

STUDIES IN PSALMS

always free to come to God (what a holy, awe-inspiring name that is).

10 How can men be wise? The only way to begin is by reverence for God. For growth in wisdom comes from obeying His laws. His name forever.

EXPOSITION

Considering how artificial is the structure of these twin psalms, it is remarkable how little sense has been sacrificed to form: perhaps *prey* (ver. 5) is the only instance in this psalm in which a less happy word seems to have been used owing to acrostic exigencies. It is further observable that notwithstanding the proverbial style of sentiment which prevails, the striking history of Israel has, in this psalm in particular, furnished several couplets: as probably the "passover" memorial of ver. 4; the grant of Canaan in ver. 6; and again the deliverance out of Egypt and covenant at Sinai in ver. 9. An allusion to Exo. 34 ("the Refrain of the Bible") may be detected in ver. 4. The subtle difference between *deed*—thing done—and *work*—"thing made"—may also repay reflection. Jehovah is worthy to be praised both for his "deeds" and his "works." The practical trend of both psalms, and the especial link between the two, clearly proclaim: "I am holy, therefore be ye holy." It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the character of the God whom we worship.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. This is a grand psalm of praise. Please find in it present-day reasons for praise.
2. Why use an acrostic?
3. How does our consideration of the character of God aid our worship?

PSALM 112

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Alphabetical Psalm in Praise of the Man who Revereth Jehovah.

PSALM 112
ANALYSIS

The structure of this Psalm exactly corresponds with that of the foregoing (of which see the "Analysis").

(P.R.I.) Praise ye Yah!

- 1 How happy the man who revereth Jehovah,
In his commandments he delighteth greatly:
- 2 Mighty in the earth shall be his seed,
The generation of the upright shall be blessed:
- 3 Comfort and riches are in his house,
And his righteousness standeth fast for aye:
- 4 He hath arisen in darkness a light to the upright,
*Gracious and compassionate*¹ and righteous:
- 5 Well is it with the man who is gracious and lendeth,
He shall maintain his words in the judgment:
- 6 For to the ages shall he not be shaken,
An age-abiding remembrance shall the righteous man
become:
- 7 Of evil tidings will he not be afraid,
Steadfast is his heart led to trust in Jehovah.
- 8 Sustained in his heart he is not afraid,
Until that he gazeth on his adversaries:
- 9 He hath scattered abroad he hath given to the needy,
His righteousness standeth fast for aye:
His horn shall be exalted with honour:
- 10 A lawless one shall see and be vexed,
His teeth shall he gnash and shall melt away;
The desire² of lawless ones shall vanish.³

(Nm)⁴

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 112

Praise the Lord! For all who fear God and trust in Him are blessed beyond expression. Yes, happy is the man who delights in doing His commands.

2 His children shall be honored everywhere, for good men's sons have a special heritage.

1. Cp. Exo. 34:6 and Ps. 111:4.

2. *Gt.*: "The hope." Cp. 9:18, Prov. 10:28—*Gn.*

3. Cp. 1:6.

4. See 113 (beginning.)

STUDIES IN PSALMS

3 He himself shall be wealthy, and his good deeds will never be forgotten.¹

4 When darkness overtakes him, light will come bursting in. He is kind and merciful—

5 And all goes well for the generous man who conducts his business fairly.

6 Such a man will not be overthrown by evil circumstances. God's constant care of him will make a deep impression on all who see it.

7 He does not fear bad news, nor live in dread of what may happen. For he is settled in his mind that Jehovah will take care of him.

8 That is why he is not afraid, but can calmly face his foes.

9 He gives generously to those in need. His deeds will never be forgotten.¹ He shall have influence and honor.

10 Evil-minded men will be infuriated when they see all this; they will gnash their teeth in anger and slink away, their hopes thwarted.

EXPOSITION

Although the course run by this psalm naturally differs from that of its predecessor, yet the correspondences between the two, both in thought and language, are numerous. Note the identity of line ver. 3b in the two psalms; also the recurrence of the "refrain" snatch in ver. 4b of this psalm as well as that; which, in this second case, is the more remarkable, because it probably applies to MAN that which was originally spoken by Jehovah concerning HIMSELF: as much as to say—"I am *gracious and compassionate*, be ye the same." Then comes the question whether, if line *b* of this verse is transferred to man, line *a* also should not be applied in like manner. If so, we reach the rather startling comparison of the Jehovah-revering MAN to a *light arising in the darkness* enshrouding his afflicted but *upright* brother. This is a by-no-means incredible result; and the strong current man-ward of this whole psalm appears to warrant our resting in it. The quotation of ver. 9 in 2 Cor. 9:9 may usefully remind us how strongly the great exponent of justification by faith teaches Christians, that they have been "created in Christ Jesus upon a footing of good (and noble) works, which God prepared beforehand, that therein we might walk" (Eph. 2:10).

1. Literally, "his righteousness endures forever."

PSALMS 112 AND 113

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. We can learn much from psalms 111 and 112 by a comparison and contrast. Graham Scroggie gave a very helpful chart on this which we reproduce here:

PSALM CXI

1. Praise ye the Lord.
1. The upright.
10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
2. Them that delight therein.
3. His righteousness endureth for ever.
4. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.
4. He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered.
5. Them that fear Him.
7. His commandments.
8. Established (stand fast).

PSALM CXII

1. Praise ye the Lord.
2. The upright.
1. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord.
1. Delighteth greatly in His commandments.
- 3, 9. His righteousness endureth for ever.
4. He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.
6. The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.
8. He shall not be afraid.
1. His commandments.
8. Established.

2. To whom do the words: "gracious and compassionate" in vs. 4b refer? This becomes a startling thought. Why?

PSALM 113

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

A Song of Sublime Simplicity: reaching its Climax
by Rejoicing with a Glad Mother!

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-3, Praise Invited from Jehovah's Servants, for All Time, through All the World. Stanza II., vers. 4-6, Jehovah's Incomparable Loftiness and Condescension in Contrast. Stanza III., vers. 7-9, The Lowly are Exalted and the Barren Wife made Glad.

(P.R.I.) Praise ye Yah!

1. Praise O ye servants of Jehovah,
praise the name of Jehovah: