

PSALLO

Psalm 92:1–15

The Psalm translation you have before you is of Psalm 92, a “Psalm or song for the Sabbath Day.” As to the title itself there is little doubt that it is authentic, not merely a scribal addition, as we have stated before in this column. This is reinforced by an examination of the Septuagint which gives testimony to the authenticity of the Hebrew title in these words, *Ψαλμὸς ᾠδῆς, εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ σαββάτου*. And, while the LXX may lend itself to a more detailed interpretation than the Hebrew, *מְזִמֹר שִׁיר לַיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת*, this is no different than the body of the text of the LXX generally as compared to the Hebrew text. Let us further remember that the Hebrew psalm title is verse 1 in the original text, which we confess is providentially preserved by the singular care and providence of God (WCF 1.8).

Trustworthy commentators have added their testimony to this understanding. For example, hear the wise counsel of the Rev. David Dickson:

From the inscription, learn, 1. The Lord hath had a special care of sanctifying the sabbath, as the appointing of this psalm for that day, may, amongst other things, give evidence: *a psalm, a song for the Sabbath day*. 2. For the sanctification of the sabbath, it is not sufficient to rest from our own bodily, servile, distractive works, but we must rest and cease from our own works, and be employed in religious service and worship, and exercises suitable for that day, whereof singing of psalms to the honour of God, is one: *this is a song for the sabbath-day*. 3. God hath appointed that the church should have solemn meetings on the sabbath, wherein God may, by his own ordinances, be publicly honoured, and the congregation edified in their most holy faith: for this psalm is given to the church with this title and inscription, *a psalm or song for the sabbath-day*, to be sung in the assemblies.¹

We might also add the words of the Southern Presbyterian, William S. Plumer, including several others in his comments:

For the Sabbath day is a part of the title uniformly preserved in the best Hebrew copies, also by the Chaldee, Arabic, Septuagint, Ethiopic and Vulgate.

The ode is very suitable for the Sabbath. Calvin: ‘There is no reason to doubt that the Jews were in the habit of singing this Psalm upon the Sabbath-day.’ Hengstenberg: ‘According to its contents, it is manifestly well adapted for such a use.’ Alexander: ‘As one main design of the Sabbath was to afford an opportunity for the admiring contemplation of God’s works or doings, the Psalm before us was peculiarly appropriate at such a time.’²

And certainly to round out these selections, it is fitting to add the observation and instruction of Keil and Delitzsch:

The Sabbath is the day that God has hallowed, and that is to be consecrated to God by our turning away from the business pursuits of the working days (Isa. 58:13f.) and applying ourselves to the praise and adoration of God, which is the most proper, blessed Sabbath employment. It is good, i.e., not merely good in the eyes of God, but also good for man, beneficial to the heart, pleasant and blessed.³

The translation you have before you is straightforward, with perhaps one exception, which is the use of the word “unicorn” in verse 10. The original uses the word *בָּאֵף*, which is glossed in Baumgartner as “buffalo”; in TWOT as “wild ox” and in others as “antelope”. The original designates a large, powerful wild beast that is untamable, exalted and honored for his strength. The word “unicorn” is retained out of honor for the Authorized Version and the Scottish Metrical Psalter, whose universal recognition and use precludes any concept of a mythical creature, but of a large and powerful beast. The term unicorn comes from the LXX itself, and refers to the wild ox, according to Liddel and Scott’s Lexicon.⁴ Finally on the translation, where words have been added to smooth out the meter, these are italicized.

Certainly then, it is good to give thanks, and to praise the Name of the Lord. To remember His judgments, and that while there are seeming injustices in the duration of this life, these will be set to right, by the Lord, in His due time.

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1. David Dickson, *A Brief Explication of the Psalms* (Glasgow; Edinburgh; London: John Dow; Waugh and Innes; R. Ogle; James Darling; Richard Baynes, 1834), 2.148–149.

2. W. S. Plumer, *Studies in the Book of Psalms: Being a Critical and Expository Commentary, with Doctrinal and Practical Remarks on the Entire Psalter* (Philadelphia; Edinburgh: J. B. Lippincott Company; A & C Black, 1872), 855.

3. C. F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 5.606.

4. See Liddel & Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (1843; rev. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1996), 1144.

thinks Edwards should have been a voluntarist given his emphasis on the affections and is then surprised with Edwards' functional priority of the intellect. But Edwards admitted that even he could not always distinguish the acts of the intellect and will in the sense of the heart. So I would have to say that he and Plantinga come within a hair's breadth. I can't help but think that he could have saved himself a lot of trouble had he been fully aware of the trajectory of Edwards' thought and the historical context in which that was articulated. ■

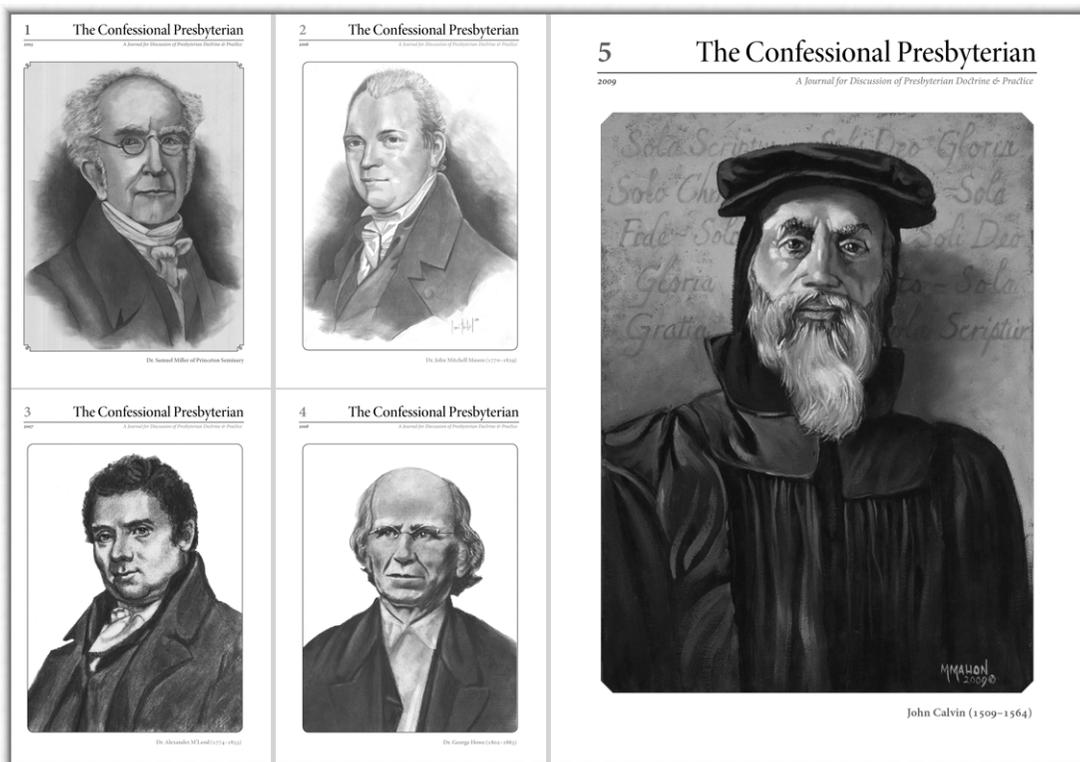
Psallo. Continued from Page 227.

The thoughts of the Lord are a great deep, and it is to behave like an untamed beast to doubt of His justice and righteousness on account of the temporary advance of the wicked. The confident assertion of the Psalmist is that he will be exalted by the Lord, and all the benefits of the Lord's grace are continually with him, and will be brought to their fullness in due time. Those that are planted in the Lord's house grow strong, tall, fruitful.

Such meditations are fitting for the Sabbath Day. That "one whole day in seven" in which these meditations rise to the forefront of our conscious thoughts, and have opportunity to remain there throughout the day, untrammelled from the labors, responsibilities, and recreations of the other days. In the heavenly environment that a properly "remembered and hallowed"⁵ Sabbath-Day facilitates, these meditations remind us of the fullness of that eternal Sabbath yet to come, and these temporal Sabbaths become steps to glory. In closing, hear Richard Baxter:

Christians, let heaven have some share in your sabbaths, where you must shortly keep your everlasting sabbath. As you go from stair to stair, till you come to the top, so use your sabbaths as steps to glory, till you have passed them all, and are there arrived.⁶

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5. See Exodus 20.11; Isaiah 58.13-14; Jeremiah 17.22-24; Ezekiel 20.20; 22.26; 44.24.

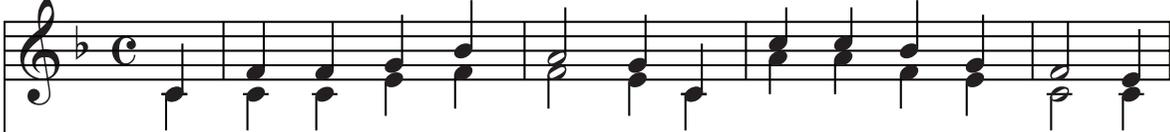
6. Richard Baxter, *The Practical Works of the Rev. Richard Baxter* ed. William Orme (London: James Duncan, 1830) 23.325-326.

Psalm 92:1-15

A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath Day

Tov LeTodah

Todd L. Ruddell



¹ O it is a good thing to give thanks un - to Je - ho - vah
³ On in - stru - ment ten - string - ed ev'n on the Psal - ter - y
⁵ Mag - nif - i - cent O LORD and how Won - der - ful Thy works be
⁷ When wick - ed men as grass spring all th' e - vil - do - ers flou - rish
 Those that work deeds of e - vil yea they shall scat - ter - ed be
¹² As Palms the just shall grow; great like Leb' - non's ce - dars they be




And to thy Name Most High to sing prais - es un - to Thee
 The med - i - ta - tion deep up - on the harp shall be
 Thy pur - pos - es and thoughts Lord they are so ver - y deep
 It's so that they will be de - stroy - ed then for - ev - er
¹⁰ But like the u - ni - corn shall my horn ex - alt - ed be!
¹³ Those plant - ed in the LORD's House in our God's courts shall grow



² Thy ten - der cov' - nant mer - cy to make known by morn's light
⁴ For Thou'st made me re - joice Lord and in Thy work *most fine*,
⁶ That man who like a beast is oh he shall nev - er know
⁸ But to e - ter - ni - ty Lord, O Thou art the *Most High*
 I'm bath'd in oil; ¹¹ Mine ears and mine eyes shall hear and see
¹⁴ Still fruit - ful in old age, fat green - leav'd they man - i - fest

And al - so of Thy faith - ful - ness to show forth in the night.
 I'll ev - er be ex - ult - ing in those hand - i - works of thine.
 Nor shall the man that fool - ish is in un - der - stand - ing grow.
⁹ For lo thine en - e - mies Lord lo Thine en' - mies shall ex - pire.
My d'sire on th'en - e - my and wick - ed men who stand 'gainst me.
¹⁵ The Lord's up - right, my rock, with Him there's no un - right - eous - ness.