

THE PSALMS

BOOK THE FOURTH¹

PSALM 90

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

A Prayer Against the Dominion of Death.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1, 2, A Foundation for Prayer, sought in the Proved Kindness and Abiding Might of the Sovereign Lord. Stanza II., vers. 3, 4, The Theme of the Psalm: a Two-fold Return. Stanza III., vers. 5-12, The Dominion of Death; described mainly in its Divine Appointment, and its Origin in Human Sin and Divine Displeasure; and calling forth a Transitional Prayer for Divine Guidance, How to Number our Days. Stanza IV., vers. 13-17, A Plea for the Overthrow of Death's Dominion.

(Lm.) Prayer—By Moses, the Man of God.

- 1 Sovereign Lord!
a dwelling place² hast thou thyself become to us
in generation after generation.
- 2 Before mountains were born,
or ever were brought forth the earth and the world—
yea, from age even unto age
Thou art the MIGHTY ONE.
- 3 Thou causest man to return even unto atoms,³
and (then) sayest—"Return! ye sons of men."⁴

1. See Table II., *ante*.

2. So M.T. (*ma'on*), as in 91:9. Some cod. (w. Sep., Vul.): "refuge" (*ma'oz*), as in 27:1, 28:8, 31:3, 4, Isa. 25:4, Joel 3:16, Na. 1:7.

3. So Driver. "Dust (as pulverised)"—O.G.

4. "Again thou sayest, Come again, ye children of men."—P.B.V.

PSALM 90

- 4 For a thousand years in thine eyes
are like yesterday when about to pass away,
or a watch in the night.
- 5 Thou didst flood them away with a rain-storm—a sleep they
become,
In the morning they are like grass which sprouteth again,—
- 6 In the morning it blossometh—and hath sprouted again,
by the evening it is cut down—and hath withered!
- 7 For we waste away in thine anger,
and in thy wrath are we dismayed:
- 8 Thou dost set our iniquities before thee,
our secret near the lamp⁵ of thy face.
- 9 For all our days decline,
in thy wrath we end our years;
- 10 Like a murmured meditation are the days of our years:⁶
in them are seventy years,
or if in full strength eighty years;
Yet their extent⁷ is travail and trouble,—
for it passeth quickly and we have flown away.
- 11 Who can know the strength of thine anger,
or whether like the fear of thee is thy wrath?
- 12 How to number our days so make thou known,
that we may get⁸ a mind that hath wisdom.
- 13 Oh return thou Jehovah!—how long?
and have compassion concerning thy servants:
- 14 Satisfy us in the morning⁹ with thy kindness,
that we may ring out our joy and be glad all our days.
- 15 Make us glad according to the days thou hast humbled us,
the years we have seen misfortune:
- 16 Shew unto thy servants thy work,¹⁰
and thy majesty¹¹ upon their children.¹²
- 17 And let the delightfulness of the Sovereign Lord our God
be upon us,

5. Or: "luminary."

6. The words of these three lines are redistributed for better balance.

7. M.T.: "pride." More probably (reading *rhb* instead *rhb*): "width, extent"—O.G.

8. Ml.: "bring in" (i.e. from the field of our study).

9. Or: "early."

10. Some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "works"—Gn.

11. Or: "state."

12. Cp. Isa. 4:4-6.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

and the work of our hands oh establish thou upon us,—
yea the work of our hands establish thou it.

(Nm.)

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 90

A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God

Lord, through all the generations you have been our home!

2 Before the mountains were created, before the earth was formed, You are God without beginning or end.

3 You speak, and man turns back to dust.

4 A thousand years are but as yesterday to You! They are like a single hour!¹

5, 6 We glide along the tides of time as swiftly as a racing river, and vanish as quickly as a dream. We are like grass that is green in the morning but mowed down and withered before the evening shadows fall.

7 We die beneath Your anger; we are overwhelmed by Your wrath.

8 You spread out our sins before You—our secret sins—and see them all.

9 No wonder the years are long and heavy here beneath Your wrath. All our days are filled with sighing.

10 Seventy years are given us! And some may even live to 80. But even the best of these years are often emptiness and pain; soon they disappear, and we are gone.

11 Who can realize the terrors of Your anger? Which of us can fear You as he should?

12 Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are; help us to spend them as we should.

13 O Jehovah, come and bless us! How long will You delay? Turn away Your anger from us.

14. Satisfy us in our earliest youth² with Your lovingkindness, giving us constant joy to the end of our lives.

15 Give us gladness in proportion to our former misery! Replace the evil years with good.

16 Let us see Your miracles again; let our children see glorious things, the kind You used to do.

17 And let the Lord our God favor us and give us success.

1. Literally, "as a watch in the night."

2. Literally, "early."

PSALM 90
EXPOSITION

That *Moses the Man of God*, the Leader of Israel out of Egypt, did write this psalm according to the inscriptional headline, is strongly confirmed by internal evidence, especially by the lonely sublimity and strong originality of the psalm; and nearly all the objections against such authorship are met by carrying back the time of its composition to the close of Moses' sojourn in Midian, instead of assuming that he wrote it at the end of the forty years' wandering in the wilderness. This modification of the opinion which adheres to the Mosaic authorship, not only removes the difficulty of supposing that Moses wrote of *seventy* or *eighty years* as the common length of human life when he himself was *nearly a hundred and twenty*, but fully accounts for the absence of any allusion to the Exodus and the marvellous incidents of the journey through the desert. Not only so, but this slight shifting back of the presumed time of authorship intensifies the cry of the writer, *How long?* (ver. 13), by placing behind it, not merely *forty years'* seeming delay, but nearly *four hundred*. It is not likely that, in sight of Canaan, Moses would have said, "How long?" when he very well knew that the crossing of the Jordan could not be much longer delayed; whereas, at the close of nearly forty years' waiting in Midian, and still no commission received *to go and deliver Israel*,—nothing could have been more natural than so to express himself respecting the threatening flight of years. *Let thy work appear!* would come with a hundred-fold more force from his pen when the first step in that "work" had not as yet been taken by the Divine Deliverer, than it would when a substantial and irreversible portion of that "work" like that of the Exodus had already been accomplished.

A FOUNDATION LAID FOR PRAYER (Stanza I., vers. 1, 2).—Most appropriately does the Divine governmental name "*Adonai, Sovereign Lord*," stand as the first word in a psalm which touches some of the weightiest problems in the Divine government of mankind. A *dwelling-place* comes with peculiar pathos from a homeless sojourner belonging to a homeless race. A sense of being at home with God, impresses the writer with the Divine kindness in drawing so near to him; and at the same time brings him into conscious fellowship with the men of the past to whom the Sovereign Lord had in like manner drawn near: hence, most comprehensively, he says: *A dwelling-place hast thou thyself become to us in generation after generation*. This is

STUDIES IN PSALMS

indeed a broad stepping-stone to prayer, which plants Moses, the Exile, beside Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and other men spiritually akin, and comprehended under the uniting pronoun *our*: *our dwelling-place*. A sojourner among the *mountains* of Arabia, who, guided by the sacred books in his possession, had many times pondered on the birth of the world, finds it natural to go back—behind the race of believing servants of the Sovereign Lord to which he belongs—to the contemplation of the *Mighty One* Himself whose existence antedates both men and mountains: *Before Mountains were born, Or ever were brought forth the earth and the world* (THEN Thou wast, as Thou art still) *the Mighty One*. But, instead of taking two sentences to say the two things (*wast—art*), the writer,—taking advantage of the Hebrew custom of merely implying the verb “to be”,—crowds into one sentence what might have made two: *Thou wast—Thou art*. Before the mountains were born, &c., thou wast 'El, the *Mighty One*. Yea, from 'olam to 'olam—from æon to æon—from concealed time in the past to concealed time in the future—or (more simply) from age to age, thou art 'El, the *Mighty One*: the father of all existing things, yea also the father of all coming times. Thus broad and firm is a foundation here laid for prayer.

THE THEME OF THE PSALM (Stanza II., vers. 3, 4.)—*Thou causest man to return even unto atoms, And (then) sayest—“Return ye sons of men”* (ver. 3). Are there here two *returns*, or is there only one? Is there first a “return” to dust, and then a “return” from dust? In other words, are the two clauses of which the verse is composed to be regarded as synonymous, both saying substantially the same thing; or as consecutive? With some confidence we reply, “consecutive.” There are two “returns.” The first clause expresses a “return” to dust; and the second, a “return” from dust. But the difference in result is so great as to lead us to ask how we may be sure which construction to prefer. Now there are two leading indications to guide us: first, the relation of these two clauses to each other, and then the connection between this verse and the next. First, as to the relation between the two clauses to each other: notice that the former clause expresses a fact, or states a Divine act, simply something done—*Thou causest*, &c.; whereas the latter tells, not of something done, but of something said, a Divine word or decree: *Thou sayest—Return*. Mark this well: first a Divine act, then a Divine decree. Now, is it likely that they would

PSALM 90.

stand in this order, if they both referred to the same thing? Is it not more probable that they would have stood in the reverse order,—first the decree, and then the act carrying out the decree? Would it not seem very awkward to represent God as first doing the act—inflicting death, and then passing the decree calling for the infliction. The very order of the clauses, therefore, already makes for the conclusion that there are two “returns” in the verse—one return executed, and then another decreed. But there is a second indication to help us; and that is, the connection between this third verse and the one which immediately follows it—the fourth. Evidently, there is a connection between the two, and that a logical connection; seeing that ver. 4 opens with the important logical link *For*, thus shewing that the fourth verse gives a *reason* for the third. Hence, if we can seize upon the nature of this connection, we may hope to obtain further guidance as to how the point before us should be decided: namely, whether ver. 3 speaks of two “returns” or of only one. What then, let us ask, is the general sense of ver. 4 when put into simple language? That general sense is plainly this: *That a long time in God’s sight is like a very short time in ours.* Such being the case, Does that sense of ver. 4 make for two “returns,” or for only one, in ver. 3? Let us try these issues one by one. Assume that there is but one “return” in ver. 3—that it speaks of the return to dust and nothing more; and then how does our “For” carry us forward: “Thou hast inflicted death on man, Because ‘a long time in thy sight is as a short time in ours’”? What reason is there in that? There is none, that we can discover. What has length of time—longer or shorter—to do with the one fact or process of inflicting death? It has no relation, that we can see. The infliction of death is going steadily on, occasioning no such sense of *delay* as to call for any explanation. Therefore, if *only* the infliction of death is comprehended in ver. 3, ver. 4 is wholly irrelevant. Now let us try the second issue, by asking: If there are two “returns” intended in ver. 3, will that create a sufficient sense of delay, as to make welcome the soothing consideration supplied by ver. 4? Obviously it will; seeing that, by including two great Divine processes, the second of which has scarcely if at all been begun, it instinctively calls forth the reflection: “Yes! but *what a long time* such a double process bids fair to demand: a first process of causing man to return to dust is itself filling ages; but the second process—bringing mankind back from the dust—

STUDIES IN PSALMS

why, it has not yet commenced. *How long* will it be ere it is begun? How much longer, before it is finished? Just the very feeling to which the consideration in ver. 4 is fitted to be addressed; because its purport is: "A long time—perhaps thousands of years. Yea; but no length of time involved affects the Divine Worker: no amount of delay can either disable him or cause him to forget!" On these sure grounds may we regard as settled the grave point at issue: concluding with confidence, both from the order and nature of the clauses in ver. 3, and from the logical connection between vers. 3 and 4, That it is even so; that the worthy theme of Moses' mighty prayer is nothing less than a pleading protest against the prolonged and unbroken dominion of death. We have thus discovered the poles on which the whole psalm turns, and are prepared to see all the remainder of the psalm naturally resolve itself, as it does, into—The Dominion of Death described; and, A Plea for the Overthrow of that dominion.

THE DOMINION OF DEATH DESCRIBED (Stanza III., vers. 5-12).—And, first, it is *Divinely caused*. The "theme" itself has already stated this: *Thou causest man to return to atoms*. And now, at the very entrance on this description of death's dominion, the same thing is reasserted: *Thou didst flood them away with a rain-storm*. It matters not at all whether this is an allusion to the Flood: the point is, that this "flooding away" is executed by the Sovereign Lord addressed, even by him to whom a thousand years are as yesterday. It will not do to try to break the force of these statements by reminding us that "every creature of God is good." True? but death is not a CREATURE: it is neither person, place nor thing—it is essentially a negation, a negation in the sense of a withdrawal of life. It is therefore unwarranted, and indeed reckless, to assert that God cannot withdraw life when once he had bestowed it. It may be good for him to give it; and yet be both good and wise for him to withdraw it, after a time, longer or shorter. It may be good to withdraw it; either because it has served its purpose, or because it has been abused and forfeited. It may be just and wise and merciful, yea even necessary, to withdraw life as a Divine protest against sin already committed, and as a Divine prevention of further sin. It is, therefore, as unwise as it is unwarranted to allege that *God cannot inflict death*. It is taught here, and in endless other places of Holy Writ, that, in point of fact, God *does* inflict death.

Still, not without reason does he inflict it. In the case of

PSALM 90

other creatures, God may have other reasons for withdrawing life—that is, inflicting death; but, in the case of *man*, there is a revealed reason, and that reason is—SIN: *Thou dost set our iniquities before thee, Our secret near the lamp of thy face.* The “iniquities” here intended are the iniquities of the race; since individual iniquities do not count, as witness the death of infants and of the forgiven. In like manner, in all probability, “our secret” is the secret of our race; which, when “Genesis” was barely written and certainly not published, was in all likelihood in the keeping of Moses alone. This may seem a great and indeed startling thing to say; but let any man, with some strength of historical imagination, give a more likely application to this remarkable phrase, of which, be it observed, the plural word “sins” forms no part. This psalm, then, itself guides us to find the special reason for man’s death in man’s sin.

Nor is this all. Man’s sin is the occasion of God’s displeasure. With surprising strength is this taught in the present psalm. Five times is this explicitly asserted during the course of this single stanza dealing with Death’s Dominion: *anger, wrath; wrath, anger; wrath* (vers. 7, 9, 11). It really appears as though the writer gave up all attempts to measure the intensity of God’s anger against man’s sin—the sin of the race—by taking refuge in a question: *Who can know the strength of thine anger?* And, if we rightly decipher the force of the duplicate question, it abundantly confirms the first member of the interrogatory: *Or whether like (—or according—to) the fear of thee is thy wrath.* Of “the fear” which unlimited power revealing itself by the infliction of death inspires, we all have some knowledge; and we can easily increase our apprehension thereof, either by studying ordinary histories of mankind or by noting this feature as seen for instance in such a classic as the Book of Job. Suffice it to claim that, according to this psalm, it is very unlikely that any of us can over-estimate the intensity of the Divine Displeasure with the sin of our race. We may make a one-sided study of it; we may omit to pass on to view the other side of the great complex question; we may amiably, but quite needlessly, plead man’s frailty—which assuredly God never forgets;—but we cannot be too deeply penetrated with the impressively taught truth that *the reason for man’s death as a race, is man’s sin as a race.* The more vividly you portray the ravages of death, the more cogently do you demonstrate God’s anger against our racial sin: comprehending, as that racial sin

STUDIES IN PSALMS

does, alike the *secret* offence of our first father and the resulting *iniquities* of his descendants.

We might here look back, for the purpose of observing what a peculiar flickering of lights and shadows is cast over vers. 5-11 by what we might call the variations seen in the incidence of Death: the sweeping away of masses of men, as in the flood; the silent falling asleep of individuals who unobservedly fall out of the living race of men; and especially the remarkable way in which generations succeed each other. Also: we might point out how the *travail* and *trouble* of life enhance the impressiveness of its brevity. Life is slow and bright in coming, but swift in departing, and shadowed in retrospect. *Seventy or eighty years* seem long to the young; but to the aged they appear but as a few days. Many besides Jacob when brought before Pharaoh (Gen. 47:9) have, in the time of retrospect, been ready to exclaim: "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life!"

But, instead of lingering over these details of the Stanza before us, it is more important to give good heed to the pivot prayer which forms the transition to the great prayer of the psalm. This pivot prayer is the outcry of the careful scholar, that he be not suffered to miss the main lesson for which he came into the Divine school: *How to number our days, so make thou known, That we may get a mind that hath wisdom.* The first point to note here is that there is an apprehended *difficulty* in making the desired calculation; and the next is, that Divine *illumination* is sought in order to overcome the difficulty. Let us carefully consider these two points in succession.

The words of this transitional little prayer do properly suppose a difficulty; nor does it seem legitimate to tone down and modify its point. The psalmist does not ask to be guided to apply his mind to a wise object: in other words, he does not say: "Having numbered my days, and easily discovered how frail and shortlived I am, teach me to regulate my life accordingly." It is the wise mind itself which he covets; and he seeks it in a definite way, namely by numbering, and not by means of reflection. It is the *numbering itself* which occasions his difficulty. He wishes to know how to make the successful calculation—how to do the necessary sum. What is it? Is it to find out what is the average duration of human life? But he knows that already. Is it to discover what point he has reached in the scale of possibility? But he can find that out, if he has lost count, by domestic repute or an appeal to the family register. Is it to know, whether he

PSALM 90

personally shall reach the average outside limit? But no amount of *counting* can inform him of that. No man, starting from the known average, can say: "Therefore I have ten or twenty more years to live." And though God could reveal it to him, that is not at all the point of the prayer.

And yet it is true, that it is a revelation—or at least instruction or information—which the psalmist seeks; for he says *Make known*. He clearly, then, wishes to know how to do the successful *numbering*. For this he feels he needs Divine guidance, and hopes for such guidance to be vouchsafed by way of *making known* to him something which at present he does not know, or as to which he feels uncertain.

Put these simple things together, and then see whether the solution will not appear. The psalmist desires a *wise mind*: he hopes to gain it by a process of *numbering*: he humbly seeks *information* that he may do the numbering aright. *What, then, is the information he seeks? What does he need to know?*

The whole psalm is eloquent with the answer. And, first, it is very plain that the psalmist gets his answer: the way in which his tone at once changes and deepens, and he forthwith opens up and boldly carries forward his great prayer against the continued dominion of Death, shews this. The informal way in which the result discloses itself, naturally suggests, that he obtains his answer by immediate—though perhaps unconscious—revelation. The materials for his answer already lie within the area of his mind. He is guided to put them together correctly; and the result is—a REVELATION: the thing he wished to *know* has been made *clear*!

Yes! he may and should take both "returns" into account: the little figures of this life and the large figures of the life to come. His survey must take in, not only the possible *seventy or eighty years*, with the uncertainties and humiliations and sorrows attendant on them, which are occupied in returning to dust, but the *thousands*, the thousands upon thousands, the illimitable *ages of ages* to be entered upon after returning from dust. *Then and so* he will indeed get a *wise mind*. The man who gets no further than the *seventy or eighty years* of this life, may, by thinking and moralising, discover a few stars of prudence twinkling in his midnight sky; but the man who by faith leaps forward into the *renewed life* that is to be, is greeted at once with the effulgence of a sun of Divine Wisdom which illumines all the heaven of his soul, and which will never set.

STUDIES IN PSALMS

A PLEA FOR THE OVERTHROW OF DEATH'S DOMINION (Stanza IV., vers. 13-17). *Oh return thou, Jehovah! how long?* It only needs that this outcry should be interpreted in the light of the context, to perceive its amazing breadth and boldness. It is then seen to mean no less than this: "Return from the anger with which, during generation after generation, thou hast been inflicting death: Reverse thy procedure. Thou hast long been turning frail man to atoms: wilt thou not now, with effect, say—*Come again, ye sons of men?* Thou hast been *flooding them away*: wilt thou not bring them back as a great army? Thou hast been putting them to *sleep*: wilt thou not awaken them? Shall the *iniquities* of our race never be adequately covered? Shall its *secret* shame and wrong never be expiated, by the morning of glory enough to redound to thy praise?"

"*And have compassion on thy servants*, who have all along through these dark ages been serving thee. Pity them for their ill requital—for their unfinished tasks—for the obloquy they have endured. *Satisfy us*: we are hungry for fulfilment. We are longing for the turn of *the morning*. We are looking for the morning of a new day. We are expecting a day in which *thy kindness* shall be as publicly demonstrated as thy *wrath* has been during the long reign of death. Infants have been taken captive by premature removal: shall they never come back from the land of the enemy? Thy servants have been publicly dishonoured: they have fallen asleep unrewarded: shall they never be owned and crowned: We are looking for the morning that shall usher in that new day that shall make us feel we are *but beginning our existence*; being ushered into which, we shall give one long *ringing shout for joy*, and then go forward with *gladness unto length of days*."

Granted, that this is, to some extent, necessarily, imaginary paraphrase: the only serious question is whether, in a form we can understand, it gives embodiment to the *spirit* of this prayer. But let us humbly endeavour to be more logical.

Make us glad, according to the days thou hast humbled us, The years we have seen misfortune. There is here a principle involved, as the ground of petition: it is the principle of proportion. Lest we should lose ourselves if we go so far afield as to keep the ancients in view, such as Noah and Abraham, although we ought to do that,—let us confine ourselves to the outlook of Moses himself. When *he* uses this language, what does he naturally mean? *The days thou hast humbled us*: how

PSALM 90

many have they been? *The years we have seen misfortune*: how long have they now lasted? Let us say, in round numbers: Four hundred years. Well, then, his petition cannot signify less than this: "Make us glad, for four hundred years, in the good land into which thou dost intend to bring us according to the promises made to our fathers." But, after all, is this the rule of proportion between the gracious Jehovah and his loyal servants? Is it simply so much reward for so much suffering? Who can think it, of Him who in the natural world gives to some kernels, cast into the earth, thirty, to some sixty, and to some a hundred fold. Will he who takes four hundred years to form the sons of Israel into an organized nation, be content to give them a four hundred years' run of national prosperity? No such conclusion can commend itself.

Show unto thy servants thy work. What work has Jehovah in hand in forming this people? Is it not to make of them "a kingdom of priests, a holy nation"? (Exo. 19). And is this work never to be finished? *And thy majesty upon their children.* And will the promised cloud of glory (Isa. 4) never rest upon them? And when it does, will the fathers and founders of the nation not be given to behold the ravishing sight?

And let the delightfulness—surely not for ever, the *anger*, the *wrath*; not merely the *kindness*, though that is bounded only by righteousness and is age-abiding; not alone the *majesty*, though that is awe-inspiring; but the *delightfulness*, comprehending all the beauty of form that can please the eye, all the sweetness of taste that can suggest entire mental satisfaction. "The delightfulness" of the *Sovereign Lord*—whose governmental designs are receiving satisfying accomplishment: "the Sovereign Lord" *our God*—approving himself to the nations of the earth, as the God of Israel. Let this *be upon us*: not merely "on them." *And the work of our hands.* When the delightfully kind and gloriously majestic Jehovah shews *his work* unto his servants, his servants will be permitted to discover *their own* humble share therein—Moses his leadership and laws, Joshua his victories, David his songs and the like. This work of ours, which thou art pleased to accept as thine own: let it be *established upon us*, both on our children and on ourselves. This is the solidarity—this the fellowship—this the fruition in this abiding kingdom, for which we pray.

In submitting the foregoing as a fair exposition of the 90th psalm, it is deemed proper to guard against extravagant ex-

STUDIES IN PSALMS

pectations, which can only yield disappointment. It should be remembered: That this psalm is poetry, and not didactic teaching, and therefore must be handled with such lightness of touch as allows for figures of speech and dramatic changes of points of view; That this is but a single, very early psalm, which may naturally have left in doubt what subsequent psalms and prophecies have made clear; and especially That it was penned centuries before "light and incorruption were illumined by the Gospel," and hence cannot be expected to have formulated a consecutive account of that great process of Bringing Back from the dust of death the race of mankind which even now is only just begun. It is, however, claimed—and it is for the candid student to judge whether the claim has been made good—that here, thus early in the history of Divine Revelation, the theme of a General Resurrection is effectively broached; and that the Initial Stages of that Resurrection are clearly implied—if, at least, the recall of Jehovah's *Servants* from the dust of death bears any pledging and causal relation to the Bringing Back of the remainders of men. That the uplifting of the Nation of Israel to the high level of their national calling, is to issue in the Birth from the Grave of the nations of the world, is now seen by independent students to be really taught in Isaiah 26 (cp. Ps. 48 end). *Why* Israel has not yet been able to respond to her call; and *why*, therefore, she has not yet wrought such "deliverance in the earth" as awaits her accomplishment, are questions most vitally at issue between Jews and Christians. When Israel finds her Leader in *the Great Return—the Coming Again*—of this psalm, she will further find that He is not only by appointment a sufferer, but that He is also the First, the Chief, the Leader of an illuminating Resurrection from the dead, who proclaims Light to both the people of Israel and to the remaining Nations of the earth. So, at least, we have been taught by a Jew who was also a Christian (in Acts 26:23).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The heading of this psalm attributes it to Moses—at what period in his life was it written?
2. Scroggie well says "The psalm falls naturally into three parts, and each of these into two: Part one—1-6; God's Eternity and Man's Frailty. Part two—7-12; Man's sin and God's wrath. Part three—13-17; Frail and Sinful Man's

PSALM 90 AND 91

appeal to the Eternal God." Compare this with Rotherham's divisions. A great deal of discussion is given to the two uses of the term "return" in vs. 3. Scroggie says: "*Return ye*, may be a parallel thought, *return to dust*, or it may refer to the rise of a new generation, answering to *generations* in verse." How does this compare with Rotherham? Discuss.

3. Does God inflict death? If so why?
4. What is "our secret" which is set up near the lamp of God's face?
5. God hates sin—why?
6. What is "the pivotal prayer" of this psalm?
7. What is "the wisdom" obtained in numbering our day?
8. Read carefully verses 13-17 and relate them to Moses, i.e. as they were written. Discuss.
9. There are some tremendous lessons for living in this psalm. List two or three for discussion.

PSALM 91

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

A Personal Application of the Foregoing Psalm.

ANALYSIS

Prelude, Commending the Initial Sentiment of Moses' Prayer. Stanza I., vers. 2-8, Exhortation to Make this Sentiment One's Own: sustained by Expanding its Implied Promises. Stanza II., vers. 9-13, To One who has Obeyed the Exhortation, a Further Expansion of the Promises is made. Stanza III., vers. 14-16, Jehovah, in Love, Responds to the Love Set Upon Him.

(Lm.—None.)¹

- 1 *How happy^s is he that abideth in the hiding-place of the Most High,
in the shadow of the Almighty he tarrieth!—*
- 2 Say thou^s to Jehovah—"My refuge and my fastness,
my God in whom I trust."

1. N.B. according to rule this psalm should immediately follow the foregoing, without break.

2. So *Gt.*—*Gn.*

3. According to change of vowel points advised by Dr., thereby preparing for second person in ver. 3.