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PSALMS

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BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK SERIES

**STUDIES
IN THE
PSALMS**

Volume One (1-72)

**JOSEPH BRYANT
ROTHERHAM**

(Translator of "The Emphasised Bible")

Paraphrase by

KENNETH N. TAYLOR

from the *Living Psalms And Proverbs*

Questions for Discussion by

DON DE WELT

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FOREWORD

The Author of these "Studies" did not live to see his work in print, and this volume is issued by his son.

It was very natural that the Translator of "The Emphasised Bible," and the Author of "Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews," should, in a period of unusual leisure at the close of a long life, turn his attention with renewed zest to a study of the Psalter. The immediate incentive to the work came from the Westminster Bible School. In his "Reminiscences," written in 1906, the Author says:—"It is very pleasant to me to avow that the impulse to make an attempt on the Psalms was lately received at Westminster Bible School, so ably conducted by Dr. G. Campbell Morgan. . . . I could never have anticipated, during the quiet years of bygone labour on the Holy Scriptures, being spared to enjoy the profound satisfaction of hearing lectures so greatly to

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my mind and so manifestly potent for good as these lectures on the Divine Library by Dr. Morgan. Long may this Bible School flourish, and far may its influence extend."

The Translator of "The Emphasised Bible" wrote out the whole of the Bible—portions of it several times over—with his own hand. Forty years' experience only confirmed his conviction, that there should be no such thing as finality in the work of Bible Translation and Revision, and in his pamphlet entitled "Our Sacred Books" he says:—

"Consider further that the world moves. Grammars are multiplied; dictionaries quarry in new directions; Palestine is re-explored; Assyrian and Egyptian Tablets are unearthed; more ancient scrolls are deciphered and collated. And all this means constantly accumulating gains making for revision. For what can be done ought to be done if the claims of truth are supreme.

"Consider further, many men, many minds; various gifts, a more effective army of occupation. The God of the Bible is not weary of bestowing His bounties, and He delights to make one relay of toilers helpful to another. This means much. For, as no two observers of nature ever see with the same eyes, so in the study of Hebrew and Greek no two students detect precisely the same cogencies and felicities.

* * * * *

"Whatever translation of the Bible we prefer, and whether or not we compare therewith other versions, let us never forget that it is our duty and privilege to rise above all mere formalism even in Bible reading, and use all our powers to get at the heart of divine things. God's works and ways and thoughts so far as revealed in His Word—let these be the objects of our search and the subjects which engage our meditation; let us seek to turn these into realities, by looking at them from every side, and translating them into our own language and into our own thoughts. Let us try to get at the facts through the words, at the sense through the sounds. Let us guard against being rocked to sleep by the lullaby of unpenetrated sentences whose meaning we do not understand. Let us not dream that we can be made holy and safe by mere verbal charms."

FOREWORD

The writer of these words was in some respects pre-eminently a man of the Grammar and Lexicon. He delighted in subtle shades of meaning sometimes only discoverable by microscopical research. He was fond of tracking words to their hiding-places. He had the instincts and patience of the hunter in following the trail, and he delighted to bring forth into the light of day his trophies of the chase. His trained memory readily recalled parallel passages and related incidents, and in these Psalm Studies the higher teaching of the New Testament is often brought to bear with good effect.

Many choice phrases, called from the works of modern scholars, and placed in the footnotes following the text, or referred to in the Expositions, bear witness to the Author's keen appreciation of the writings of others; but he was a man of independent mind, accustomed to draw his own conclusions after a careful first-hand investigation of all the available evidence. He occupied a somewhat unique position between scholarly experts on the one hand, and the average Bible student on the other, and in these "Studies," the needs of advanced students and the rights of the unlearned, have alike been conserved.

Special thanks are heartily tendered to Dr. J. W. Thirtle (whose own work on the Psalter is referred to by the Author in the following Preface) for kindly help in examining the proof-sheets. But for the exceptional clearness of the Author's handwriting, the printing of a work extending to upwards of eighteen hundred MS. pages, without his personal supervision, would not have been possible, and in accomplishing the task grateful reference should be made to the care bestowed upon it by the printers. It is recognized that both Managers and Staff (including the Author's friend, Mr. R. T. Hesketh), have taken special pains in carrying through an undertaking which makes unusual demands on typographical resources and technical skill.

The present writer is persuaded that "the further endeavour after accuracy," by a "diligent revision" of the text of these Sacred Lyrics, and the Freshness and Vigour of the Expositions, embodying as they do the garnered fruit of prolonged meditations and ripe experience, will be welcomed by Bible students, and will justify this addition to the literature of the Psalter.

J. G. R.

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PREFACE

The aim of this volume is to induce readers of The Psalms to become students. Any apprehension on my part of being deemed presumptuous in preparing it, has been held in abeyance by three considerations: first, that the wants of students are various; second, that the methods of teachers are diverse; and, third, that the Psalms themselves are inexhaustible. This last conclusion outweighs all others. Franz Delitzsch—himself one of the ablest of commentators on the Psalms—says: The Psalms “are inexhaustible; there always remains an undeciphered remnant; and therefore the business of exposition, although it has a progress, yet has no end.” Hence the hope that this further contribution will simply be judged on its merits.

It will be convenient if I at once state precisely what I have here attempted.

In the first place, I have reproduced the text of the Psalms which had already been given in “The Emphasised Bible”—of

PREFACE

course, *diligently revised*; for it was not possible to refrain from embodying therein a further endeavour after accuracy. At the same time, I have deliberately retained in this rendering of the Psalms nearly as much as before of the Hebrew Emphatic Idiom, being, as I am, profoundly convinced of the possibility of putting into intelligible and forceful English more of the idiomatic felicity of the original than is commonly deemed consistent with the composition of classic English.

Especially where careful interpretation is the immediate end in view, is a correctly emphasised English text a clear gain for securing a true exposition.

Scholars will observe that, in the small reference-notes placed at the foot of the text, not only are they themselves conveniently reminded of critical results with which from ampler sources they are already familiar, but that those very notes, fragmentary as they may appear to the casual reader, do nevertheless furnish enticing stepping-stones for such as would hesitate to plunge into deeper critical waters; by a discrete use of which, therefore, the less thoroughly equipped student may be materially assisted.

Less venturesome readers—in fact, all who for want of time or self-reliance shrink from being too severely taxed—are requested to observe that the “Exposition” proper which follows the psalm has been as far as possible disencumbered of critical details, so as to render it, if not always quite easy reading, yet at least not so difficult as to impede the progress of sensible and candid lovers of the Psalms. Questions of authorship and subsequent adaptation have, indeed, here been rather freely discussed; but only under the confident persuasion that—based as they are on the broad grounds of circumstantial evidence such as confront most men in daily life—they can be made, not merely intelligible, but intensely interesting to average Bible students.

I have not shrunk from the labour and risks of trying to make my “Introduction” really introductory, by providing the reader with details and references calculated to smooth his path, and to suggest other methods, similar to those here actually pursued, by which he may add to the “Studies” of another further and still sweeter studies of his own.

It remains only to indicate the extent of my indebtedness to various critics in preparing this volume, and to express my gratitude if I have, by the Divine blessing, been enabled worthily to enter into their labours.

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To Dr. Ginsburg my obligations are ever growing, the longer I am spared to use his magnificent "Massoretico-Critical Hebrew Bible" with its precious footnotes, and to consult his invaluable "Introduction" to the same.

To Dr. Driver I am exceedingly grateful for his "Parallel Psalter," from the text, notes, and first glossary of which I have gleaned many suggestions of the greatest practical value.

To the Introductory volumes of Thrupp I owe several fruitful suggestions; and I am still more sensible of all kinds of assistance derived from the translations and commentaries of Perowne, Delitzsch, Kirkpatrick, and Briggs. To the last named, my obligations are peculiar. As may be gathered from my Introduction, Chapter II., I have often felt compelled to decline his over-rigid metrical principles and his over-daring resort to conjecture; at the same time his drastic methods have in several instances furnished relief from difficulties which no other critic has seemed able to surmount.

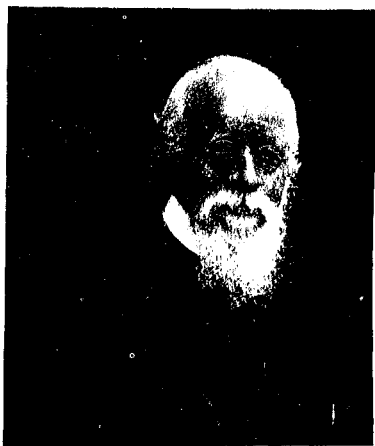
Next to Ginsburg, however, Dr. Thirtle would seem to have placed me under the deepest debt of gratitude, for having furnished a fresh view-point from which to study the origin and early history of the Psalms. I could not wait to see how he would weather the storm of disapprobation which his two works on "The Titles of the Psalms" and on "Old Testament Problems" were certain to provoke; and therefore laid myself under severe caution to beware of following him too implicitly, especially as the results at which he had arrived were so exceedingly acceptable to my prepossessions. But this I am bound in candour to acknowledge: that, in several instances, where I started the study of a psalm in doubt of Thirtle's view of its origin, I ended in a surprisingly complete agreement. Sooner or later, the weight of internal evidence generally brought me into unison with his conclusions. In a few matters as to which we at present may appear to differ, he will, I think, see that I am right. But when all of this nature is said that can be said, there remains in my mind the persuasion that it is mainly due to Dr. Thirtle that my recent studies in the Psalms became such a delightful discovery to me of traces of autobiographies, weaving themselves into the histories of both David and Hezekiah.

I am profoundly thankful to have been permitted to undertake and complete these "Studies In The Psalms".

JOSEPH BRYANT ROTHERHAM.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR



JOSEPH BRYANT ROTHERHAM

About the author . . .

Joseph Bryant Rotherham was born in New Buckenham, Norfolk, England in 1828. His father was a Wesleyan preacher. Mr. Rotherham followed in his father's footsteps, and in his young manhood was a Methodist preacher.

Because of his eager desire to learn and his transparent sincerity, he soon became dissatisfied with the Methodist form of baptism. In 1853 he was immersed

publicly by a Baptist minister. Because of opposition from his former friends, Mr. Rotherham became a preacher of the Particular Baptist Church. It was not long until he discovered that the purpose he saw for baptism as he read the New Testament, was not shared by his fellow Baptist preachers. On June 5, 1854, he wrote a letter to "The Ministers and Messengers of the Shropshire Baptist Association", in which he said "The fact is, I could not be comfortable to sit still and hear esteemed Christian brethren ill-spoken of, (and I take the liberty to think misrepresented) as I have done at some of our district meetings. I refer to brethren commonly known as Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. The same independent and fearless examination of the Word of God, which induced me to regard believers' immersion as the only scriptural baptism, has also led me to the conclusion that on the design of this ordinance the views of these brethren are far clearer and more scriptural than those commonly entertained by Baptists, whether General or Particular."

From that date forward he labored for a restoration of primitive Christianity. For fourteen years he was engaged in evangelistic work in Wales and Scotland.

J. B. Rotherham was a Greek and Hebrew scholar recognized on both sides of the Atlantic. He contributed many articles to the British MILLENNIAL HARBINGER. His greatest work was THE EMPHASISED BIBLE: this monumental work of a great number of years, contains a new translation of the entire Bible with a unique type of marking to indicate just what emphasis is found in the original language. By following such markings, the reading of the Bible in English will be given the same emphasis as indicated in the Greek or Hebrew.

His work on Psalms was begun when he was past seventy and was given his undivided attention until its completion shortly before his death. R. B. Rotherham passed from this life to the next in 1910.

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