. Psalm 26

The comfort and blessing which this psalm has helped to inspire is well illustrated by an incident of the latter seventeenth century:

"After the revocation of the edict of Nantes in 1685, by Louis XIV, the Protestant ministers were expelled from France, but the people were forbidden to leave, and all the highways and byways were jealously watched to prevent them. Fines, imprisonment, tortures, were then employed to make them renounce their religion, and their children were taken from them to be brought up in the Roman Catholic faith. Despair drove the Protestants to attempt every means of escape. They took refuge among the mountains and woods, hiding by day, and fleeing by night to reach the frontiers. The most industrious and intelligent of her population left France, and inflicted on her a loss from which she has not yet recovered. The stories of some of these refugees are of the most thrilling kind. When they reached a friendly land, they thanked God with ecstasy for the safety and freedom their own country denied them. Pineton of Chambrun, one of these exiles tells that when he and his companions came in sight of Geneva, they sang with tears of joy this psalm, from verse eight to the close, every word of which seems made for such a case."¹

How much more meaningful these words now become:

"Jehovah, I love the habitation of thy house, and the place where thy glory dwelleth. Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with men of blood. . . But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity; redeem me, and be merciful unto me. My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless Jehovah."²

b. Psalm 39

An excellent illustration from this psalm is told by an ecclesiastical historian of the fifth century by the name of Socrates.

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1. Ker, op. cit., pp. 50-51.
2. Psalm 26:8-12.

He tells of a plain man named Pambo who came to a very learned man and asked him to teach him one of the Psalms. The teacher began to read Psalm 39 and after Pambo heard the first sentence, "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue,"¹ he departed, saying that he would consider that as his first lesson. He did not soon return and two months later when the teacher asked him when he would proceed with his lessons, Pambo replied that he had not yet mastered his first lesson. Forty-nine years later Pambo gave the same answer to the same question.²

John Ker remarks that Pambo might have succeeded better had he allowed his teacher to go on to verse 7 and 8: "And now Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee. Deliver me from all my transgressions."³

c. Psalm 68

The words of strength found in this psalm are illustrated by Mr. William Edwards, a magistrate in India who was a fugitive during the Indian Mutiny of 1857. After a sleepless night, devoured by mosquitoes, depressed in mind and body, he writes, August 16th:

"It is at such times I feel the real blessing the Psalms are. They never fail to give peace and refreshment, when all is dark and gloomy within and without. The circumstances under which many of them were written, seasons of danger and almost despair--David fleeing and hiding from bloodthirsty enemies, as we are--render them peculiarly suitable to our case. This morning I felt the 5th verse of the 68th Psalm most soothing, in the assurance it gives me that, if I am cut off, my God will be with my widow and fatherless children."⁴

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1. Psalm 39:1.
2. Ker, op. cit., p. 69.
3. Ibid.
4. Prothero, op. cit., pp. 361, 363.

d. Psalm 115

From the life of the great Austrian composer, Franz Joseph Haydn, comes this impressing illustration which will stamp indelibly upon the human heart the message of Psalm 115:

"On the evening of a day in the beginning of April, 1809, all the lovers of art in Vienna were assembled in the theatre to witness the performance of the oratorio of the 'Creation.' The entertainment had been given in honour of the composer of that noble work--the illustrious Haydn. Now that the aged and honoured composer was present, probably for the last time, to hear it, an emotion too deep for utterance seemed to pervade the vast audience. It seemed as if every eye in the assembly was fixed on the calm noble face of the venerable artist; as if every heart beat with love for him; as if all feared to break the spell of hushed and holy silence. Then came, like a succession of heavenly melodies, the music of the 'Creation' and the listeners were as if transported to the infancy of the world. At the words, 'Let there be light, and there was light,' when all the instruments were united in one full burst of gorgeous harmony, emotion seemed to shake the whole frame of the aged man. His pale face crimsoned; his bosom heaved convulsively; he raised his eyes, streaming with tears, towards heaven, and, lifting upwards his trembling hands, exclaimed--his voice audible in the pause of the music--'Not unto me--not unto me--but unto Thy Name be all the glory, O Lord.'"¹

e. Psalm 130

It is said that John Wesley heard the words of Psalm 130 sung on the afternoon of Wednesday, May 24, 1738 as an anthem at St. Paul's Cathedral. The same evening he received that assurance of his salvation by faith in the room at Aldersgate Street. And so this Penitential Psalm was one of the influences which led to that sure confidence in God which enabled John Wesley to use his intense energy and organizing genius in building the movement which yet bears

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1. Dyer, op. cit., p. 455.

his name.¹

Thus, in the words of Henry Van Dyke,

"these Psalms come to us with a power and sweetness which has grown through all centuries, a life precious and manifold. The breath of the eternal is in them. But not this alone for they breathe also the fragrance of all that is highest and best in the mortal."²

In applying the truth of the Psalms, the minister's use of living illustrations of how the Psalms have lived with people in the past will make them come alive and meet the needs of people today.

D. The Appropriateness of the Psalms
for
Special Preaching Occasions

It is evident from the previous discussion in this chapter that the Psalms are of such an applicable quality that they speak effectively to the present day congregation when used as preaching material. Apart from the Psalms being used for what might be called "ordinary" preaching occasions of the year, there are some of the Psalms, which because of their suitable themes and subject matter, are especially appropriate for expository preaching on "special" occasions. A few of these psalms which are adaptable for this purpose are worthy of mention here:

- (1) Communion Sunday - Psalm 103.
- (2) Good Friday - Psalm 22.
- (3) A funeral - Psalm 23.
- (4) Thanksgiving - Psalm 100.

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1. Prothero, op. cit, p. 304.

2. Henry Van Dyke: The Story of the Psalms, p. 12.

- (5) Armistice Day - Psalm 46.
- (6) Universal Bible Sunday - Psalm 119.
- (7) Easter Sunday - Psalm 2.
- (8) Christmas - Psalm 110.

This list will grow both in the types of occasion and also in the specific psalms which are appropriate for them as the minister becomes better acquainted with the Book of Psalms.

E. Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, the Psalms have been discussed in the light of their adaptable quality for present day preaching application. The practical life experiences from which the Psalms arise are mainly of three types--those which are primarily personal, those which are primarily national, and those which are primarily ecclesiastical. Thus there will be found in the Psalms three main areas of life which speak to our day--that of the individual person, that of the nation, and that of the church. The individual who suffers countless troubles and reflects on the great problems of human life, which are either directly or indirectly concerned with the conflict of right and wrong, will find an answer to his needs as he takes his burdens to a God of loving-kindness. The nation is reminded of its past history, both its glory and its miserable failures, and is commanded to take heed to the past, is exhorted to obedience, and is warned of judgment as it plans its present and future activities. The church finds in the Psalms that its life is closely associated and related to both the nation and the individual, but at the same

time finds a source book on worship, worshippers, and the sanctuary.

The value of the Psalms for present day preaching is further amplified for the minister as he finds striking illustrations of how they have influenced men and women down through the centuries of the Christian Church. These illustrations which indicate the timeless character of the Psalms are a means of making them speak in a living way to human hearts in the present day congregation.

Then also, some psalms, because of their special subject content in addition to their timeless and practical character, adapt themselves to special preaching occasions throughout the calendar of the Church year.

If the Book of Psalms does not live for the present day church congregation, and if sermons which are preached from it do not move the hearts of men, the fault is not with the Book but with the preacher of the Book. "The Psalter will live as long as men are moved by the impulse to praise and to pray. . .Its simple penetrating words have a strange power over the human heart."¹

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1. McFadyen, op. cit., p. xii.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEVOTIONAL QUALITY OF THE PSALMS
AS
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CHAPTER IV

THE DEVOTIONAL QUALITY OF THE PSALMS AS A PREACHING VALUE

A. Introduction

One of the main objectives of expository preaching should be the strengthening of Christian believers. The minister who is desirous of seeing his people grow spiritually will make much of both the Old and New Testaments because he finds that through the influence of the Word of God "knowledge increases, love grows, faith is quickened, hopes are brightened, and the sweet experiences of the Christian life are made sweeter."¹ The Book of Psalms, because it is "highly devotional and intended to set forth the praises of God,"² is especially adaptable for this purpose. One writer in speaking of the devotional quality of the Bible has indicated the superiority of the Psalms thus:

"And yet, no portion of it, for inflaming the heart with devotion to God, keeping alive and in exercise the gifts and graces of the Spirit in the soul, will the devout turn with a greater relish or keener appreciation of its helpfulness for that purpose than to the Psalter."³

In each of the previous chapters of this study, the devotional quality of the Psalms has been mentioned, which indicates the impossibility of discussing any characteristic of the Psalms

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1. John McNaugher: The Psalms in Worship, p. 253.
2. Spence and Exell, op. cit., p. i.
3. McNaugher, op. cit., pp. 253-254.

apart from this all pervading characteristic. The chief concern of this chapter, however, will be to examine some choice preaching passages which make the Psalms a "book of religious devotion, public and private"¹ in order to ascertain their preaching value especially for Christian believers. For analytical purposes the chapter will be divided into two parts, discussing first the concept of God as found in the Psalms, and then man's devotional expression as a means of spiritual growth.

B. A Practical Concept of a Personal God.

The Book of Psalms was never intended to be a textbook on Systematic Theology, although many of the common theological attributes of God are described there. His omnipotence,² His omniscience,³ His omnipresence,⁴ His eternity,⁵ His holiness,⁶ and His uniqueness⁷ are often beautifully described in scattered passages throughout the Book. But even so, the psalmist's conception of God is not an abstract or philosophical thing, but rather an intimate picture of a real, living, and personal God who is the Creator and Sustainer of His universe, the Righteous and Holy Judge, and the God who is interested in man. This is the conception of the "plain man" or the "man in the

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1. Charles W. Budden and Edward Hastings: The Local Colour of the Bible, Vol. II, p. 122.
2. Psalm 78:12-16.
3. Psalm 139:1-6.
4. Psalm 139:7ff.
5. Psalm 90:1-6.
6. Psalm 99:1-9.
7. Psalm 115:3-8.

street"¹ as he struggled to satisfy the needs of his soul.

1. A God Who is the Ruler and Sustainer of His Universe.

In Psalm 104, which is "one of the loftiest and longest sustained flights of the inspired muse,"² is a "bright and living picture of God's creative power, pouring life and gladness throughout the universe."³ The power, wisdom, and goodness of God are seen not only in the past creation but in His ever working and caring for all of His own family which includes all of the astronomical, geological, biological, and botanical creation. The order in which all of God's creation is very animatedly described is similar to the Genesis account,⁴ although the primary emphasis in this psalm is the dependence of the world upon the will of God for its continued existence.⁵

For this author whose mind is like a "crystal mirror in which the cosmos is reflected,"⁶ the power and majesty of God are manifested daily in nature. This is likewise true of all the psalmists who reflect upon the beauty and purpose of God's universe.

2. A God Who is Just and Righteous.

In Psalm 96, God is pictured as a judge who "will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth."⁷ All

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1. J.M.P. Smith: The Religion of the Psalms, p. 129.
2. C.H. Spurgeon: The Treasury of David, Vol. V, p. 1.
3. Perowne, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 224.
4. Ibid., pp. 225-226.
5. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 605.
6. Alexander MacLaren: The Psalms, p. 260, The Nicoll Expositor's Bible, Vol. III.
7. Psalm 96:1.

the nations of the world are exhorted to worship Jehovah because the psalmist has seen His righteous judgment upon both Israel and her enemies, and he is assured of God's equitable dealings with all men.¹ Jehovah alone is worthy to be worshipped for all other objects of worship are nothing.²

In Psalm 11 is found one of the fundamental problems which is in the mind of the psalmist: what will be the destiny of the righteous and the wicked? The answer is found in a God who is righteous and loves righteousness,³ who has His throne in Heaven,⁴ and who tests the children of men, yet hates the wicked.⁵ Because of this the wicked will be punished severely, but the upright shall see His face.⁶

Psalm 99 deals with another aspect of God's justice and righteousness--His holiness. This Psalm has been called "The Sanctus" or "The Holy, Holy, Holy Psalm" because the word "holy" is the conclusion and refrain of its three main divisions.⁷ In the first division (verses 1-3) the holiness of God is seen in His elevation above the finite and imperfect.⁸ In the second section (verses 4-5) the holiness of God is seen in His equity, justice, and righteousness. In the final section (verses 6-9) the holiness of God is seen in His testimonies and statutes and in the kind of worship that He demands--

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1. Psalm 96:2.
2. Psalm 96:4-5.
3. Psalm 11:7.
4. Psalm 11:4.
5. Psalm 11:5.
6. Psalm 11:7.
7. Spurgeon, Vol. IV, op. cit., p. 385.
8. Maclaren, op. cit., p. 249.

a worship that goes deeper than all outward sacrifices, a worship that is more than silent awe, and a worship that involves need, desire, and aspiration.¹

3. A God Who is Interested in Man.

The psalmist's picture of God is not only that of a creator and sustainer of the universe, or of a righteous and equitable judge, but it is much more than that; for God is pictured as a tender, merciful, and forgiving personality who is constantly interested in the affairs of each individual.

J. M. Smith in speaking of the psalmist's conception of God says:

"It is this beneficent side of the divine character that the psalmists constantly bring to mind. They are the songsters of a needy people. God must be to them a comfort, a helper in time of trouble, a strength and stay. So He appears as the deliverer of the poor and needy; a shepherd caring solicitously for all the needs of his flock; the embodiment of lovingkindness and faithfulness; tenderly thoughtful of the sick and suffering saint, healing all his diseases; a covert from the storm and a cooling shade in the sweltering heat; a bountiful dispenser of good things; and the preserver of the lives of his saints."²

Thus can be seen the personal and intimate relationship the psalmist maintained with his God.

In Psalm 8, God's interest in man is portrayed very beautifully by means of contrast. As the psalmist is impressed by the glory of the heavens, he is immediately made to feel his own unworthiness³, but not for long; for he soon reflects upon the glory of man.

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1. Maclaren, op. cit., pp. 250-251.
2. Smith, op. cit., pp. 149-150.
3. Psalm 8:4.

He realizes that the God of nature is also the God of man and has even shown more interest in the latter.¹ Man is seen as "little less than divine in nature, and lord of all creation"² Furthermore, man's purpose is given to overcome evil that good might prevail.³

Psalm 139, although dealing with the omnipresence and omniscience of God has been called a "psalm on the constitution of man"⁴ because of its emphasis upon the personal relationship of the psalmist with his God. Maclaren expresses it thus:

"Only in the last verses is there reference to other men. In the earlier parts of the Psalm there are but two beings in the universe--God and the psalmist. With impressive reiteration, God's attributes were gazed on in their bearing on him. Not mere omniscience, but a knowledge which knows him altogether, not mere omnipresence, but a presence which he can nowhere escape, not mere creative power, but a power which shaped him, fill and thrill the psalmist's soul. This is no cold theism but vivid religion."⁵

Kirkpatrick says that "the consciousness of the intimate personal relation between God and man which is characteristic of the whole Psalter reaches its climax here"⁶ as the psalmist reverently meditates on these truths and seeks to yield himself more fully to God's control and guidance.

So in these psalms is found a picture of a personal and living God which has become a permanent contribution of Hebrew religion to Christianity.⁷ The Psalter is unique among religious books in the

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1. Psalm 8:5-8.
2. Perowne, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 130.
3. Psalm 8:2.
4. Morgan, op. cit., p. 2.
5. Maclaren, op. cit., p. 324.
6. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 786.
7. Smith, op. cit., p. 155.

world in preserving at the same time the infinity and the personality of God;¹ for

"not an attribute of His being is overlooked. His goodness and His greatness, His justice and His Holiness, His faithfulness and His truthfulness, His love and His mercy, His hatred of iniquity and His delight in such as keep His law. All of these rays of light and truth about Himself are made to shine so bright in this Book that it seems safe to say that nowhere in the Word has He focused the light of His glory in rays so bright and beautiful as in the Psalms."²

Dr. W. W. White, the founder of the Biblical Seminary in New York, was impressed by the psalmist's conception of God. Nothing could be more appropriate to conclude this section and introduce the next section of this chapter than a statement by him:

"What a God these Psalms reveal! One to whom one may go in his distress. One to converse with, who but for a moment, renews the strength. One Before whom the heart may be laid open with assurance that no confidences shall be betrayed."³

With a God like this as the basis for Christian worship, the attention of this chapter will now be directed to some of the means of devotional expression used by the psalmists.

C. Man's Devotional Expression as a Means of Spiritual Growth

The many devotional expressions of the psalmists are often varied even within one psalm as they come before their God and utter their desires, their fears, their confessions, their aspirations, their sorrows, their joys and their thanksgivings.⁴

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1. Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol IV, p. 157.
2. McNaugher, op. cit., pp. 262-263.
3. Wilbert Webster White: Studies in O.T. Characters, p. 92.
4. Perowne, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 18.

These are all part of the psalmists' experiences as they worship, and they are very difficult to break down into compartments for the purpose of analysis because many of them are so closely related. But usually some one aspect of devotion will predominate within a given psalm--that which especially moves the heart of the psalmist as his affections, hopes, and faith are made to burn with increasing fervor as his entire personality is touched by a divine power.

With this introductory statement in mind, several psalms will now be briefly discussed in the light of what the author considers to be their dominant devotional expression.

1. Expression of Adoration.

Psalm 19 illustrates two types of adoration--the adoration of God as revealed in nature¹ and the adoration of God as revealed in the "moral beauty and beneficent power"² of His law.³ In verses 1-6 the psalmist is filled with majestic awe and reverence as he witnesses a beautiful oriental sunrise--the sun pictured as a bridegroom coming out of his heavenly tabernacle and running as a strong man throughout his circuit unto the ends of the heavens.⁴ In verses 7-11, the psalmist's reverent adoration is seen for the law, testimonies, precepts, commandments, and ordinances of Jehovah as he speaks of their effects upon human lives.

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1. Psalm 19:1-6.
2. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 101.
3. Psalm 19:7-11.
4. Psalm 19:5-6.

Kant, in speaking of these revelations of God says, "The starry sky above me and the moral law in me . . . are two things which fill the soul with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence."¹ The adoration of God has an effect upon the psalmist also; for in verses 12-14, as he views his own life in the presence of such Deity, he confesses his faults and earnestly prays for pardon and preservation, concluding with these well known words, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight Oh Jehovah, my rock and my redeemer."²

Thus, the psalmist through his adoration of God takes a step forward in his spiritual understanding and discernment.

2. Expression of Petition.

According to McFadyen's classification of the Psalms, thirty-three of them are called Psalms of Petition, and these are largely personal prayers for deliverance, preservation or restoration.³ These do not include what are known as the "Seven Penitential Psalms"⁴ and there are also numerous psalms which contain only elements of petition such as Psalm 19 which was just discussed. This all shows the importance of this kind of devotional expression in the Psalter.

Many of these prayers as in Psalm 28 are for divine help in meeting what might be called problems in Christian living. Here

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1. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 101, quoted from Wallace's Kant, p. 53.

2. Psalm 19:14.

3. McFadyen, op. cit., pp. xix-xx.

4. Psalms 6, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143. See McFadyen, op. cit., pp. 193-195.

is a man who has put his trust in God, yet realizes that if he doesn't call upon God and receive answered prayer, he will be drawn away with the wicked and become as they are.¹ Therefore, he prays earnestly that God will keep him from the temptations of the wicked and that God will judge those working unrighteousness.² The results of this prayer are very evident as Maclaren notes: "As in many psalms, the faith which prays passes at once into the faith which possesses."³ The psalmist sings, blesses, and praises God for the help which he has received,⁴ and then concludes with a prayer for all of his people.⁵

Thus, the value of a praying faith in the life of a believer can be seen readily as this psalmist moves closer to his God.

3. Expression of Faith and Trust.

The psalmist's expression of faith and trust reaches one of its high points in Psalm 23 where God is pictured both as a loving shepherd who cares for his sheep⁶ and a gracious host who supplies all the psalmist's necessary needs.⁷ There is not one instance of defeatism in this entire psalm; for as Dr. Maclaren states:

"It is the pure utterance of personal trust in Jehovah, darkened by no fears or complaints and so perfectly at rest that it has nothing more to ask. One tone, and that the most blessed which

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1. Psalm 28:1.
2. Psalm 28:2-5.
3. Maclaren, op. cit., p. 76.
4. Psalm 28:6-8.
5. Psalm 28:9.
6. Psalm 23:1-4.
7. Psalm 23:5-6.

can sound in a life, is heard through the whole. It is the psalm of quiet trust."¹

The imagery used by this psalmist in expressing his faith is unusually striking and should appeal to the minister; for

"the lovely series of vivid pictures, each but a clause long, but clear cut in that small compass, like the fine work incised on a gem, combines with the depth and simplicity of the religious emotion expressed, to lay this sweet psalm on all hearts."²

The results of faith as seen in this psalmist's assurance that God is always caring for him are a sense of spiritual quietness and rest, a sense of guidance and direction, a sense of fearlessness and boldness in the midst of wickedness, and a sense of spiritual fulness. This comforting assurance which gives the psalmist confidence in both himself and God is well summarized by his three affirmations, "I shall not want,"³ "I will fear no evil,"⁴ and "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."⁵

What a psalm to show the value of faith for the Christian believer! The minister will want to say with the great Spurgeon, "Oh that we may enter into the spirit of the Psalm as we read it, and then we shall experience the days of heaven upon the earth!"⁶

4. The Expression of Praise and Thanksgiving.

There are so many psalms which are concerned with praise

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1. Maclaren, op. cit., p. 65.
2. Ibid.
3. Psalm 23:1.
4. Psalm 23:4.
5. Psalm 23:6.
6. Spurgeon, Vol I, op. cit., p. 398.

and thanksgiving that the Hebrews gave to the Psalter the title of the "Book of Praises."¹ The expression of praise and thanksgiving is the victorious result of any or all of the devotional expressions which have been mentioned in this study. It is usually an objective thing and springs forth from the heart because of happiness and joy, being the devotional expression of the psalmist or the nation of Israel in return for God's revelation to them.

In a psalm such as 136 the expression of thanksgiving is dominant whereas in a psalm such as 148 the dominant expression is praise. Both of these devotional expressions are so closely related, however, that it is very difficult to properly distinguish between them. Therefore, for purposes here Psalm 138 which is concerned with the combined elements of both praise and thanksgiving will be used.

Here is a psalmist, whether it be David, Haggai, or Zechariah,² who is so enthusiastic about the spiritual blessings which have been bestowed upon him that he is giving whole hearted thanks to God and singing praises in the presence of pagan idols and gods.³ This expression of praise and thanksgiving is especially called forth because of God's lovingkindness and truth, and because of a personal answer to prayer.⁴

Then growing out of this personal expression is the prophetic assurance that all the nations will give thanks and sing praises

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1. Spence and Exell, op. cit., p. i.
2. Perowne, Vol II, op. cit., p. 410.
3. Psalm 138: 1.
4. Psalm 138: 2-3.

to Jehovah because of the greatness of His glory.¹ Also growing out of the psalmist's personal praise and thanksgiving is the increased assurance that Jehovah will complete His purposes for His people even though there will be opposition.²

From this psalm, then, it appears that praise, worship, and thanksgiving to God are an obligation to those who receive spiritual blessings; and further, that the expression of praise and thanksgiving will lead to a stronger confidence, faith, and assurance in God. The value for today of an outward expression of praise and thanksgiving is seen in a comment by Spurgeon on this psalm:

"Praising and singing are our armor against the idoltries of heresy, our comfort under the depression cause by insolent attacks upon the truth, and our weapons for defending the gospel. Faith when displayed in cheerful courage, has about it a sacred contagion."³

The minister will want to preach occasionally from the psalms of praise and thanksgiving in order to give an emphasis in worship which will make for greater and stronger Christian vitality.

In concluding this section of the present chapter, it can be said that regardless of the type and kinds of devotional expression found in these psalms which have been investigated, each as an element in worship contributes to the strengthening of the psalmist's faith in God and to the growth of religious character. Sermons from these devotional psalms directed to Christian believers will be the means of helping them find a richer and deeper Christian experience with God.

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1. Psalm 138:4-6.

2. Psalm 138:7-8.

3. Spurgeon, Vol. VII, op. cit., p. 218.

When the psalmist expresses his adoration, they will worship more reverently. When the psalmist expresses his faith and trust, they will find a greater stability and restfulness in Christian living. When the psalmist prays, they will want to turn over their burdens and problems to a loving God. When the psalmist expresses his praise and thanksgiving, they will want to live in such a way that this happiness and joy will be a spontaneous thing in their every day life.

D. Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter the devotional quality of the Psalms has been set forth by showing briefly the subject content of selected psalms. This has been done with the purpose of ascertaining the preaching value from such Psalms which would be especially appropriate for Christian believers.

The psalmist's conception of God is not an abstract or philosophical thing. He rather portrays a practical concept and intimate picture of a real, living, and personal God who belongs to each and every individual. This is a God who has not only created but continues to rule daily His universe. This is a God who is just and righteous and holy in all of His divine government. This is also a God of lovingkindness and mercy who is interested in all the affairs of man. It is the God of the psalmist which is the God of Jesus Christ and therefore the God to whom the worship of Christian believers should be directed.

The psalmist's devotional expression to his God is very dominant throughout the entire Book and assumes various forms. He knows that he has a God that can take care of any of his problems, difficulties, or burdens. Therefore, his expressions of adoration, petition, faith and trust, and praise and thanksgiving, all of which together constitute his worship experiences, lead to a stronger religious devotion, vital faith, and spiritual growth.

The psalms which have been briefly investigated in this chapter are only a taste of the unlimited devotional library which is contained in the Psalter. Yet, from those which have been studied, it should be evident to the minister that

"the energy and warmth of devotion exhibited in the Psalms is suited to stir up and inflame our hearts to a greater affection and zeal than they could otherwise readily attain to, and thus to raise us to spiritual heights beyond those natural to us. As flame enkindles flame, so the fervour of the psalmists in their prayers and praises passes on from them to us, and warms us to a glow of love and thankfulness which is something more than a pale reflex of their own. Without the Psalms, without the constant use of them, Christian life tends to become dead and dull, like the ashes of an extinguished fire."¹

Therefore, the devotional quality of the Psalms is a preaching value which should be utilized by every minister.

1. Spence and Exell, op. cit., p. xiii.

CHAPTER V

**THE EVANGELISTIC QUALITY OF THE PSALMS
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A. Introduction

Expository preaching must appeal not only to those who are considered to be Christian believers, but also to those who are not enjoying that fellowship with God which is the privilege of every Christian. For the psalmist, fellowship with God was the "summum bonum" of life, and therefore estrangement from God was the worst of all calamities.¹ The continual desire, then, which was uppermost in the mind of the psalmist, was to enjoy this divine fellowship, and at the same time to refrain from doing anything which would cause divine displeasure.

In no place in the Psalter is this shown more convincingly than in Psalms 51 and 32 which are of the Penitential group² and were of those called by Dr. Martin Luther "Pauline Psalms."³ These psalms are ascribed to David in the Biblical inscriptions and also by the

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1. Smith, op. cit., p. 153.
2. Psalms 6, 38, 32, 51, 102, 130, and 143 have been called "Penitential Psalms" since between 600-700 A. D. because of their unity of subject matter. They are all characterized by penitance because of a sense of sin and guilt. Morgan, op. cit., p. 102.
3. Psalms 51, 32, 130, and 143 called "Pauline" by Luther according to statement by Dr. Vartan Malconian.

majority of scholars.¹ They are thought to have been the outcome of David's sin against Uriah and Bathsheba after being indicted by Nathan the prophet.²

Kirkpatrick in speaking of Psalms 51 and 32 shows their important relationship:

"It (Psalm 51) has generally been thought to contain David's first heart-felt prayer for pardon, while Psalm 32 written after some interval, when he had time to ponder upon the past, records his experience for the warning and instruction of others in accordance with the resolution of Psalm 51:13."³

These psalms contain all the exercises of true repentance⁴ and at the same time all the steps which compose gospel conversion.⁵ Van Dyke, commenting on the religious experience found in these psalms says, "Thus the parable of the prodigal son is enacted in real life a thousand years before Christ put it into words of imperishable beauty and power."⁶

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1. Van Dyke gives the following reasons which support the Davidic authorship of Psalm 51: (1) the ancient tradition; (2) the close resemblance of the style to that of the psalms which are universally acknowledged to be his; (3) the fervour of spirit and the unity of thought; (4) the fact that there is no other person described in the Old Testament to whose known history it can be applied, no one else of whom it can be said "that he was a devout man before and after his fall, that his sin involved the guilt of blood, and that it was unpunished by the law, and that he was restored to Divine glory." Of Psalm 32, Van Dyke says, "Even Ewald concedes that David was its author; and what the great denier admits, no other critic will care to question." Van Dyke, op. cit., pp. 71 and 78.
2. II Samuel, Chapters 11-12.
3. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 285.
4. Leach, op. cit., p. 145.
5. Morgan, op. cit., p. 107.
6. Van Dyke, op. cit., p. 75.

The purpose of this chapter is to show the preaching value of the evangelistic quality of the Psalms--that quality which will appeal to those who are separated from God because of sin either great or small. Psalms 51 and 32 will be the chief source for investigation.

B. The Appeal to the Consciousness of Sin in the Human Heart

Like many sins of today, David's sin did not bring at once any outward punishment or disgrace. For a whole year,¹ his eyes blinded and his heart hardened because of his sin, he gave no outward manifestation to indicate that he was conscious of his fall. It took the words of the prophet Nathan to make him see his heart as it really was.²

"Then," says Van Dyke,

"David's eyes are opened and he knows what he has done. In the clear, cold light of conscience he stands self-convicted and self-condemned. His sin has found him out and he must bear its punishment; though all the world should acquit and justify him, he cannot escape the consequences of his evil deed, the stain upon his honour, the sickness and shame and disaster which must fall upon his house; worst of all, he cannot escape the evil deed itself, which stands within his soul like a loathesome fiend, now unmasked, and visible in all its deformity."³

He realizes that he has not just committed one sin, but many sins.⁴ He realizes that every sin he has committed in doing an injustice to his family, his fellow man, and his kingdom is doing a greater injustice towards God.⁵ He sees as never before that this terrible situation is

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1. II Samuel 12:1-6.

2. Ibid.

3. Van Dyke, op. cit., p. 74.

4. Psalm 51:1.

5. Psalm 51:4.

a result of his sinful nature.¹ The suffering, the anguish, and the agony of a guilty conscience make him feel as though his bones are broken² and wasting away.³ He sees himself as the owner of a black and unclean heart, as the possessor of a wrong and evil spirit, and as one with a sad and miserable countenance. In stunning awareness, he realizes that his fall has been swift and horrible, that it has been "from the heights to the depths, from the holy hill of God into the very abyss of Satan."⁴ He needs help stronger than himself-- he needs to be rescued.

What a picture of the sinful heart! Who can fail to see that what is described here is as typical of many needy people today as it was of David! As the heart of the psalmist is laid bare by the searchlight of God's Holy Spirit, the hearts of men and women today will likewise be convicted of their destitute condition and dire need.

C. The Appeal to the Mercy and Lovingkindness of God

But the evangelistic appeal in these psalms becomes stronger as David turns in his hour of need and cries out to God, "Have mercy upon me according to thy lovingkindness."⁵ He realizes that he is helpless in his own strength, that no form of outward worship will be acceptable to God on his behalf, and that the sacrifice demanded of

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1. Psalm 51:5.

2. Psalm 51:8.

3. Psalm 32:3.

4. Van Dyke, op. cit., p. 71.

5. Psalm 51:1.

God for him is an inward contrition and sorrow for sin.¹ Knowing that God will accept him if he will but humble himself and call for mercy, David in penitent prayer seeks the favor of God.

1. Prayer of Confession.

David's prayer is marked by a humble and open confession of all his convicted sin as he lays his heart open before God. Nothing is held back or hidden as he acknowledges his iniquities, transgressions, and sins.² There is a feeling of genuine sorrow and true renunciation of sin as he confesses his separation from God.³ There is also the expression of faith and trust in "God's pardoning grace, and confidence in His power to make the broken bones rejoice, and to wash the tainted heart whiter than snow"⁴ which is a part of true confession.

Through his confession which is marked by Godly sorrow and true repentance, the psalmist expects to be forgiven. This is indeed the prodigal of the Old Testament who has said, "I have sinned against Jehovah"⁵ speaking with the prodigal of the New Testament, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee"⁶ as they in their confessions appeal to the mercy and lovingkindness of God.

2. Prayer of Petition.

Closely associated with and intermingled with David's con-

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1. Psalm 51:16-17.

2. Psalm 51:3; Psalm 32:5.

3. Psalm 51:4.

4. Marvin R. Vincent: Gates into the Psalm Country, p. 118.

5. II Samuel 12:13; Psalm 51:4.

6. Luke 15:18.

fessions are his petitions to God which are an indication of his earnest desire to have his needs met. The psalmist's prayer for forgiveness and pardon¹ is seen in such petitions as "blot out my transgressions,"² "wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,"³ "cleanse me from my sin,"⁴ and "purify me with hyssop."⁵ The psalmist's prayer for renewal and sanctification⁶ is expressed in the petition, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."⁷ Other petitions are for a restoration of joy⁸ and for God's continual care and preservation.⁹

These petitions are all the result of the psalmist's conviction of sin and his sincere confession of the same as he pleads earnestly with God to deal with him according to His lovingkindness and tender mercies.

3. Prayer of Resolution.

Added to the psalmist's confessions and petitions in this penitential prayer are his resolutions or promises which are an expression of his gratitude for what God will do for him. First of all is his resolution to teach transgressors the way of God and to work for the conversion of sinners.¹⁰ Perowne, commenting on this says

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1. Perowne, Vol I, op. cit., p. 379.
2. Psalm 51:1.
3. Psalm 51:2.
4. Psalm 51:2.
5. Psalm 51:7.
6. Perowne, Vol I, op. cit., p. 385.
7. Psalm 51:10.
8. Psalm 51:8, 12, and 15.
9. Psalm 51:11 and 12.
10. Psalm 51:13.

that the psalmist

"expresses that which he desires to do, as an evidence of his gratitude, and as knowing how greatly his sin must have been a stumbling block to others. Terrible had been the fruit of his sin, not only in the wasting of his own soul, but in the injury done to others. Terrible was his punishment in witnessing this; and therefore the more anxious is he, though he cannot undo his own sin, to heal the breach, and repair the evil of sin in other souls."¹

In the second place is his resolution to worship God in singing and proclaiming His praises, this determination arising from feelings of sincere devotion, gratitude, and anticipated joy.²

And then finally is the resolution that all of the worshippers of Zion will praise God by the giving of their best and holiest offerings.³ This infers that David will do his best to make the worship of his people acceptable unto God.

So we have these promises of the psalmist which indicate his sincerity and true purpose as his faith reaches out to the God of mercy and lovingkindness.

What a prayer! These confessions, petitions, and resolutions as found in Psalm 51 teach the lesson "that the removal of sin by pardon and purification is so difficult that none but God can accomplish it."⁴ Yet, God in his love and mercy does accomplish it when man, moved by the sense of his need, confesses his sin and prays for forgiveness. This was found to be true in David's case⁵ and is

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1. Perowne, Vol I, op. cit., p. 387.

2. Psalm 51:14-15.

3. Psalm 51:19.

4. Joseph B. Rotherham: Studies in the Psalms, p. 234.

5. Psalm 32:5.

the teaching of both the Old and New Testaments.¹

This prayer is unique in its appeal to all mankind because of its profound conviction of sin, its deep and unfeigned penitence, its true and tender confession, its fervent desire for renewal, and its humble trust in the forgiving love of God.² As Rotherham says,

"It is all prayer, and its prayer is so personal, so comprehensive, so sustained, that it naturally serves for all time as a fund of feeling and storehouse of words, to help all petitioners who are craving for pardon at the hands of Infinite Love."³

To this must also be added the testimony of Dyer who has made an intensive study of the history of this psalm:

"Indeed the history of this Psalm is the history of the Christian soul, and in it the suffering and sinning of all ages have found the expression of their own unworthiness and the comfort that comes from a true confession."⁴

This psalm as no other will touch the hearts of those who are separated by sin from fellowship with God because it not only shows the necessity for true repentance, but also portrays the method and procedure in repenting.⁵ As the psalmist prays to a loving and merciful God, men and women will feel the urge to pray likewise for forgiveness, pardon, and cleansing. The minister will want to say to those in need, "Let us kneel beside him, and thank God that since we are like him in our sinfulness, we can be like him also in his penitence, in his prayer, in his hope of pardon."⁶

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1. Numbers 5:6-7; Proverbs 28:13; I John 1:9.
2. Perowne, Vol I, op. cit., p. 378.
3. Rotherham, op. cit., p. 234.
4. Dyer, op. cit., p. 227.
5. Spence and Exell, op. cit., pp. xi-xii.
6. Van Dyke, op. cit., p. 76.

D. The Appeal to a Life of Blessedness

It has been shown that in Psalm 51 the evangelistic appeal is chiefly to the consciousness of sin in the human heart and to the mercy and lovingkindness of God, both of which are expressed in the psalmist's prayer. But in Psalm 32 which is the "beatitude of the forgiven man," the evangelistic appeal is almost entirely to the life of blessedness which is a consequence or result of divine forgiveness. This blessedness is due to many factors of which the most important ones will be discussed here.

1. Blessedness Because of Divine Forgiveness.

The primary cause for David's joy and happiness is that he has been forgiven,¹ that his uncovered sins have been covered,² and that he is now held as innocent in God's sight.³ No longer must he suffer the remorse of a guilty conscience,⁴ no longer will his bones ache and seem to waste away,⁵ and no longer will the streams of joy and freshness be dried up;⁶ for David has experienced a great divine release which makes him happy. He is now a rescued man.

Vincent, in speaking of David's blessedness as expressed in this psalm, says,

"He has a whole catalogue of joyful consequences of his confession to present to us; but he is careful to make it perfectly clear at the outset that all of these consequences are linked with forgive-

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1. Psalm 32:1; Psalm 32:5.
2. Psalm 32:1.
3. Psalm 32:2.
4. Psalm 32:3.
5. Ibid.
6. Psalm 32:4.

ness. The man is not blessed who can forget his sins; who can blind himself to them; who can divert his mind from them; who can temporarily escape their consequences. Blessed is he and only he, whose transgression is forgiven.¹

2. Blessedness Because of a Stronger Faith and Devotion to God.

The psalmist's blessedness because of his forgiveness is not a temporary happiness. As his faith and devotion are kindled anew, he finds the blessedness of security. He knows that the great waters of temptation will not destroy the man whose faith is in God; for he says, "Thou art my hiding place; thou wilt preserve me from trouble; thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance."²

Likewise he is confident that God will instruct him and teach him in the way that he should go,³ and that God's lovingkindness will be his source of strength as long as he is a man of trust and faith. He is exceedingly happy; for he has found that

"every tear sparkles like a diamond in the sunshine of pardon, and he who begins with the lowly cry for forgiveness will end with lofty songs of joy and be made, by God's guidance and Spirit, righteous and upright in heart."⁴

3. Blessedness Because of a Living Testimony.

The psalmist is likewise blessed because he has experienced something that he is desirous of telling others about. His joy is so full that it overflows as he gives testimony to his victory in telling

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1. Vincent, op. cit., pp. 118-119.
2. Psalm 32:7.
3. Psalm 32:8.
4. Maclaren, op. cit., p. 86.

his experience,¹ as he exhorts and warns others to seek God while the opportunity presents itself,² as he contrasts the sorrow of the wicked with the joy of the righteous,³ and as he pleads for a greater expression of joy on the part of the upright and righteous.⁴ Thus he fulfills his promise made while praying for pardon⁵ and finds the blessedness of a living testimony to God's grace.

What happiness and joy—this blessedness that comes from God to the forgiven man! This psalm comes to tell us today that even the worst sinner can find the life of blessedness through God's forgiveness⁶ and that even the worst sinner can be made to show forth the fruits of a clean heart. This evangelistic appeal is very strong because

"the lives of the saints have testified to this truth, and the lives of the men and women of God today prove it, and none of us should be satisfied with less, for nothing less will satisfy our Father which is in heaven."⁷

E. Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter the evangelistic quality of the Psalms has been set forth by investigating the subject content of two selected Psalms, 51 and 32. This has been done with the purpose of ascertaining the preaching value from these psalms which would be especially

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1. Psalm 32:5.
2. Psalm 32:6.
3. Psalm 32:10.
4. Psalm 32:11.
5. Psalm 51:13-15.
6. Vincent, op. cit., p. 110.
7. Leach, op. cit., p. 148.

appropriate for those separated by sin from fellowship with God.

In Psalm 51 there are two strong evangelistic appeals. The first is to the consciousness of sin in the human heart. This is seen in David's realization and awareness of the consequence of his sin after listening to the words of Nathan the prophet. For David, sin was shameful, vile, and a cause of misery; it was a joy-killer; it separated him from man and also God; it was a disruptive and disintegrating force not only in himself but also in society. The second appeal is to the mercy and lovingkindness of God which is seen in David's prayer of contrition in which he confesses his sins to God, petitions God for forgiveness and renewal, and resolves to be a living testimony to the grace of God in worship and service.

In Psalm 32 the primary evangelistic appeal is to a life of blessedness—a happiness and joy which is the result of being forgiven by God, of feeling the security of a strong faith and trust in God, and of being a living testimony to the grace of God as wrought in a human heart.

So to all those countless numbers who are suffering the anguish and remorse of a guilty conscience, and who desire the fellowship, happiness, and joy of God's forgiving love, these psalms make their special evangelistic appeal. Therefore, because of the appeal to the consciousness of sin in the human heart, because of the appeal to the mercy and lovingkindness of God, and because of the appeal to a life of blessedness, the evangelistic quality of the Psalms becomes a very practical preaching value for today.

CHAPTER VI

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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A. Restatement of Problem and Method of Procedure

The purpose of this study has been to determine certain expository preaching values from the Book of Psalms which would show its practicality as a Book to be preached from in the twentieth century pulpit. In accomplishing this purpose, such qualities of the Psalms which are especially adaptable to homiletical usage have been investigated. It now remains to summarize the expository preaching values which have been derived from these qualities, and then to make some general conclusions which are the result of this study.

B. Summary of Expository Preaching Values as Found in The Book of Psalms

1. Expository Preaching Values Derived From the Literary Characteristics of the Psalms.

(1) The themes and topics of the Psalms which are as varied as the experiences, moods, and emotions of human life, but yet treated in the light of religion, are well adaptable for preaching topics and provide a rich source of suggestions for variety in preaching subjects.

(2) The brevity and simplicity of many psalms enables the minister to treat them homiletically without a laborious contextual study and without getting lost in a maze of details.

(3) The natural divisions of many psalms provides the minister with homiletical skeletons upon which he can build expository sermons

in the order of arrangement in which the material is presented by the Psalmist.

(4) The repetition and recurrence of key ideas and thoughts, which is an outstanding characteristic of the Psalms, lends itself to a flexibility in sermon outlining through a selective and arranging process on the part of the minister.

(5) The vivid and beautiful descriptive language of the Psalms is an aid to new understanding and appreciation, and at the same time, it provides the minister with a spiritual vocabulary that cannot be excelled in any religious literature of the world.

2. Expository Preaching Values Derived From the Adaptable Quality of the Psalms for Present Day Application.

(1) The practical life experiences of the individual as portrayed by the Psalms speak to men and women today for the following reasons:

- (a) Man is pictured in all walks and conditions of life.
- (b) Man is seen pondering over the great and timeless philosophical problems of life.
- (c) Man is seen actively engaged in the age old conflict between right and wrong, good and evil, righteousness and unrighteousness, the godly and the ungodly.
- (d) Man is seen expressing all the timeless feelings, moods and emotions of the human soul.
- (e) Man is seen in many and varied troubles, yet as finding an answer to his personal needs as he takes his burdens to a loving God.

(2) The practical experiences of the nation as portrayed by the Psalms speak to the nation today as it is reminded of its past history, as it is commanded to take heed to the past, as it is exhorted to obedience, and as it is warned of judgment.

(3) The practical experiences of the ecclesiastical organization of Israel as portrayed by the Psalms speak to the Church today in matters pertaining to worship, worshippers, and the sanctuary. Also the Church finds in the Psalms that its life is closely associated and related to both the nation and the individual.

(4) The many illustrations of how the Psalms have influenced the lives of men and women down through the centuries of the Christian Church provide the minister with a type of illustrative material which makes the Book of Psalms timeless and very contemporary in its application. Through the use of these illustrations, the Psalms will speak in a living way to human hearts.

(5) The subject matter of certain psalms provides the minister with appropriate themes and topics for many special preaching occasions throughout the Church year.

3. Expository Preaching Values Derived From the Devotional Quality of the Psalms.

(1) The practical and personal conception of God as revealed in the Psalms--a God who has created and is sustaining His universe, a God who is just and righteous in His divine government, and a God of lovingkindness who is interested in all the affairs of men--is one that will appeal to all mankind as the supreme object of devotion.

(2) Man's devotional expression to his God as revealed in the Psalms--the expressions of adoration, confession, petition, faith, trust, praise, and thanksgiving--is the means of making for a stronger religious devotion, vital faith, and spiritual growth on the part of

the Christian believer. The Psalms not only show the necessity for man's devotional expression to his God, but they also show the manner and means of this expression.

4. Expository Preaching Values as Derived From the Evangelistic Quality of the Psalms.

(1) The Psalms in appealing to the consciousness of sin in the human heart show the terrible nature of sin and the resulting consequences.

(2) The Psalms in appealing to the mercy and lovingkindness of God show the method and procedure for one who is separated from God to follow in finding forgiveness, pardon, and cleansing.

(3) The Psalms in appealing to a life of blessedness show the happiness and joy involved in a life of consecration. This blessedness is found in being forgiven by God, in feeling the security of a strong faith and trust, and in being a living testimony to the grace of God as wrought in the human heart.

C. General Conclusions

Along with these expository preaching values which have been determined throughout the process of this study, it is very fitting to make a few general conclusions in bringing this work to a close.

First and of primary importance, this study has indicated the great need for preaching from the Psalms today. As generally used in public worship, the Psalms are not properly appreciated or understood. They need to be explained and taught. Expository preaching is

one way of accomplishing this for the present day congregation. Furthermore, preaching from the Psalms will help to make for what is lacking to such an extent in much of Christendom today--a dynamic experience with God which will transform personalities and make them living testimonies to the power of the Christian gospel.

Second, this study has revealed the practicality of making the Psalms a living part of the ministers' life. He should be so filled and saturated with the language of the Psalter that it will play a natural part in his private, family, and public worship.

Third, this study has shown the great possibilities for further work in the Book of Psalms. Of primary interest for further investigation are these subjects: "The Use of the Psalms in Christian Education," "The Pastor's Use of the Psalms," "Series Preaching From the Psalms," "The Messianic Concept in the Psalms," and "The New Testament Usage of the Psalms."

Fourth, this study has shown the importance of a thorough and direct first-hand study of any passage of Scripture which is to be used as a basis for expository preaching. While all other helps and sources are valuable as secondary references, nothing can take the place of the Scriptures, themselves.

Fifth and finally, this study has been the means of spiritual growth and understanding. The consciousness of a personal experience with God has been very real as the Scriptures have taken on new meaning. It has been indeed a joyous and profitable pastime to explore the beautiful homiletical palace of the Book of Psalms. The

glory and majesty of its atmosphere will always be revered. The use of the many discoveries and valuable lessons which have been found there are hereby consecrated to the cause of advancing the Kingdom of God.

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight Oh Jehovah, my rock and my redeemer."¹

1. Psalm 19:14.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF A PSALM¹

1. Read with leisure; do not have the feeling of being hurried. An hour is a good unit of time for rewarding study.
2. Read repeatedly, prayerfully, purposefully, expectantly.
3. Read with pen in hand, and all senses alert. Writing what one sees aids his "eye-sight."
4. Read aloud to both hear and see the psalm's thought and imagery.
5. Read to visualize: see word-pictures, speech-figures, illustrations.
6. Read to discover the dominant features and general characteristics of the psalm being studied.
7. Read to catch the writer's dominant thought; state it in a few, distinctive words.
8. Read analytically, seeing the divisions into which the psalm falls, then read synthetically to observe how the parts are related.
9. Read diagrammatically with the use of charts both in study and to organize and present your findings.
10. Read to discover the writer's use of contrast, comparison, repetition, cause and effect, means to end. Note well all connectives and prepositions.
11. Read for autobiographical references.
12. Read to see references to persons, places, events, social conditions, etc.
13. Read to feel. The Book of Psalms contains religious poems; be ready to respond to the emotions the writer has sought to stimulate.
14. Read for study leads to be pursued later. Record these instantly.
15. Read to paraphrase; search out meanings of words and with the use of synonyms write your own version of the psalm.
16. Read in two or more translations: the Authorized version and the American Revised version. More modern translations may prove useful.

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1. These study suggestions were prepared by the members of Dr. Vartan Malconian's class in "The Book of Psalms," of which the author was a member in the Summer of 1945.

17. Read at times with another person for the stimulus of each other's mind and to clarify one's own study findings.
18. Read secondary sources only after the psalm itself has been studied thoroughly.
19. Read the psalm grammatically, i.e., to note the verbs, tense, person, mood, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, etc.
20. Read for its poetry and music: to note cadence, accent, stanzas; mood, tone quality, solo and chorus parts, antiphony, etc.
21. Read it theologically, to see its teachings about God, man, sin, etc.
22. Read it devotionally, for expression in prayer (whole psalms and verses) of praise, petition, confession, resolution, etc.
23. Read it pedagogically, to discover possible uses to make of it in teaching different age groups.
24. Read to see the use made of the Psalms in the New Testament and in subsequent history.
25. Read it practically, to apply everything your study of the Psalms contributes. The Psalms came out of the life experiences of the writers and are intended to come alive again in us.

APPENDIX II

A CLASSIFICATION OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS¹ BY

JOHN E. MCFADYEN

PSALMS OF ADORATION

I. ADORATION OF GOD AS REVEALED IN NATURE

1. Jehovah's Glory in the Storm (29)
2. The Witness of the Heavens to His Glory (19:1-6)
3. Jehovah's Goodness Revealed in Creation (104)
4. Nature's Testimony to God's Love for Man (8)

II. ADORATION OF JEHOVAH FOR HIS LOVE TO HIS PEOPLE

1. Jehovah's Marvelous Goodness (103)
2. Nature's Manifestations of Jehovah's Love and Power (147)
3. Jehovah the Preserver of His People (33)
4. Jehovah's Incomparable Power and Love (115)
5. His Goodness Shown in Israel's Redemption (111)
6. Jehovah's Love to the Lowly (113)
7. An Invocation (117)

III. ADORATION OF JEHOVAH'S GLORIOUS KINGDOM

1. Jehovah's Just and Gracious Rule (145)
2. Jehovah the Unfailing Protector (146)

IV. NATURE'S CALL TO UNIVERSAL PRAISE

1. The Universal Acclaim (148)
2. A Triumphant Burst of Praise (150)

PSALMS OF REFLECTION

I. REFLECTIONS ON THE MORAL ORDER OF THE WORLD

1. The Courage of the Man of Faith (11)
2. The Folly of Denying God (14)
3. The Triumphant Power of Divine Love (36)
4. The Vanity and Pathos of Life (39)
5. The Doom of Arrogance (52)
6. God the Only Source of Confidence (62)
7. God the Impartial Arbiter of Destiny (75)

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1. McFadyen: op. cit., pp. xiii-xxi. This particular classification is included in this study because of its value for expository preaching.

8. God the Upholder of Justice (82)
9. The Lessons of Divine Providence (90)
10. The Ways of God (92)
11. The Divine Judgment Upon the Godless (9,10)
12. The Certainty of Jehovah's Just Vengeance (94)
13. The Sure Punishment of the Wicked and Vindication of the Righteous (37)
14. The Brief Triumph of the Wicked (49)
15. The Fellowship which the Good Enjoy with God (73)

II. REFLECTIONS UPON DIVINE PROVIDENCE

1. Jehovah's Omniscience and Omnipresence (139)
2. The Joy of Fellowship with God (16)
3. The Need of Divine Help (127:1,2)
4. Jehovah the Good Shepherd (23)
5. The Serene Confidence of the Godly (91)
6. Jehovah the Guardian of His People (121)
7. Jehovah an Unfailing Defence (125)
8. Jehovah's Favor to the Godly (34)
9. The Blessedness of Jehovah's Followers (112)
10. The Prosperity of Jehovah's People (144:12-15)
11. Jehovah the Source of Domestic Joys (127:3-5; 128)
12. The Blessedness of Brotherly Concord (133)

III. REFLECTIONS ON THE VALUE OF SCRIPTURE

1. Its Mastery the Secret of Success (1)
2. The Power of the Law (19:7-14)
3. Meditations on the Word of God (119)

IV. REFLECTIONS ON THE NATURE OF THE IDEAL MAN

1. The True Citizen of Zion (15)
2. The True Worshipper (24:1-6)
3. The Essence of True Worship (50)

PSALMS OF THANKSGIVING

I. A GENERAL THANKSGIVING (107)

II. THANKSGIVING FOR DELIVERANCE FROM SENNACHERIB

1. The Security of Jehovah's Own City (46)
2. The Deliverance of Zion (48)
3. Jehovah's Victory at Jerusalem (76)

III. THANKSGIVING FOR DELIVERANCE FROM THE EXILE

1. Jehovah's Signal Deliverance (124)
2. Jehovah's Power to Protect (129)
3. Jehovah the Confidence of His People (65)

4. Jehovah the Deliverer (66)
5. Jehovah's Goodness to Israel and to All Men (67)
6. The Joy of Deliverance (126)
7. Jehovah's Deliverance an Act of Grace (40)

IV. THANKSGIVING FOR MACCABEAN VICTORIES

1. The Constancy of Jehovah's Care (138)
2. Jehovah the Warrior's Stay (144:1-11)
3. Jehovah the Leader to Victory (68)
4. Jehovah a Sure Deliverer (30)
5. Thanksgiving for His Great Deliverance (118)
6. Deliverance out of Great Affliction (116)
7. The Song of Victory (149)

THE PSALMS IN CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP

1. Jehovah's Triumphant Entry into the Sanctuary (24:7-10)
2. The Vision of the Temple (122)
3. The Pilgrim's Longing for the Sanctuary (84)
4. Yearning for Fellowship with God (42,43)
5. A Morning Prayer for Guidance (5)
6. The Prayer of the Sincere Worshipper (26)
7. Joy in Jehovah and His Sanctuary (27)
8. An Evening Invocation (134)

THE HISTORICAL PSALMS

I. PSALMS EMPHASIZING THE UNFAITHFULNESS OF THE PEOPLE

1. The Lessons of Their Past Acts of Apostasy (78)
2. Jehovah's Mercy and Israel's Ingratitude (106)
3. Israel's Inexcusable Disobedience (81)

II. PSALMS EMPHASIZING THE LOVE OR POWER OF GOD

1. Jehovah's Unceasing Care over Israel (105)
2. Jehovah's Love Revealed in Nature and History (135)
3. The Revelation of Jehovah's Love in Israel's History (136)
4. The Significance of the Deliverance from Egypt (114)

THE IMPRECATORY PSALMS

1. Upon the Brutal and Malignant Foes of Judah (137)
2. Upon Unrighteous Judges (58)
3. Upon Treacherous and Malignant Foes (59)
4. Upon Wanton Persecutors (69)
5. Upon Bitter Adversaries (109)
6. Upon Those Who Would Destroy Judah (83)

THE PENITENTIAL PSALMS

1. A Cry for Help in Time of Mortal Distress (6)
2. A Confession and Prayer for Deliverance (38)
3. The Joy of Confession and Reconciliation (32)
4. A Plea for Forgiveness and Promise of Faithful Service (51)
5. An Appeal to Jehovah to Pity and Restore His People (102)
6. A Prayer for Pardon and Restoration (130)
7. A Cry for Deliverance and Guidance (143)

THE PSALMS OF PETITION

I. PRAYERS FOR DELIVERANCE, PRESERVATION, OR RESTORATION

1. For Protection From Active Foes (3)
2. For Protection Against Slander (4)
3. For a Judgment Which is Just (7)
4. For Protection Against Deceitfulness (12)
5. For God's Manifestation of Himself (13)
6. For Deliverance From Insolent Foes (17)
7. For Deliverance From Enemies (25)
8. For Deliverance From Extreme Distress (31)
9. For Deliverance From Malicious Foes (35)
10. For Healing and Vindication (41)
11. For Deliverance From Determined and Malicious Enemies (64)
12. For Deliverance From Watchful Foes (71)
13. For Preservation as of Old (77)
14. For the Preservation of Israel, Jehovah's Vine (80)
15. For Restoration and Forgiveness (85)
16. For Guidance and Favor (86)
17. The Prayer of Despair (88)
18. For Deliverance From Slander (120)
19. For Divine Pity (123)
20. For Childlike Confidence in Jehovah (131)
21. For Deliverance From Scorn and Persecution (44)
22. For Deliverance From Plunder and Spoliation (74)
23. For Help in Bitter Need (79)
24. For Deliverance From Oppressors (54)
25. For Help Against a Traitorous Friend (55)
26. For Jehovah's Leadership Against Edom (60)
27. For Preservation in Extreme Danger (140)
28. For Deliverance From the Ways of the Wicked (141)
29. For Deliverance From Determined Persecutors (142)

II. ANSWERED PRAYERS

1. The Triumph of the Sufferer (22)
2. Help Against the Wicked (28)

3. Confidence in Divine Favor (56)
4. Protection Against Adversaries (57)

THE ROYAL PSALMS

- I. THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING (45)
- II. THE CORONATION ANNIVERSARY (21)
- III. PRAYERS FOR THE KING'S WELFARE AND SUCCESS
 1. On the Eve of Battle (20)
 2. For the Preservation of the King's Life (61)
 3. For the Overthrow of His Enemies (63)
- IV. THE CHARACTER OF THE KING
 1. His Desire to Rule Righteously (101)
 2. Prayer for a Just and Glorious Reign (72)
- V. THE DOMINION OF THE KING
 1. A Universal Dominion Promised by Jehovah (2)
 2. The Divine Promise of Victory over all Foes (110)
 3. Jehovah's Unceasing Care for His Servant the King (18)
- VI. YEARNING FOR THE MESSIANIC KING
 1. The Sure Promise to David (89)
 2. The Certainty of the Fulfillment of the Promise to David (132)

PSALMS CONCERNING THE UNIVERSAL REIGN OF JEHOVAH

1. Its Universal Acknowledgment (47)
2. Jehovah's Supremacy Unquestionable (93)
3. The Establishment of His Universal Sway (96)
4. The Joint Homage of Nature with Man (98)
5. Its Assurance of Judah's Security (97)
6. Jehovah's Just and Holy Rule (99)
7. Jehovah the Creator and Ruler of His People (95)
8. Jehovah the One Gracious Lord of All (100)
9. Zion, Jehovah's City, the Universal Mother (87)

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