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merged in the United Church of Canada), not only organized and helped to train his troupe, but occasionally wrote plays for them himself and encouraged them to do the same. I need not have come as far as Canada to find an exemplification of the new spirit that is at work, but unhappily I cannot speak from personal experience of the fine work which Miss Alice Buckton is doing at Glastonbury, and others of the 'eager heart' in other country places.

Again, among our kinsfolk on the other side of the Atlantic, I have found a village school of craft which reproduced in a new form the work which the late Canon Rawnsley and Mrs. Rawnsley started among the boatmen of Keswick. Here, too, in New Brunswick the place was a popular holiday resort, and the folk who were busy in the summer catering for the visitors were occupying the long winter evenings, which would otherwise have been vacant, idle and tedious, in original craft work.

Here and there good work is going on—more, probably, than we suspect. Like all the most hopeful activities in social betterment, such work springs up here and there spontaneously, and grows round some vital personality, without any grants from an education committee, or official initiative. But nothing would be more helpful to our new national life at the present time than for our magazines to tell us of these ventures.

The minds of men everywhere are full of inarticulate longings, of which we neither know the meaning nor the right expression. And we are straitened until we find that expression. What we want is to find some one who has found that for which we blindly grope. To find contact with such a one is to find the way to our own larger self. The new times are full of impulses of deeper birth. Here and there among us these impulses are taking shape as realities. When the higher appears, the lower will perish. The springs of joy are from within.

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## Some Misunderstood Psalms.

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### II.

#### PSALM LXXXII.

It is a peculiar misfortune that this psalm, coming under the mechanical revision of the editor of the Elohistic book to which it belongs, has had the divine name changed from Yahweh to Elohim. The change has helped to obscure the point of the psalm, which is precisely the difference between the rule of the God of Israel and that of the other deities. The writer gives his reason for believing that the faith of his people will be universal.

The hymn is one of the eschatological hymns. The writer sees the consummation of all history to have already arrived. In that day of the Lord, to use the prophetic phrase, the leading feature is that Yahweh reveals Himself to be what He has always been, the King of the universe. He makes clear to all creation His sovereign might. In Ps 93 and 97 this is described as His accession: מלך יהוה, 'Yahweh has become King.' The translation of R.V., 'the Lord reigneth,' does not bring out the precise force of the saying, since it suggests to our mind the

constant rule of God. But what the psalms mean to say is that in the consummation God becomes King in a new way which none can mistake. Our psalm describes the great event in slightly different terms: He has taken His seat on His throne where He is acknowledged Lord. The perfect tense of the first verb marks the definite act: the following imperfect describes what He then proceeds to do—He proceeds to summon the gods of the world to His judgment-bar.

Israel's God sits throned over the divine assembly and, by virtue of His supremacy, judges the other gods. But Kirkpatrick in the *C.B.* and Kittel in his recent Commentary translate 'elohim here, not by gods, but by 'judges,' and count those who are being tried to be the judges of Israel. In support of this view, they appeal to Ex 21<sup>6</sup> 22<sup>7f.</sup>, where they hold that 'elohim means judges. It must, however, be said that such a translation of the word in these two passages stands so much in need of support for itself that it cannot support the rendering here or elsewhere. And, even if it were granted that Hebrew usage might justify the use, there is no Hebrew usage

which can justify the judges of Israel being called 'sons of the Most High' (v.<sup>6</sup>). We should, further, need to translate that verse, 'I, Yahweh, declared you judges and every one of you sons of the Most High'—a rendering which seems to condemn itself. Nor is it easy to understand how malfeasance of justice in a court at Jerusalem could make all the foundations of the world to reel (v.<sup>5</sup>), or why the failure of some parochial judges to do their duty should make the psalmist call on Yahweh to arise and judge the world, because He falls heir to all nations (v.<sup>8</sup>). The whole scale of the psalm is too vast for such an interpretation. The writer is thinking in terms of God and the universe, not of Yahweh and Israel.

Bäthgen, again, would make the divine assembly in which Yahweh takes His seat the gathering of the kings themselves, who are condemned for the treatment they have meted out to Israel. And certainly some of the expressions used about the wronged, such as 'the lowly' and 'the poor,' are elsewhere used of faithful Israel. But no Jew would ever have called Israel an 'orphan,' especially in a hymn in which he summoned Yahweh to intervene for its deliverance. Besides, it is not the need of Israel alone, but of the universe, which fills the mind of the psalmist. When he calls on God to arise, it is to judge the world and to inherit all nations.

The poet, then, has a vision of his world: as many as are its nations, so many are its gods. He also, with Hebrew directness, recognizes that this has come about by the permission of Yahweh. Perhaps he even makes use of an idea which seems to have become current in later Judaism. According to this, the gods of the heathen were not denied all existence, but were degraded into subordinates of Yahweh, who had the task of fulfilling His purposes in the world. Traces of this conception appear in Dn 10<sup>13</sup>. 20<sup>ff.</sup>, where the 'princes' who have rule over the nations *may* have taken the place of the national deities. At least, whatever may precisely have been in his mind on the subject, the psalmist believes that, but for Yahweh's permission, these gods would have held no power. Now in His day Yahweh has come to see what they have made of His world: and in a divine proclamation from His throne (vv.<sup>2-7</sup>), He condemns their work and describes their doom.

None of them has sought or been able to enforce justice and mercy among the peoples who revered

them and over whom they were set in charge (vv.<sup>2-4</sup>). They have not demanded these things from men, because they themselves did not know their value nor understand their greatness. Far from being able to guide their peoples in these wholesome ways of life, the gods themselves have groped in darkness; and, because of their helpless ignorance, the foundations of the solid world are reeling (v.<sup>5</sup>).<sup>1</sup> For the world cannot endure without justice and mercy. Therefore the gods are doomed; they shall pass away like the shadows they are, dying like the men they have pretended to save and falling from their thrones like any human prince.<sup>2</sup> The heathen faiths cannot endure, because they do not stand for the only things which have any endurance.

After the divine proclamation is ended, the psalmist can only pray that the great day may come soon. May the God of Israel, whose revealed will is justice and mercy, be acknowledged in a world which has sore need of His control and guidance (v.<sup>8</sup>).

What the psalm recalls on this interpretation is Dn 4<sup>25</sup>. 27. There the Hebrew appears, judging the civilisation which has conquered him in the person of its king. 'Thou shalt be driven from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and thou shalt be made to eat grass as oxen, and shalt be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee; till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if there may be a healing of thine error.' The thrones men have set up on earth have been the copies of what they believed to govern in heaven. Both shall vanish like smoke, when Yahweh lays bare the eternal verities of His government. When He has taken His seat on His throne and made clear the basis of all authority, the gods and the kings vanish together. When He has thus arisen to judge the world, it needs no more for Him to fall heir to all nations. For the nations have waited so long for nothing else. Justice and mercy, as they are the

<sup>1</sup> With the Targ. insert לֹא, therefore, before 'all the foundations': it easily fell out after the preceding word תְּהִלָּתוֹ. Its restoration helps the sense.

<sup>2</sup> For the language, cf. Jg 16<sup>7</sup>. 17. And for the use of *sarim*, cf. Dn 10<sup>13</sup>. 20<sup>d</sup>.

only enduring foundations of authority, are the only qualities men finally acknowledge on earth and in heaven.

The psalmist is saturated in the conceptions of the prophets. His opening closely resembles Is 3<sup>13</sup>, his vision of Yahweh coming for judgment is the constant prophetic theme, the eschatological frame, both in language and in idea, comes from the same source. Again, the interesting points of contact with Daniel serve to suggest that the hymn springs from the same circle of thought which appears in that book. It must accordingly be late in the life of Israel. But, the later it is set, the more clearly does it militate against the conception of later Judaism as priest-ridden, sunk in legalism and deaf to the higher teaching of its prophets. To call it apocalyptic because of its strongly eschatological

character is only to force one again to ask where the higher apocalyptic falls short of prophecy. For v.<sup>8</sup>, with its touching prayer that the God of Israel may arise, not for Israel's sake, but for the world's help, strikes the authentic note of the nobler spirits in both movements. This wide and catholic spirit, this absence of all Jewish exclusiveness, this firm conviction of the eternal validity of Judaism, because it alone holds the ethical elements which befit a universal faith, are remarkably suggestive for a just understanding of one side of all later Jewish thought. To think of post-exilic Judaism as wholly legalistic in character is to rob it of the elements which made Christianity possible. And, after all, the problem of Hebrew religion is to discover how it gave rise to Rabbinism, and yet was the faith to which Jesus Christ, after the flesh, came.

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## In the Study.

### *Virginibus Puerisque.*

Set down my Name, Sir.<sup>1</sup>

'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?'—  
Ps 24<sup>8</sup>.

DID you ever hear of the island of Rapa? No? Well, to tell you the truth, I don't know much about it myself. And no shame either. For all that anybody knows about it is just this, that it is a queer little lonesome place away down in the southern seas, lying well out of the track of steamers, so that few people have ever seen it; and surrounded, so I am told, by cliffs so high and steep and unbroken, with the sea dashing against them in great clouds of spray, that no one, it is thought, has ever landed on it. There it has lain in the sunshine yonder for who can tell how many thousands and thousands and thousands of years, and no man yet has ever stood on it. Well, when we heard of that, what happened? Why, people said at once, 'No one ever been there? Well, then, I'm off; I'll be the first!' And they have fitted out a ship, and it has sailed, to do lots of things away down yonder in the sunny seas, but one of them is to find some way to get on to Rapa, and to see what it is like.

Isn't that a funny thing about us humans?

<sup>1</sup> By the Reverend A. J. Gossip, M.A., Aberdeen.

If we are told a thing is hard, we want to do it; if we are shown some place where nobody has ever been, we itch to reach it; and the worse job it is to get there, why all the better fun. We were told about the Poles, hidden away hundreds and hundreds of miles from anywhere, lost yonder in the snow and the thick ice and the bitter cold. 'You can't reach them,' everybody said, 'it just can't be done.' But that made some people sit up at once. 'Can't?' they asked. 'Can't? You can do a heap of things if you really try.' 'Oh! but not this,' the others said; 'think of the dark, and the dangers, and the pitiless weather, and the ice breaking behind you and cutting you off.' But that didn't daunt them. Their faces lit up; they grew quite excited. 'Sounds all right,' they cried; 'seems just the thing that we've been looking for. We're off.' And they did go, time after time; until at last they managed, did win to the Poles; kept on trying, just because nobody had ever done it, wanted to be where nobody had ever been before.

So there are some folk who cannot see a mountain but they must find a way up to the top. It doesn't matter how steep, or how stony, or how high it is; they mean to get there, and they do, crawling about like flies, hanging from ropes, clambering up places that make some of us dizzy even to look at them. Up they mean to get, and up they go. So that