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THE PSALMS

IN THREE COLLECTIONS

TRANSLATED WITH NOTES

BY

E. G. KING D.D.

PART I FIRST COLLECTION (Pss. I—XLI)

WITH PREFACE

BY THE

BISHOP OF DURHAM

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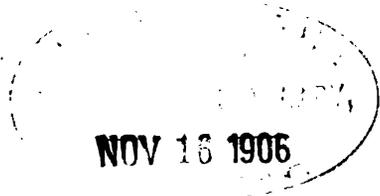
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NOV 16 1906

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE variety and excellence of Commentaries on the Psalter seem to leave little room for fresh illustration of the text; but the Psalter is as inexhaustible as the aspirations of the human soul, and I cannot but think that Dr King has made an original and suggestive contribution to the understanding of it. It was my happiness to hear several expositions of Psalms given by Dr King in sermons at Madingley and Gayton, and I expressed a wish that he would publish, at least in outline, the substance of what he said. The present book is an instalment of the work; and I trust that in due time the remainder will follow.

The notes require careful study, but, if I may speak from my own experience, they will repay it. They are not designed to save the reader from the trouble of thought, but to stimulate him to independent reflection and enquiries which lie within his reach. They constantly remind me of Bengel's pregnant sentences—and I know no higher praise—which point to a conclusion rather than develop it. The scholar indeed if he is to profit by his teacher's words must share his teacher's labour. The memorable saying in which Heraclitus sums up the method of the Delphian king describes the ideal method of the true master: He neither tells nor hides but gives a sign.

In this lies the peculiar merit of the notes. Dr King appears to me, as far as I may presume to judge, to have a natural sympathy with the characteristics of Hebrew thought and of Hebrew poetry. For him, as for the old Hebrew scholars, a single word suggests real if remote associations; and feeling, as they did, that 'all creation was one act at once,' he recognises correspondences between different spheres of the Divine work and working. Under this aspect the relations of the fortunes of the nation to the fortunes of the individual, of the Messianic people to the Messiah, of the vicissitudes of Nature to the vicissitudes of Life (see *e.g.* Pss. xxix., xxx.; xix.) offer fertile subjects for reflection. Even the close analysis of the structure of a Psalm brings out subtle and unexpected lines of thought (see *e.g.* Ps. xv., cxi., cxii.). Difference of opinion will naturally exist as to special applications of the general principles, but the general principles will, I believe, commend themselves if they are fairly weighed; and in all these ways the student is

led to consider indications of the harmony which underlies 'the mighty sum of things for ever speaking' in spite of the disorders wrought by the Fall; and the frequent parallels which are drawn from great poets shew how men have striven unweariedly in all ages towards the truth which the voice of the Spirit has revealed to us.

It will be seen from what I have said that the book, while based upon a critical foundation, is specially adapted for meditative and, in the fullest sense of the word, devotional reading. It is this which gives it a peculiar claim on attention at the present time. There is among us far more reading about the Bible than reading of the Bible. Popular interest in questions of pure criticism tends to divert thought from the Scriptures themselves to problems, often insoluble, as to their origin and history. But, however attractive and even important the investigations may be which are thus raised, we are spiritually concerned not with them, but with the meaning of the texts which we have received. We have beyond question the Old Testament as it was read in the apostolic age and accepted by the Lord Himself as the Divine Charter of the hope of Israel. Our first duty therefore is to spare no pains in order to understand its teaching, remembering the necessary canon: *Omnis Scriptura Sacra eo Spiritu debet legi quo facta est.* And in this connexion it may be worth while to notice that with two exceptions, all the primary passages which are quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews to illustrate the true nature of the Person and Work of Christ are taken from the Psalms. Some of these may perhaps seem to the hasty reader to be far-fetched, but I venture to hope that the course of interpretation which Dr King points out will be found to fully justify the use which is made of them, and that the apostolic usage itself in this respect will open the way to a more intelligent apprehension of the place which the writings of the Old Covenant occupied and still occupy, in the training of the people of God.

It is, then, because I believe that Dr King's notes, which some at first sight may be tempted to think obscure and mystical—a convenient excuse for unwillingness to think—are fitted to encourage and to reward personal study that I heartily commend them to those who hold that the secrets of the LORD are disclosed to such as seek for them with watchfulness and patience in living oracles. Just so far as we are enabled to learn how the Spirit spoke to our fathers in the days of old, we shall come to recognise the messages which He addresses to us to-day in our own language.

B. F. DUNELM.

AUCKLAND CASTLE,
Innocents' Day, 1897.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS book, which is the outcome of some years spent in lecturing on Hebrew in Cambridge followed by many more years in a Country Parish, does not claim to be a complete Commentary on the Psalms. Those who seek for grammatical notes will find them abundantly supplied elsewhere. The task that the writer has set himself has been to shew the leading thought and poetical structure of each Psalm and to do this, as far as possible, by marginal notes and by the arrangement of the text.

The book is intended for the devotional use of the educated English reader and for such of the Clergy as are not afraid of reverent criticism.

The Arrangement of Psalms in the Psalter. It is now generally admitted by competent scholars that the arrangement of the Psalter in Five Books is not the original arrangement. "The *natural* division of the Psalter appears.....to be in *three* parts, Ps. i.—xli., Ps. xlii.—lxxxix., Ps. xc.—cl.: the division into *five* parts is generally supposed to have been accomplished later, in imitation of the Pentateuch, Ps. xlii.—lxxxix. being broken into two at Ps. lxxii. the subscription to which would form a natural point of division, and Ps. xc.—cl. being divided at Ps. cvi. where *v.* 48 was adapted by its contents to mark also the conclusion of a Book" (Dr Driver, *Introduction*, p. 351).

Graetz quotes both the Midrash and Epiphanius in support of his assertion that the Five Books of the Psalms were a Jewish imitation of the Pentateuch. Graetz shews that even the number of the Psalms was determined by this arrangement. The custom of the Synagogue was to read through the Pentateuch once in a three years' cycle. Now, in a three years' cycle, the number of Sabbaths, not coinciding with a Feast-day, will vary from 147 to 150; in order therefore to provide a 'Lesson' for each Sabbath the Pentateuch was divided into 150 sections and was thus read through in the three years. A similar arrangement was adopted for the Psalms which were thus made to vary from 147 (Jerusalem Talmud, *Sabb.* p. 15, quoted by Graetz) to 150. If in the three years' cycle the number of Sabbaths was 147 instead of 150 certain Psalms would be combined and read as one. This will explain the fact that different Congregations had different divisions for the Psalter, *e.g.* the Babylonian Jews

read Pss. i. and ii. together, while the Septuagint read Pss. ix., x. as one Psalm and also Pss. cxiv., cxv., while they retained the number 150 by dividing Pss. cxvi. and cxlvii. each into two. To this question we shall have occasion to return; meanwhile the reader is asked never to lose sight of the fact that the present form of the Psalter has been determined by the liturgical use of the Synagogue.

As Dr Driver has said, "the *natural* division of the Psalter" would be in Three Collections rather than in Five Books. The present work will follow this natural division. It is impossible now to restore these Collections to their original form, but the writer feels that something may be done to determine the conditions under which each Collection was made, and that the historical method is the truest and most profitable method of study.

But though we are justified in speaking of the *Three Collections* we do not mean to imply that the form in which they have come down to us exactly corresponds with the form in which each Collection was made. Thus, for example, Pss. i., ii. were added as an Introduction to the whole Psalter; Ps. l. was taken from its original position among the 'Asaph' Psalms probably because each of the three cycles would end at the '*Asaph*' or Feast of the Ingathering (cf. Pss. l., c. and cl.). This will appear more clearly when we treat of the 'Asaph' Psalms.

It is, so to speak, an accident that the First Collection coincides with the First Book (Pss. i.—xli.). In this Collection I have however included (pp. 40—66) those alphabetical Psalms which properly belong to the Third Collection. This seemed necessary in order that the whole group of alphabetical Psalms might be studied together and that certain remarkable characteristics which I have pointed out in the alphabetical Psalms of the First Collection might be compared with those of the Third Collection.

Titles and Authorship of Psalms. The Psalms of the First Collection are practically all assigned to David by their titles, but the reader is reminded that the titles *form no part of the original Hebrew text* and consequently that the authorship of any Psalm is known only by tradition. These traditions are most valuable and they are comparatively old since most of them were known to the Septuagint translators (circ. 200 B.C.). But, on the other hand, there are several instances in which the title in the Septuagint differs entirely from that of the Hebrew. Thus they assign Ps. cxxxvii. to Jeremiah, Pss. cxxxviii. cxlvi.—cxlviii. to Haggai and Zachariah. Evidently the titles in the Hebrew were not fully recognized as a binding tradition at the date of this translation, viz. 200 B.C.; but David's date is 1000 B.C., i.e. 800 years earlier. Every candid reader will admit that such traditions of authorship are not to be accepted against strong internal evidence of later date.

There was a growing tendency to ascribe Psalms to David even when

they were anonymous in the Hebrew text; thus the Syriac translators add the name of David to Pss. xxxiii., xliii., lxxi., xciii., xcix., civ., cxxiii., cxxxvii. (see Graetz, p. 89), and the Septuagint do not hesitate to ascribe to David an apocryphal Psalm cli., which does not occur in the Hebrew text, and even to give the circumstances under which he wrote it!

Who is the speaker in the Psalms? It is difficult for the English reader to realize that "I" in the Psalms can refer to anything except an individual. Still the fact remains that, even in prose, "I" is used of the whole community or nation. Thus Numb. xx. 19, "If we drink of thy water, I and my cattle, then will I give the price thereof: let me only,...pass through on my feet"; Judg. i. 3, "And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot" etc. (see many other passages in Driver's *Introduction*, p. 336). Still more frequent was this in poetry, e.g. Is. xii. 1, 2, "In that day thou shalt say, I will give thanks unto thee O Lord; for though thou wast angry with me thine anger is turned away" etc. This is virtually a Psalm and the context shews that the words are put on the lips, not of an individual but, of Israel. Jer. x. 19, 20, "Woe is me for my hurt!...my children are gone forth of me" etc. See also Lam. i. 11—16, 18—22 and the whole of Chap. iii. These are but a few instances out of many, but they may suffice to shew that in certain and undoubted cases the Nation or Community of Israel was personified, and that too in a most minute and striking manner quite alien to our Western thought.

If we regard the same question from an historical point of view we note that Revelation came rather through God's dealings with the Nation than with individuals: God was the Father of Israel long before He was recognized as the Father of the individual. The individualism of a modern Christian Hymn would have been quite impossible in Old Testament times.

Since, however, the Psalms were written by individuals, even though they were intended to express the voice of Israel, we should naturally expect that the joys, hopes or sorrows of the time would be moulded in a personal form.

In a letter of Tennyson's, speaking of his poem *In Memoriam*, he says: "'I' is not always the author speaking of himself, but the voice of the human race speaking thro' him" (*Memoir*, p. 305). If it be so in the case of a Poet in an introspective age, how much more shall an Inspired Writer merge his personality in that of the Nation whose future was to mould the whole religion of the world.

The Christian believes that, in Christ, all God's thoughts for Israel have found their completion. If this be so, and if the Psalms are the voice (not of an individual Israelite however great, but) of Israel, then it follows that the Psalms, though not all Messianic, will all become in a certain sense a voice of Christ.

One great advantage of studying the Psalms in Three Collections rather than in Five Books is that attention is thereby directed to the remarkable interchange of the Divine Names, the First Collection being *Jehovistic*, the Second *Elohistic*, and the Third again *Jehovistic*. If the most holy Name of God had been, in the Second Collection, changed into Elohim through motives of reverence, it is scarcely likely that it would again have appeared in the Third Collection which is of still later date. I must not anticipate the discussion of this point, but when the Three Collections are finished I shall hope to shew the reason for the interchange of the Divine Names. In the translation where the most holy Name occurs I have used the symbol YHVH merely to indicate the letters of the Tetragrammaton. The word Jehovah is, of course, an absolutely impossible form, while the modern pronunciation Yahveh is, in my opinion, incorrect; it has, however, the merit of consisting only of two syllables and the reader may, if he please, give this sound to the letters YHVH.

The Bishop of Durham, at whose suggestion I commenced this work, has very kindly read the proof-sheets as they passed through the Press: while thanking him for his kindness, I wish it to be understood that he is in no way responsible for any opinions I may have expressed.

The labour has been to me a labour of love and of ever-growing interest and delight. Most gladly would I communicate this delight to the reader in the only way in which it is possible—by inciting him also to labour in the same inexhaustible field.

GAYTON RECTORY, BLISWORTH.

The Festival of St Thomas, 1897.

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For the Liturgical use of the Psalms I have chiefly consulted Grünwald,
Ueber den Einfluss der Psalmen, &c.

* Ps. xxix. seems to have been used in the Temple both on the first and last days of Tabernacles; the last verse was also sung at the Evening Sacrifice on New Year's Day (T. B. *Rosch haschana* 30^b, quoted by Graetz).

PSALMS I—II.

A LATE PREFACE TO THE WHOLE PSALTER.

“ Ah, poor Man, befooled and slow
And faint!
Ah, poorest Man, if so
Thou turn thy back on bliss
And choose amiss!
For thou art choosing now :
Sinner,—or Saint.”

(C. ROSSETTI.)

PSALM I.

THIS is a Psalm of the "two ways"—the way that ends in blessing, and the way that ends in the curse. Ebal and Gerizim (Josh. viii. 33). This thought of the two ways is very widespread and is found in the Zoroastrian religion. "Thus in a fragment of the *Hādōkht Nask*, which gives an account of the progress after death, we find four steps mentioned in the advance of the soul. The first step of the righteous he places upon good thought, the second upon good word, the third upon good deed, and the fourth and last upon the eternal lights. The account of the contrary progress of the unrighteous soul is lost, except the last clause, 'The soul of the wicked man fourthly advanced with a step he placed on the eternal glooms'" [*Religion of Zoroaster*, R. Brown, Jun.].

Possibly there may be some connexion between the four upward steps of the good man in the Psalm and the four Zoroastrian steps—thus

- (a) *Good thought*—not "in the counsel of the wicked."
- (b) *Good word*—not "in the way of sinners."
- (c) *Good deed*—not "in the company of the scoffers."
- (d) *The eternal lights*—"the law of YHVH" (cf. Ps. xix.).

Certainly the "Law of YHVH" does not here signify the Law of Moses but rather that Divine Revelation which fulfils the same part in the world of Spirits as the sun does in the world of nature (see notes on Ps. xix.) and which may therefore be fitly compared with "the eternal lights."

But whether our Psalm has been consciously influenced by the Zoroastrian thought or no it has certainly been influenced by the following passage from Jeremiah :

"Cursed is the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his strength
and turneth away his heart from the Lord.
For he becomes like the heath in the desert,
that will not feel it when good comes,
For it dwells in the parched places of the wilderness,
a land not inhabited.
Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord,
and the Lord becomes his confidence,

PSALM II.

The first and last stanzas should be read together, referring as they do simply to events on earth. "YHVH and His Christ" against whom the nations are rebelling in the first stanza, answer to "YHVH" and "the Son" to whom they are forced to pay homage in the last stanza. The second and third stanzas should then be read together, in which the scene is not on earth but in Heaven; since the rebellion is against "YHVH and His Christ" YHVH speaks in Stanza II. and "His Christ" in Stanza III.

If God can say, "Israel is My son, My firstborn" (Exod. iv. 22, cf. Jer. xxxi. 9), the Christian need not fear to confess that the Messianic Psalms have a relation to Israel as well as to the Christ: indeed the application to Christ will often best be seen by first considering the application to the Messiah-nation.

The rebellion (*v.* 1 f.) of the "nations, peoples, kings, and rulers" must not be narrowed to the service of any historical allusion. It represents that opposition of earth to earth's God, and therefore to earth's good, which is ever going on and which is "as hopeless as if the stars were to combine to abolish gravitation" [Maclaren]. If a man fall upon any God-laid corner-stone "he is broken" (cf. verse 9), but even that is better than that the corner-stone should fall upon him "and scatter him as dust" (Luke xx. 18, compare *v.* 12 of our Psalm).

Rebellion against a law of Nature must be futile; and Christ is the central Law of all Nature. The special use of this Psalm for Easter Day is justified by verse 7, "Thou art My Son, It is I that have begotten thee this day." These words mean much the same as Ps. lxxxix. 27, "I too will make him My Firstborn, a Most High to the kings of the earth": the "Day" does not suggest the thought of an eternal generation, but rather that at some signal point of the world's history God had "highly exalted him and given him the Name above every name." This "Day" was the Resurrection, for then he "was declared *to be* the Son of God with power...by the resurrection of the dead" (Rom. i. 4).

St Paul also quotes our Psalm as fulfilled in the Resurrection of Jesus (Acts xiii. 33). Death was the condition on which the Father alone could give him "the nations for his inheritance" (cf. Is. liii. 12, Matt. xxviii. 18). He is "the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col. i. 18). It is only as "the firstborn of the dead" that he is "the ruler of the kings of the earth" (Rev. i. 5).

Psalms i. and ii. forming as they do a Preface to the whole Psalter were at one time regarded as one Psalm (see Acts xiii. 33 crit. text). The point of connexion is seen in the first line of Ps. i. and the last line of Ps. ii. Ps. i., like the Old Testament, depicts the happiness that springs from obedience to the Law. Ps. ii., like the New Testament, depicts the happiness of trust in the Christ as the central Law of Creation.

Israel speaks.	<p>1 Why do the nations rage^a, And the peoples ponder a vain thing? 2 Earth's kings^b take their stand, Rulers take counsel together— (It is) Against YHVH and against His Christ!</p>	<p>^a Acts iv. 25-27 ^b Rev. xvi. 14 : xix. 19</p>
The rebel-powers say	<p>3 "Let us burst their fetters And let us cast off their bonds!"</p>	
Were the heavenly purpose known rebellion would be seen to be futile.	<p>4 The Throned-One of heaven laughs ; The Lord^c derides them ! 5 Then He speaks to them in His anger And strikes them in fear with His wrath, 6 "It is I that established (?) My King Upon Zion My Holy Mountain."</p>	^c Adonai
The heavenly purpose is revealed on earth in His choice of the Messiah.	<p>7 Let me tell of the decree— YHVH said unto me, "Thou art My Son^d, It is I that have begotten thee this day. 8 Ask of Me, I would give thee nations for thine inheritance, The ends^e of the earth for thy possession. 9 Thou shalt break^f them with an iron^g sceptre, And shatter them like a potter's vessel."</p>	<p>^d Acts xiii. 33 : Heb. i. 5 : v. 5 ^e Is. xlix. 6 ^f Aramaic ^g Rev. ii. 26, 27 : xii. 5 : xix. 15</p>
Therefore let the rebel-powers submit in time.	<p>10 And now O kings be wise ; Be warned ye Judges of Earth ; 11 Serve YHVH with reverence, And tremblingly rejoice. 12 Pay homage to the Son^h lest He be angry and ye be lost ! For His anger may easily burn ! Happyⁱ are all they that take refuge in Him.</p>	<p>^h Aramaic cf. Prov. xxxi. 2 Sept. differs ⁱ Ps. i. 1</p>

FIRST COLLECTION.

'DAVIDIC' PSALMS.

PSALM III.

Psalms iii. and iv. are usually regarded as a pair; the former being an evening and the latter a morning Hymn. Undoubtedly they are fitted for such use though not originally written for the purpose. The points of similarity vanish on closer examination;—compare “*My Glory*” iii. 3 with iv. 2, where even if the text be correct (see *Sept.*) the word is probably used in another sense. Ps. iii. 5 “I laid me to sleep, I awoke” should rather be compared with Mark iv. 27 than with Ps. iv. 8, since it denotes man’s passive “sleeping and rising night and day” as opposed to God’s active work of sustentation. The structure of Psalms iii. and iv. is also different.

In Psalm iii. we have four stanzas of two verses each. The Psalm depicts the progress of the soul (or shall we say of Israel?) through four stages to the repose of expectant prayer. In the first stage (Stanza I.) we see nothing but the consciousness of need. In the second stage (Stanza II.) the standpoint is in the unseen world of realities. The soul *knows* that God is its Shield and that, as Luther says, ‘a little word can bring Him down’ (cf. *v.* 4). But there is a vast difference between knowing a thing and realizing it; hence the soul passes to the third stage (Stanza III.), the stage of experience in which it comes to realize that

“Man’s weakness leaning upon God
Its end can never miss.”

The fourth stage (Stanza IV.) might seem at first sight to be retrograde, since we should scarcely expect petition to follow upon such repose of faith as we have found in Stanza III. The answer to this difficulty is, I think, to be found in the fact that the Psalm depicts the experience of Israel and that Israel is still looking forward to the “far off Divine event” to which every lesser salvation pointed; hence the very triumph of Stanza III. gives birth to the prayer of Stanza IV.

The reader should study the connexion between the verses which are marked (a), (a₁), (a₂), (a₃), and also, in like manner, the verses marked (b), (b₁), (b₂), (b₃).

PSALM III.

What seems

(a) Danger all round.

1 O YHVH, how many are my foes!
Many are rising against me!

(b) No help in God.

2 Many are saying of my soul
"There is no salvation for him in God^a."

^a Is. liii. 4:
Matt. xxvii.
43

What is

(a₁) God a Shield all round.

3 But Thou, YHVH, art a Shield round about me;
My Glory, and the uplifter of my head.

(b₁) God a very present Help.

4 With my voice I but call unto YHVH,
And He has answered me from His Holy Hill.

What I learn by experience

(a₂) When I am weak

5 As for me I laid me to sleep, I awoke—
But YHVH it is that sustains me.

(b₂) Then I am strong.

6 I fear not the myriads of people
That have set themselves against me round about.

What will be

(a₃) The unseen God will arise.

7 Arise, O YHVH, help me O my God,
Thou hast^b smitten all mine enemies on the cheek^c,
Thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

^b Ps. lxiii. 7
^c Sept. differs

(b₃) His salvation will appear.

8 To YHVH belongeth salvation,
Upon Thy People be Thy blessing.

PSALM IV.

The occasion of this Psalm may very possibly have been the Feast of the Ingathering in a disastrous season. Those gifts of the earth had sometimes to be withdrawn because they were attributed to Baal. Thus God complains of Israel, "She did not know that I gave her corn and wine and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal. Therefore I will return and take away my corn in the time thereof etc." (Hos. ii. 8 f.). But when this was done the sinners still failed to recognize the Giver, "They have not cried unto Me with their heart, when they howl upon their beds; they assemble themselves for the corn and wine and they rebel against Me" (Hos. vii. 14). The point of the Psalm is to shew that man's blessedness consists in the presence of the Giver, not in the possession of the gift.

Israel was "separated" ("singled out") from the nations of the world for this very end that God's Presence should be its all in all. "For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? is it not that Thou goest with us? so shall we be *separated* (cf. v. 3 of Psalm I and

Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth" (Ex. xxxiv. 16).

The first verse of our Psalm reads very like a gloss on the last stanza of Ps. iii. In any case the structure of the Psalm is best understood by commencing at verse 2: the Psalm then falls into three stanzas of which the first and last closely correspond. The worldly party in Israel not only craved for temporal goods for their own sake (Stanza 1.) but also as a sign of God's favour (Stanza III.). Israel on the other hand feels that his God has "separated" him for Himself (v. 3). This must imply a being "left alone," but yet he is "not alone because the Father is with him" (v. 8).

The application of the Psalm to Christ is obvious.

1 Answer me while I cry, O God of my righteousness!
In straits Thou madest room for me;
O pity me and hear my prayer!

Worldlings crave
for temporal goods.

2 Ye worldlings^a, insulting my Glory,
How long will ye love the vain,
And seek the false?

^a Sons of men

Israel is singled out
for God only.

3 Note how YHVH has singled^b me out as His loved one,
YHVH hears me while to Him I cry.

^b separated.
Ex. xxxiii.
16

Disappointed hopes
may lead to sin.

4 Be ye in rage—but sin^c not,
Speak with your hearts—on your beds—and be still^d.

^c Eph. iv. 26

^d resigned

Thanksgiving will
lead to God.

5 Offer sacrifices of righteousness
And put ye your trust in YHVH.

Worldlings crave
visible signs of God's
favour.

6 Many are saying, "Oh for the sight of good times!
Display Thou upon us the Light of Thy countenance YHVH."

Israel's is the greater
joy.

7 Thou hast put a joy in my heart
Above theirs when their corn and new wine are abounding.

Alone, yet not alone,
with God.

8 In peace altogether I can lay me to sleep^e

^e Ezek. xxxiv.

For thou YHVH in seclusion makest me dwell in safety.

^f 25

v. 2. The text is somewhat doubtful. Wellhausen would make it agree with the Septuagint and would read "Ye sons of men;—how long ye slow of heart!—Why will ye love vanity, etc."

v. 6. "Display Thou." If there be any allusion here to the Priestly blessing in Numb. vi. 24 f. the word is purposely changed so as to signify not the "lifting up" of God's countenance but the "displaying it as a sign." The words must be taken as those of the unbelievers who are craving for a sign.

v. 8. "In seclusion." The words here translated "in seclusion," "in safety" are almost synonyms, as may be seen from Numb. xxiii. 9; Mic. vii. 14; Deut. xxxiii. 28; Jer. xlix. 31, "His God makes him to dwell free from care, though in seclusion" (Delitzsch). The thought of "seclusion" undoubtedly goes back to v. 3 where Israel was said to be "separated" or "singled out."

PSALM V.

This, like Psalm i, is a Psalm of the 'two ways'; but whereas Psalm i. shewed us the two roads, Psalm v. shews us the two ends, "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt" (Matt. xii. 33; cf. Rev. xxii. 11 R.V.).

The general structure of the Psalm will be seen from the marginal notes. It will be convenient to consider first the downward course and its end (verses 4—6 and 9—10). This is founded upon the Nature of God who cannot abide sin (verses 4—6) and the nature of sin which cannot abide God (verses 9—10). Evil, at last, must go to its own place—whatever that may mean.

We now take the upward course which has a *beginning* (verses 1—3), a *middle* (verses 7 and 8) and an *end* (verses 11 and 12).

The *beginning* consists of three prayers followed by three closely related resolves; thus—

PRAYERS.	RESOLVES.
(a) 'Give ear to <i>my words</i> .'	(a ₁) 'In the morning <i>Thou shalt hear my voice</i> .'
(b) 'Consider my <i>meditation</i> .'	(b ₁) '.....I will <i>order my thoughts</i> before Thee.'
(c) 'Attend to the <i>voice of my cry</i> ,' i.e. its <i>true meaning</i> , whether I know it myself or not.	(c ₁) 'I will stand on my watch,' i.e. to <i>catch Thy meaning</i> .

Thus we have a rising order of *word, thought, purpose*.

The prayer that my words may be heard must pass into the resolve of early instant prayer. If I ask God to consider my meditation I must consider it myself, I must order my thoughts as a sacrifice in His presence.

If I ask God further to attend to the purpose of my cry rather than to the words I must myself stand patiently to await His pleasure.

The *word* once was, 'Let this cup pass from Me,' but 'the *voice of the cry*' to which the Father 'attended' was 'not as I will but as Thou wilt.' Those who ask God to attend to the voice of their cry will certainly need to stand, as the prophets did, upon the watch-tower to await and understand His answer.

So much for the *beginning* of the upward course. The *middle* is set forth in verses 7 and 8 which give indeed the central thought of the Psalm, viz. that the good man enters God's presence not through his own righteousness but through God's "*grace abounding*." The reader will notice the contrast between "*sins abounding*" (v. 10) and "*grace abounding*" (v. 7).

The *end* of the upward course (verses 11 and 12) is summed up in the joy of two thoughts, *God's Protection* and *God's Presence*: these thoughts will be seen to be a development of verses 7 and 8 but in reverse order.

No higher blessedness can be reached than that of verse 12:

"Thou Thyself dost make the righteous man blessed—
YHVH! Shield-wise with favour dost Thou crown him."

It is the joy of the Beatific Vision.

- Three prayers for
(a) Word. 1 O YHVH give ear to my words,
(b) Thought. Consider my meditation,
(c) Intention. 2 Attend to the voice of my cry, O my King and my God ;
For unto Thee do I pray.
- Three resolves for
(a₁) Word. 3 In the morning, YHVH, Thou shalt hear my voice ;
(b₁) Thought. In the morning I will order^a before Thee my thoughts <sup>a Lev. vi. 5 :
Numb.
xxviii. 4</sup>
(c₁) Intention. And stand on my watch.
- God's Presence an
impossibility to evil
negatively 4 For Thou art not a God that can find pleasure in sin,
Evil can be no guest^b of Thine ! ^{b Ps. xv. 1}
5 Mad-boasters cannot bide Thine eyes,
Thou hatest all workers^c of vanity. ^{c Matt. vii. 23}
6 Those that speak lies Thou destroyest,
The man of blood and fraud YHVH abhorreth.
- I, through Grace,
can come into Thy
Presence. 7 So I, through Thy grace abounding, can enter Thy House,
Can worship at Thy holy Temple, in Thy fear.
Therefore lead me
with Thy Protection. 8 Lead me, YHVH, in Thy righteousness, because of my foes ;
Make Thy way straight before me.
- They, being evil,
have no part in the
Divine Presence
negatively 9 For there is in his^d mouth no steadfastness, <sup>d their
mouths</sup>
Their inner being is a yawning-abyss ;
Their throat an open grave, they flatter with their tongue.
positively. 10 Shew them as guilty, O God !
Let them fall through their own counsels !
Drive them out through their sins abounding !
For they have rebelled against Thee.
- The joy of God's
Protection. 11 So Thy trusting-ones all shall be glad,
They shall ever joyously sing,
And Thou wilt protect^e them ; <sup>e cover, cf.
Ps. xci. 4</sup>
Yea those that love Thy Name exult in Thee.
- The joy of God's
Presence. 12 For Thou Thyself dost make the righteous blessed—
YHVH ! Shield^f-wise with favour dost Thou crown him ! ^{f Ps. xci. 4}

v. 11 f. The pilgrimage to God is often described under the image of Israel's journey to the Land of Promise ; as God's guiding Light was then both Light and Shield, so it will be in the future (cf. Is. xi. 16). As God's Presence brooded over His People like the cherubim that "covered" the "mercy-seat," so in the future He will "cover" them : thus protected and guided they will "come unto Zion with joyous songs" (Is. xxxv. 10 ; li. 11 ; Jer. xxxi. 12). See also note on Ps. xliii. 3.

PSALM VI.

The first of the seven 'penitential' Psalms (the others being xxxii; xxxviii; li; cii; cxxx; cxliii). The language and thought is so similar to that of Jeremiah (see marginal references) as to justify us in asserting that the Sufferer is Israel. Israel was God's 'Servant' whose mission was to make God known to the Gentiles (Is. xlix. 3, 5, 6). This mission involved that "scattering" which seemed like the death of Israel but which was really a "sowing in the earth" (Hos. ii. 23 and cf. St John xii. 24—27). Though Israel may feel "for this cause came I unto this hour" still he prays "Father save me from this hour"—*ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐπαράχθη σφόδρα* (v. 3 Sept.). The sowing of Israel among the heathen was an agony of separation from God (see Stanza i.), but the promised reward was that, in some way dimly understood, the whole world should, through Israel, be separated from evil (see Stanza iii.).

We need not shrink from applying this and other penitential Psalms to Christ; for if He has united Himself, as it were in a Marriage union with our nature, He must feel the *sin* of that nature as if it were His own. The "sowing" of Israel in the earth was a type of that "corn of wheat" which fell into the ground and died that it might not "abide alone."

The Psalm consists of three Stanzas. 1st, The Fear of Sin as *Separation from God*. 2nd, An agony of prayer based on the shortness of opportunity. 3rd, *Separation from evil*. The six lines of Stanza iii. answer exactly to the six lines of Stanza i. Our Lord quotes v. 8 (Matt. vii. 23; xxv. 41; Lk. xiii. 27) with reference to His own final separation from evil men.

If we interpret the whole Psalm of Christ we might say that Stanza i. represents the shrinking fear with which He plunges into the evil of the world and takes the 'nature of sinful flesh' (see especially v. 3 and compare Joh. xii. 27; xiii. 21 and xi. 33). Stanza ii. would represent the "strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death" (Heb. v. 7); the agony arising from the knowledge that the opportunity for the world was short (cf. Luke xii. 50).

Stanza iii. would then be Christ's triumph-song of victory over the world's evil.

v. 8. Separation from Sinners (Heb. vii. 26), as contrasted with v. 1 'conviction of sin.'

The Father hears the voice of His weeping, as contrasted with v. 1 'chastisement in wrath.'

v. 9. The Father hears His supplication, as contrasted with v. 2 The cry for pity in weakness.

The Father receives His prayer, as contrasted with v. 2 The cry for healing.

v. 10. His enemies are troubled, as contrasted with v. 3 His own soul troubled.

The conviction and conversion in a moment, as contrasted with v. 3 Age-long waiting.

The agony of separation from God.

- 1 YHVH! Convict^a me not in thine anger,
Neither chastise me in Thy wrath^a.
2 Pity me YHVH for that I am weak;
Heal^b me YHVH for my bones are troubled;—
3 Yea troubled^c is my soul exceedingly,
But thou—O YHVH, how long?

^a Jer. x. 24;
xxx. 11; Ps.
xxxviii. 1 (2)

^b Ps. xli. 4 (5)

^c Sept. ἐραπαχ-
θη. Cf. St
John xii. 27

The night cometh when no man can work.

- 4 Return, YHVH, rescue my soul!
O save me for Thy mercy's sake.
5 For not in Death is Thy memorial,
And in Sheól who can give Thee thanks^d?
6 I am weary^e of groaning, each night I water my bed,
I bedew my couch with my tears.
7 My sight is dim^f through grief,
It is aged through all my foes.

^d Ps. xxx. 9
(10)

^e Ps. lxi. 3
(4)

^f Ps. xxxi. 9
10; Lam. v.
17

The joy of separation from Evil.

- 8 Depart from me, all ye that work evil,
For YHVH hath heard the voice of my weeping.
9 YHVH hath heard my supplication,
YHVH receives my prayer.
10 All mine enemies will be shamed and troubled exceedingly,
They repent, they are shamed, in a moment.

v. 5. "*For not in Death is Thy memorial*"—i.e. 'in death one cannot memorialize Thy goodness.' The rendering of the E.V. "there is no remembrance of Thee" is far too strong and is not justified either by the context or by the usage of Scripture. Scripture often speaks of the 'memorial' (remembrance) of the wicked perishing (Ex. xvii. 14; Deut. xxv. 19; Job xviii. 17; Pss. ix. 6 (7); xxxiv. 16 (17); cix. 15; Ecc. ix. 5; Is. xxvi. 14). But, on the other hand, God's 'memorial' (remembrance) is "throughout all generations" (Pss. cii. 12 (13); cxxxv. 13; cf. also xxx. 4 (5); xcvi. 12; cxi. 4). The passage must not be used either one way or other in determining the belief of the writer as to the state after death. It merely asserts that the work of life ends with life, and since the work of Israel's life is to "abundantly utter the remembrance (memorial) of God's great goodness" (Ps. cxlv. 7) then, if Israel cease to be, God's 'little human praise' will cease as well.

v. 8. "*Depart from me.*" The meaning may be gathered from the following passages: "Depart I pray you from the tents of these wicked men" (Numb. xvi. 26); "Depart, get you down from among the Amalekites" (1 Sam. xv. 6); "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out...touch no unclean thing" (Is. lii. 11). In all these passages the *good* are exhorted to separate themselves from the evil so as not to share their fate: but in Lam. iv. 15 the *unclean* are bidden to depart as lepers from those who are, or think themselves, clean. There are two other passages in the Psalms in which the expression occurs, viz. Ps. cxix. 115, "Depart from me, ye evil-doers; for I will keep the commandments of my God"; and cxxxix. 19, "Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: Depart from me therefore, ye men of blood." This is not a sentence of banishment but simply the expression of the necessary separation between good and evil. No doubt in early times the distinction between hating the sin and the sinner was often lost sight of (cf. Ps. cxix. 113; cxxxix. 21), but it should not be so under the New Testament. When then our Lord quotes these words we must interpret them in His spirit.

PSALM VII.

The Seventh Psalm is a Psalm of Judgement, just as the Seventh Month is the Month of Judgement (See my '*Asaph's Psalms*, Lect. II.). The editor who arranged the Psalms in their present order was, I believe, guided by this thought both here and in the case of Psalm L. which is a Jubilee Psalm or a completion of the cycle of seven times seven (see ad loc.). According to the old Semitic religion God took His place for judgement in the Seventh Month and the gods of heaven and earth came humbly round Him bowing down before Him. The destiny of all was then determined (Sayce, *Hib. Lect.* pp. 65, 94f.). This thought has certainly left its impress on the Jewish observance of 'New Year's Day' (Seventh Month) and has coloured the imagery of the present Psalm (verses 6—10). Israel claims that not Merodach but Elohim the Righteous God is the true Judge who determines the destiny of all (*vv.* 6, f.). Israel prays to be judged by this Righteous Judge (*v.* 8); he cannot doubt the result since his own aim is at righteousness (*v.* 10). On the other hand, because God is Righteous evil must become its own avenger (*vv.* 9^a, 14—16). Surely this is a somewhat late conception?

Israel unjustly oppressed 'catches at God's skirt and prays.'

- 1 YHVH, My God, in Thee I take refuge,
Save me from all my pursuers and rescue me;
- 2 Lest he tear my soul like a lion,
Rending with none to rescue.
- 3 YHVH, My God! if I have done this—
If iniquity cling to my hands,
- 4 If I have requited evil to my friend—
Then I could exonerate my causeless foe.
- 5 The enemy might pursue my soul,
Might overtake and trample my life to the ground,
And lay my glory in the dust.

v. 2. "*Rending with none to rescue.*" If we follow the Septuagint we should read "*None to redeem and none to rescue.*" The word *porûq* signifies to *break* e.g. a yoke (Gen. xxvii. 40), hence to "*redeem*" (Lam. v. 8; Ps. cxxxvi. 24). It is once used of *rending* or breaking claws in pieces (Zech. xi. 16) and might therefore be used of a lion *rending* his prey, but the balance of usage is undoubtedly in favour of the Septuagint. The passage in Lam. v. 8 should specially be noticed since the thought is so similar to that of our Psalm: "Slaves rule over us and *redeemer* there is none from their hand."

v. 3. "*If iniquity cling to my hands.*" Compare also verses 8, 9, 10, 17. Israel as the People of God can claim a holiness which the individual Israelite could not claim. By this very fact Israel becomes a type and a prophecy of the Christ.

v. 4. "*I could exonerate.*" The verb is *subjunctive* or *optative* as is noticed in the Septuagint and Vulgate: this seems to exclude the renderings "*I have spoiled*" or "*I have set free.*" The primary sense of the word is "*to strip*": hence follows the meaning "*to remove*" "*take away*" e.g. stones (Lev. xiv. 40, 43); hence "*to deliver*" "*to free*" out of trouble (Ps. vi. 4 (5); xviii. 19 (20); xxxiv. 7 (8); l. 15; lxxxii. 7 (8); xci. 15; cxix. 153; cxl. 1 (2) &c.). From the sense "*to free*" we might easily get *to exonerate, to free (from blame)*. The LXX read ἀποπέσοιμι ἄρα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν μου κενός. The Vulgate, *decidam merito ab inimicis meis inanis*.

The heathen have
their fable of a Judge-
ment Day, but the true
Judgement is moral,
by a Righteous God.

- 6 YHVH, Arise in Thine anger!
Lift Thee up against the rage of my foes!
Yea rouse Thee for me—a judgement Thou hast ordained!
- 7 The assembly of the Nations comes around Thee,
Then, above it, do Thou throne Thee on high!
- 8 YHVH (that) righteth the people,
Judge thou me, YHVH!
By my righteousness, by the integrity that is mine.
- 9 Let the evil of the wicked end itself,
But uphold Thou the righteous-one.
The One who trieth hearts and reins
Is Elohim the Righteous-One!
- 10 My shield devolves on Elohim
Who helpeth the upright of heart.
- 11 Elohim is a righteous Judge,
And * will not ever be angry *.
- 12 Except he repent He whets His sword,
Bends His bow and makes it ready.
- 13 For him He prepareth the weapons of death,
His arrows He maketh burning.
- 14 Behold he is in birth-pangs with iniquity;
Mischief he conceived and falsehood he brought forth.
- 15 A pit he dug and scooped it out,
And fell in the trap of his making.
- 16 His mischief returns on his own head,
And on his own crown his violence comes down.
- 17 I can praise YHVH according to His righteousness,
And can harp to the Name of YHVH Most High.

In that Day of His
vengeance Israel will
be safe.

The enemy falls in
the Judgement self-
destroyed.

* text doubtful

v. 6f. The key-note to the Psalm is to be found in verses 6 and 7 which anticipate a judgement on the nations that are hostile to Israel's God. Just as the stars seem ever to be climbing round the Pole-star but it abides changeless on the throne of heaven, so the nations of the world "come round about" the God of Israel but He in calm judgement maintains His throne.

v. 7. The present text reads "*return Thou on high*" but since the change required is only one of the vowel points it is better to read "*sit Thou,*" or "*throne Thee.*"

v. 10. "*My shield devolves on Elohim,*" lit. "*My shield is upon Elohim.*" Cf. the similar Psalm of Divine Judgement (Ps. xlvii. 9) "For all the shields of the earth are Elohim's"; also Ps. lxxxiv. 9, "Oh Elohim our shield." Our Psalmist had said (v. 1) that he "*took refuge*" as it were under God's wings: he, like Abraham, had given up all for God; therefore to him too God would say "I am thy shield" (Gen. xv. 1). Cf. also on Ps. xviii. 2 (3), 30 (31), 35 (36). Just as in Browning's *Instans Tyrannus* the victim of oppression at last "Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed!" and then "...from marge to blue marge The whole sky grew his targe." So here God becomes Israel's Shield: indeed it devolves upon Him, cf. II Thess. i. 6 f.

v. 11. This verse is very doubtful. Taking the present text we should translate "*Elohim is a righteous Judge*" (or "*Elohim judgeth the righteous*") "*And El is angry every day.*" But the Septuagint read *al* "not" instead of *El* "God."

PSALM VIII.

This Psalm is a Pæan of Creation. The episode of the Fall is passed over in the full assurance of God's purpose; for

"what began best can't prove worst,
Nor what God blest once prove accurst."

The God whose glory fills the heavens has chosen man, of the dust of the earth, as His "stronghold" for self-revelation; the Incarnation, though not yet revealed, was involved in this choice.

We seem in this Psalm to catch an echo of the joy of Him who when on earth rejoiced in the homage of children (Matt. xxi. 16) and in the knowledge that His Father was revealing Himself to babes (Matt. xi. 25, compare 1 Cor. i. 19 ff.).

The Psalm falls naturally into three Parts. In the *first* we have the bold paradox that man's littleness is greater and more glorious and more God-loved than all the galaxy of stars and suns. In the *second* we pass to the difficulty of realizing man's true place when all the stars of night are looking down upon his insignificance. In the *third* we come back to facts:—Man *has* already a growing dominion over the earth. True greatness cannot be measured by a foot-rule. Man's greatness consists in this; that God has chosen him to be the bearer of His Image; all things, at last, will be placed under his feet (cf. Heb. ii. 6—8 in Bishop Westcott's Commentary).

The critic will note that the Psalm is written in the spirit of the Priest-Code (P) not only from the fact that it ignores the Fall but also from the direct allusions to P in verses 3 and 5—8. Is it altogether an accident that the subject of the *Eighth* Psalm should be the *Eighth* Word of Creation, viz. "Let Us make man in Our Image etc."?

1 O YHVH, our Lord,
How glorious is Thy Name in all the earth!

God's wonderful
purpose in creating
man.

[When Thou didst put]^a Thy Majesty upon^b the heavens,
2 From the mouth of babes and sucklings
Thou didst establish a stronghold^c;—

^a text doubtful

^b Numb. xxvii.
20; 1 Chr.
xxix. 25

^c Sept. *praise*

v. 1. "When Thou didst put." The text is by no means certain. The translation which I offer provisionally has, on the whole, the authority of Sym. Jer. Syr. and Targum: it is however grammatically difficult. In any case, the general sense of the passage is clear. The Psalmist begins by acknowledging the glory of God's *Name* (i.e. His Self-revelation) in the earth: he then passes to the central thought, viz. the Creation of Man as God's 'stronghold' for Self-revelation to the Worlds. When God created *the heavens*, "the work of His fingers" (v. 3), He put upon them something of His own Glory, though it was but physical splendour; but when He created *Man*, in His own Image (v. 5), He put upon him the capacity of sharing the joys and sorrows of the Divine Nature and thus becoming Elohim upon earth.

v. 2. "Thou didst establish a stronghold"—Lit. 'Thou didst lay a foundation of strength.' By the Creation of the physical Universe, which found its completion in Man, God established His

Because of Thine adversaries ;—
To still the enemy^a and the avenger^a.

^a Ps. xlv. 16
(17)

The difficulty of realizing it from the standpoint of earth.

3 When I behold Thy heavens,
The work of Thy fingers,
The moon^b and the stars^b which Thou didst establish—
4 What is mortal 'man that Thou shouldst bear him in
mind,
And the son of man that Thou shouldst so regard^c him?

^b Gen. i. 15 f.
(P)
^c Contrast Job
vii. 17

Yet man's destiny is foreshadowed in his dominion over the creatures.

5 Yet Thou didst make him little less than Elohim,^d
And with glory and honour dost crown him.
6 Thou givest him dominion^e over the work of Thy hands—
All things Thou didst put under his feet—
7 Sheep and oxen, all of them,
Yea and the beasts of the field,
8 The birds of the air and the fish of the sea,
Whatever moves through ocean's paths.

^d Sept. *angels*

^e Gen. i. 26 (P)

9 O YHVH, our Lord,
How glorious is Thy Name in all the earth!

stronghold from whence He might first reveal Himself and finally "gather together all things in One" thus "*stilling the enemy and the avenger.*"—The "enemy and the avenger" must denote that proud power which exalts itself against God and which God puts to silence not by violence but by choosing the weak things of earth (1 Cor. i. 19, 27; cf. Jas. ii. 5). If we accept the modern theory of development the argument becomes, not weaker but, stronger.

v. 4. "*Mortal man...the son of man.*" Both these expressions are used to denote man's nature on the side of weakness. The title 'Son of man' always has this meaning in the Old Testament: cf. especially Dan. vii. 13 where the "Son of man" is identified with Israel (compare verses 14 and 18) as an idealized suffering Humanity and contrasted with the other kingdoms of brute violence. In the New Testament our Lord chooses this lowly title to denote not only the reality of His representative Humanity but also to emphasize the fact that His Kingdom was not of this world.

"*That Thou shouldst so regard him*"—Lit. 'shouldst visit him.' 'Visiting' is here used in a good sense, as in Ps. lxxv. 9 (10) "Thou visitest the earth and waterest it," Ruth i. 6 "The Lord had visited His people in giving them bread." Compare Luke i. 68 "He hath visited and redeemed His people."

vv. 5, 6. Without pretending that the Hebrew tenses are used with the same accuracy as the Greek we may note here the change of tense. In 5^a and 6^b we have the *past* tense denoting, as it were, the final purpose of God in creating man (the Divine image (5^a) and the Dominion over Creation (6^b) being virtually the same (cf. Gen. i. 26)); whereas the *imperfect* (or *future*) tenses in 5^b and 6^a remind us that the work is still going on and thus justify the argument of the writer to the Hebrews (ii. 6-8) "We see not yet all things put under him."

INTRODUCTION TO THE ALPHABETICAL PSALMS.

Of the Alphabetical Psalms (ix—x, xxv, xxxiv, xxxvii; cxi, cxii, cxix, cxlv) the first four belong to the First Collection and the last four to the Third Collection. For convenience of study we have grouped them together, though in point of time the First Collection is much earlier than the Third.

I shall shew that while the four Alphabetical Psalms of the Third Collection are regular those of the First Collection are all irregular *after a common law*, since in each of them the letter **ד** probably stood before **י** and certainly the **ו** verses stood before the **פ** verses. It will also be seen that the alphabet in these Psalms was not used as a mere acrostic, but that it was arranged in two Tables of *ten* letters each with direct reference to the sacred number *ten*, which is the number of the Covenant and which is to the Priest-Code what the number *seven* is to the Prophetic Writers.

The order of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet is supposed to be fixed by the following alphabetical passages: Pss. xxv, xxxiv, xxxvii, cxi, cxii, cxix, cxlv; Lam. i—iv; Prov. xxxi. 10—31. The order, however, is not altogether uniform, for it cannot be an accident that **ד** comes *before* **י** in Lam. ii. 16, 17, iii. 46—51 and iv. 16, 17. If this fact had stood alone it would have justified us in suspecting that, in the time when these Books were written, the order of the alphabet was not altogether fixed as we have it now, and that later editors might possibly rearrange an alphabetical composition making it conform to the order of the alphabet as it is known at present. Thus, for example, out of the four alphabetical chapters in Lamentations we have seen that in three the **ד** comes before the **י**, while in one passage only (ch. i. 16, 17) the order is reversed so as to follow the present alphabet. If any unprejudiced reader will look at the latter passage he will see at once that a much better sense is obtained by transposing verses 16 and 17, i.e. he will conclude that originally the **ד** verse stood before the **י** verse, as it does in the other three chapters of this Book. Now it is an interesting fact that in the Alphabetical Psalms of the First Collection a clearer meaning would in each case be found if we were to transpose the **י** and **ד** verses (see notes pp. 33, 35). But we may go further. Not only was there an uncertainty in the order of the letters **י** and **ד** but also, I believe, in the order of the letters **פ** and **ו**. From the alphabetical fragments contained in Psalms ix—x no certain argument can be drawn, but it should be noted that it is on the letter **פ** that Ps. ix ceases to be alphabetical and on the letter **ו** that Ps. x begins to be alphabetical, the same words "Arise O YHVH" being found in each place. It is obvious that the *disjecta membra* of two or more alphabetical compositions have been pieced together.

Now let the reader turn to the fragment Ps. x. 11—end and let him transpose the letters ק and ך, i.e. let him read v. 14 after verse 11. Thus:—

- v. 11. He says in his heart "God forgets," "He hides His face," "*He never sees.*"
- ך 14. *Thou hast seen*—Thou beholdest violence and vexation.
The poor may leave it all on Thee, placed in Thy hand;
As for the orphan Thou art become his helper.
- ק 12. Arise O YHVH; Lift up Thine hand; forget not the poor!
13. Why should the wicked despise God while he saith in his heart "*Thou wilt not require it.*"
- ש 15. Break Thou the arm of the wicked—as for the evil,
Thou wilt require his wickedness till Thou find none.
- [16. YHVH is King for ever and ever; the Nations are perished out of His Land.]
- ת 17. Thou YHVH hast heard the desire of the poor.

&c. &c. &c.

The connexion of thought as indicated by the words in italics is thus brought out, whereas it is obscured by the arrangement in the text. I conclude therefore that, in the original text, the ך stood before the ק

The next alphabetical Psalm is Psalm xxv, and here again we note an irregularity in the letters ק, ך; the ק being omitted altogether and the ך doubled; but, not only so, one of the ך verses (v. 18) actually interrupts the sense (see notes) and was probably introduced into the text from some other alphabetical Psalm while the ק verse has been lost. The same transposition must also be made in Ps. xxxiv (see p. 30). In the next alphabetical Psalm (xxxvii) the case is still more clear; If the reader will carefully compare the four Parts, stanza by stanza, he will see that the stanzas which we have printed in parallel columns correspond in a very remarkable way; but when he comes to the letters ק and ך he will observe that it is *absolutely necessary to transpose them* since the ך verse (35) answers to the ך verse (25) and the ק verse (34) to the ך verse (27). Next let him compare Part IV with Part II and he will see that the five stanzas of Part IV exactly correspond with the five stanzas of Part II, *but only on condition of placing the ך stanza before the ק stanza*. Thus I conclude that in the earliest of the Alphabetical Psalms, the alphabetical order was not altogether fixed as we have it now, or, if fixed, was for some reason or other disregarded in the order of the letters ק and ך. We now proceed to the separate study of these Psalms.

PSALM IX—X.

The arrangement of Psalms ix—x suggests an interesting problem in Psalm structure. If with the Septuagint we regard them as one Psalm we might suppose that the portion between the letters ך of Ps. ix and ך of Ps. x had accidentally lost its alphabetical arrangement; but against this we have to set the fact that Ps. ix is altogether a thanksgiving for victory while Ps. x is a prayer out of the depths of oppression. Again the letter ך is found in both Psalms with the words "Arise O YHVH." Consequently we are led to the conclusion that two or more alphabetical Psalms having much in common have been pieced together possibly for some special effect like music in a major and minor key. The general structure of the alphabetical arrangement would seem to have been two verses to a letter as in Psalm xxxvii. We note however that in Ps. ix the *Aleph* and *Vav* letters are fourfold, just as in Lam. iii each letter is threefold; these verses which have a different alphabetical structure have no very direct connexion with the sense, possibly they are fragments of a Psalm in which each letter was arranged in *fours*. The reader is asked to suspend his judgement until he shall have studied the whole group of alphabetical Psalms which, for this reason, have been placed together.

It appears to me that the original writer of Ps. ix omitted the letter *Daleth* because his object was to emphasize the number *ten* by using only ten letters of the Alphabet and by so dividing them that the five letters of Part I should answer exactly to the five letters of Part II. Thus *Aleph* corresponds with *Zain*; *Beth* with *Cheth*; *Gimel* with *Teth*; *Heh* with *Yod* (see marginal notes). Then there came an editor who wished to extend the use of the number *ten* by making *ten verses* in each Part. To effect this he makes four verses of the letter *Vav* instead of two verses and adds verses 19, 20 from another alphabetical Psalm, thus forming also a link of connexion with Psalm x. Psalm ix is from beginning to end a magnificent thanksgiving for victory. It is quite impossible that vv. 19, 20 should have been written at the same time. It is interesting to observe that in the alphabetical fragment (vv. 19, 20) the letter ם follows immediately after ך. This, so far as it goes, confirms my contention that the original order of the alphabet was ך, ך, ם and not ך, ך, ם as at present.

PSALM X.

This Psalm is at the same time a continuation and a contrast to Ps. ix. A continuation, in that it contains striking similarities of thought, language and alphabetical structure; a contrast, in that the enemy is no longer the Heathen without but the Heathen within; no longer a conquered foe but a foe elated with prosperity and contemptuous alike of God and man. The Psalm must belong to a time when the Godless party in Israel was making common cause with the Heathen.

The writer of Pss. ix, x, or the editor to whom we owe them in their present shape, must have intended, by placing these Psalms side by side, to imply that as the World-powers had perished (ix. 6, 17), so the Heathen party in Israel must perish in spite of its present prosperity. The verse x. 16 interrupts the sense: may not its proper place have been after v. 5 of Ps. ix? It is of course quite possible that the unalphabetical verses (2—11) may be due to an editor who wished thus to point a Psalm against apostates which was originally written with reference to other enemies (cf. Cheyne, *Orig. of Psalter*, p. 228).

PS. X (*First half*).

- 1 Why, O YHVH, shouldst Thou stand afar?
 Why hide in seasons^a of trouble? * Ps. ix. 9
- Let the hot pursuer
 himself be trapped.
- 2 Proudly the wicked hotly pursueth the poor.
 Let them be trapped in the very deeds of their devising^b. b Ps. ix. 15
- He believes in no
 retribution.
- 3 For the wicked boasted of his own self-will,
 And the rapacious hath 'blest'—hath blasphemed YHVH.
- 4 The wicked, pride-led (thinks) "He will not require it";
 "There is no God" is the sum of his plans.
- 5 His ways are ever prosperous^c; c Targum &c.
 Far above, out of sight, are Thy judgements.
 All foes he laugheth to scorn.
- 6 He says in his heart "I shall never be moved;
 From age to age I shall come to no ill."
- 7 His mouth is full of cursing, fraud and wrong;
 Under his tongue is violence and mischief.

v. 2. "*Hotly pursueth &c.*" This word is used of *chasing* an enemy in Gen. xxxi. 36; 1 Sam. xvii. 53. It is used of "*burning lips*" (Prov. xxvi. 23), and of "*fiery arrows*" (Ps. vii. 13 (14)), but the *locus classicus* for our Psalm is the alphabetical chapter Lam. iv, where we read (*v.* 19 f.) "Our persecutors.....have *hotly pursued* us upon the mountains, they laid wait for us in the wilderness.....the anointed of the Lord was taken in their pits &c."

PS. X (*Second half*).

The lion trapped.

- 8 He lurks in the hamlet thickets ;
 In secret he slays the innocent ;
 His eyes are in wait for the helpless.
 9 He waits in the secret places, as a lion in his lair ;
 So he waits to capture the poor.
 He will^a [capture the poor]—when He draws him into
 His net,
 10 He is crushed, brought low and falls^a.....the helpless.

^a Text uncertain. See Versions

He did not believe in retribution but it is coming.

- 11 He said in his heart, "God forgets"—
 "He hides His face"—"He seeth not."
 14 Thou hast seen—Thou beholdest violence and vexation.
 The helpless may leave it all on Thee, placed in Thy hand.
 As for the orphan Thou art become his Helper.
 12 Arise, O YHVH! God, lift up Thine hand; forget not the poor.
 13 Why should the wicked blaspheme God?
 While he saith in his heart "Thou wilt not require it."
 15 Break Thou the arm of the wicked—as for the evil
 Thou wilt require his wickedness till Thou find none.
 16 [YHVH is become King for ever and ever:
 The Nations are perished out of His Land.]
 17 Thou, YHVH, hast heard the desire of the humble,
 Thou tunest their heart and lendest Thine ear thereto :
 18 Righting the orphan and oppressed that earth-born man
 may tyrannize no more.

v. 9 f. This corresponds with *v. 2*. There we read the prayer that the proud pursuer might be trapped, here the lion is trapped. The text in 9^c, 10 is uncertain; the words "capture the poor" may possibly be a repetition from the preceding line. If we might omit them we should read "He waits to capture the poor while He (i.e. God) is drawing him into His net." This, in any case, must be the general meaning of the passage. The translation "He croucheth, he boweth down" is contrary to the use of the words and to the authority of the Versions. The man-eating lion is drawn into God's pitfall and is there crushed. Cf. Ps. ix. 16, 17.

v. 15. "Thou wilt require his wickedness till Thou find none." Wellhausen would alter the text and read "Require Thou his wickedness, forgive (it) not." But there is no need for this. God is the "requirer" of guilt (Ps. ix. 13), though the wicked man is self-blinded to the fact (Ps. x. 4). The judgement will make this manifest. The words "till Thou find none," lit. "till Thou find not," doubtless implied (to the Psalmist) a total extermination of evil men, but the Christian will see in the words the deeper thought of the extermination of evil in itself.

v. 17. "Thou tunest their heart and lendest Thine ear thereto." The human heart is God's harp. Humility is its concert-pitch. The "desire of the humble" is the music of Heaven to which God can listen with delight and lend an attentive ear. The immediate reference is to the cry of the oppressed.

PSALM XXV.

This alphabetical Psalm should be studied first with its twin Psalm (xxxiv) and then with the other pair of twins (Pss. cxi and cxii). In all these cases we shall see that the alphabetical arrangement is subjected to the number *ten*. The number *ten* is the number of the Covenant.

In our present Psalm the close correspondence between the two halves (see marginal notes) makes it all but certain that the purpose of the original writer was to use the alphabet only so far as it fell in with his division of the Psalm into *two parts of ten letters each*; thus, out of the twenty-two letters, two must be omitted; the servile letter *Vav* would be a natural one to omit in the first half, and, since the second half ought to begin with *Mem* as the middle letter of the alphabet, it would follow that *Lamed* would be the other omitted letter. This being so, the original Psalm would have consisted of two equal parts of ten verses each, viz. verses 1—10 and verses 12—21. A later writer, wishing to maintain the structure of the Psalm and yet to make its *verses* correspond in number with the twenty-two letters of the alphabet, may have added verse 11 at the end of the first half and verse 22 at the end of the second half. This suspicion becomes well-nigh a certainty when we find that it also explains the formation of Psalm xxxiv.

The question now arises—The number *ten* denoting, as it does, the Covenant, what are we to understand by the *two tens*? Do they represent the two Tables, i.e. *God* and *Man*? The analogy of Pss. cxi and cxii would certainly point to this (see *ad loc.*). We observe also that in our present Psalm the first half seems to refer to deliverance from *sin* (*vv.* 7, 8), the second half to deliverance from *outward foes* (*vv.* 15, 17, 19). It is true that in the second half (verse 18) we find the words “forgive me all my sin,” but a certain amount of doubt rests upon this verse since it begins with the letter *Resh* instead of the letter *Koph* which ought to stand here. Except for this doubtful verse the whole reference in the second half is to outward afflictions and foes.

In any case it would seem that the author of verses 11 and 22 recognised some such distinction as I have pointed out, since he sums up the first half in the words

v. 11 “For Thy Name’s sake, YHVH, *pardon mine iniquity* for it is great,”

and the second half in the words

v. 22 “Redeem Israel, O God, *out of all his distresses.*”

If these verses were added by a later writer he certainly entered into the spirit and purpose of the Psalm.

The first half, like the first ‘Table’ of the Covenant, relates to *God*. The second half, like the second ‘Table’ of the Covenant, relates to *Man*, and, like the second Table, begins with the “promise” to “inherit the Land” (*v.* 13). In the first half the thought is of *God’s own Nature* for which the soul longs, whereas in

the second half we find ourselves dealing with the *moral law* and relation of *man to man*. This may be exemplified by the following table:

FIRST HALF.	SECOND HALF.
v. 1. Unto Thee...I lift up my soul.	v. 12. Who is the God-fearing man? (cf. notes on Ps. xxxiv. 12): he has the promise of the life that now is (v. 13).
v. 5. Guide me, lead me, teach me.	vv. 16—19. Bring me out of the distresses and troubles in which I am entangled.
vv. 6, 7. Look at Thy own Nature, Thy compassions how eternal they are!	vv. 19 f. Look at my enemies how many they are!
vv. 8—10. God <i>is</i> goodness and rectitude itself, therefore He must impart that goodness as forgiveness, that rectitude as guidance.	v. 21. (My own) integrity and rectitude shall keep me, being as they are the faint reflex of Thy Nature.

The contrast between verse 8 and verse 21 should be noted. In v. 8 God, being, as He is, *goodness and rectitude*, keeps and guides man, whereas, in v. 21, it is not said that man's *goodness* and rectitude keep him but his "*integrity* and rectitude." The word here translated *integrity* is never applied to God: it denotes the *sincerity* of a conscience void of offence both (α) towards *God* (Gen. xx. 5, 6; 1 Kings ix. 4; Job i. 1, 8 &c.) and (β) towards *man* (Ps. lxxviii. 72; Prov. x. 9; xix. 1 &c.). If the assertion seem too strong that a man's own integrity and rectitude should keep him, we must remember the words that follow: "For I have waited for Thee." We may also compare Prov. xx. 28 "Mercy and truth keep the king, and his throne is upheld by mercy," and Prov. xiii. 6 "Righteousness keeps the man of upright way...."

In both these passages it seems clear that the mercy, truth and righteousness which "keep" the man are the mercy, truth and righteousness which he shews in his dealings with others; for "Merit lives from man to man" though "not from man, O Lord, to Thee."

Verse 1 is a line too short, while verse 5 is a line too long, the redundant line beginning with ⚡; the sense is greatly improved if we restore this redundant line which I have placed in brackets to what was doubtless its original position in verse 1.

The reader will observe that I have transposed two 7 verses (18 and 19), the doubtful verse 18 being enclosed in brackets. Originally a 6 verse would have stood here and I have shewn (p. 18) that in some of the earlier alphabetical arrangements the order was not 6, 7 but 7, 6. Compare also these letters in Ps. xxxiv and Ps. xxxvii.

PS. XXV (*First half*).

The Covenant must
mean redemption from
sin.

- ⌘ 1 Unto Thee, O YHVH, I lift up my soul.
[Thyself it is I hope for all the day.]
- ⌘ 2 In Thee, my God, I trust; I shall surely not be con-
founded!
Nor shall mine enemies triumph over me.
- ⌘ 3 Yea, none that hope in Thee shall be confounded.
Confounded be the wantonly treacherous ones.
- ⌘ 4 Thy WAYS, O YHVH, make me to know!
Thy PATHS, teach me them!

Prayer for this re-
demption based on my
sin.

- ⌘ 5 Guide me in Thy truth and teach me,
For Thou art the God of my salvation.
- ⌘ 6 Remember Thy compassions, O YHVH,
And Thy kindnesses, how eternal they are!
- ⌘ 7 My sins of youth and transgressions remember not
In Thy kindness remember—Thou art mine!
For the sake of Thy goodness—O YHVH!

Echo of *vv.* 1—4
with the added assur-
ance of experience.

- ⌘ 8 Goodness and rectitude (itself) is YHVH,
Therefore will He guide sinners in the WAY.
- ⌘ 9 He will guide the humble aright,
And teach the humble His WAY.
- ⌘ 10 All the PATHS of YHVH are kindness and truth
To those that keep His covenant and testimonies.

-
- ⌘ 11 For Thy Name's sake, YHVH, pardon mine iniquity
for it is great.

PS. XXV (*Second half*).

The Covenant must mean redemption from outward evils.

- D 12 Who is the man that feareth YHVH?
 Him should He teach in the way He should choose.
 J 13 His soul should dwell in good,
 And his seed should inherit the Land.
 D 14 The intimate fellowship of YHVH is for those that fear
 Him,
 And His covenant is for their instruction.
 Y 15 Mine eyes are ever towards YHVH;
 He Himself frees my feet from the net.

Prayer for this redemption based on my misfortunes.

- D 16 Turn Thou toward me and pity me,
 For lonely and poor am I.
 Y 17 Oh set my heart free from its troubles,
 And bring me out of my deep distress.
 J 19 Behold my enemies how many they are!
 And they hate me with virulent hate.

Echo of vv. 1—4 with the added assurance of experience.

- [J 18 Behold my affliction and misery
 And forgive me all my sin.]
 Y 20 Keep Thou my soul and deliver me;
 Let me not be confounded for in Thee I trust.
 J 21 Integrity and rectitude shall keep me,
 For I have trusted in Thee.

-
- D 22 Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his distresses.

PSALM XXXIV.

This alphabetical Psalm when compared with the alphabetical Psalm xxv suggests a most interesting study. Both consist of two closely corresponding halves. Both contain 22 verses, i.e. a verse for each letter of the alphabet. Both omit the letter *Vav*. Both duplicate the letter *Pe*. In both the 11th and 22nd verses (i.e. the letters *Lamed* and *Pe*) are superfluous and destroy to some extent the symmetry of the Psalm. Both therefore suggest an earlier arrangement in which each half of the Psalm consisted of 10 verses, the second half in each case beginning with the letter *Mem* which is the middle letter of the alphabet.

In Ps. xxxiv the two verses which begin with *Pe* (viz. vv. 16 and 22) have, I think, been transposed; I have therefore restored them to what I believe to have been their original position. The motive for the transposition would be the well-known Jewish feeling that no Psalm should end in malediction. As restored, Stanza 11 of the second half answers exactly to Stanza 11 of the first half, while verse 17 becomes intelligible.

The relation between the three Stanzas of the first half and the three corresponding Stanzas of the second half is very remarkable and should be studied with the marginal notes. It should be observed that the first half deals almost entirely with the relation between *God and an individual speaker* (v. 1 "I can bless...," v. 2 "My soul exulteth...," v. 3 "Magnify YHVH with me...," v. 4 "I sought...," v. 6 "This sufferer cried, i.e. I cried,") whereas the second half applies to *men generally*; compare also Ps. xxv.

We may also trace in the two halves of the Psalm an allusion to the two Tables of the Covenant.

As the second Table begins with "the Commandment of promise" so the second half of our Psalm begins with the "promise of the life that now is." Compare also on Ps. xxv and Pss. cxi and cxii.

I have again transposed the letters ק and ך (vv. 18 and 19). We have already seen strong reasons for believing that in other alphabetical Psalms the ך stood originally before the ק (see p. 27). Suffice it here to remark that the transposition suits the context and makes Stanzas 11 and 111 of the second half exactly correspond with Stanzas 11 and 111 of the first half. There is a direct connexion between "the contrite-hearted...the crushed in spirit (v. 18)" and the fact that God "keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken (v. 20)." This connexion is lost if we read with the text

19 "Many are the misfortunes of the righteous,
But YHVH frees him out of them all.
20 He keepeth all his bones,
Not one of them is broken."

After saying that God frees the righteous out of all his misfortunes it were surely needless to add "He keepeth all his bones &c.," whereas the "nearness of YHVH" is the pledge that the "crushed in spirit" shall not be utterly broken.

Compare 2 Cor. iv. 8 ff. "pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not left behind; smitten down, yet not destroyed."

The words "*Come ye children*" &c. (v. 11) are usually taken with the words which follow, but they should, in my opinion, be taken as a summary of those that precede, i.e. of the first half of the Psalm. The "fear of the Lord," i.e. true religion, begins with the Duty to God, not with the Duty to Man. No doubt v. 12 begins abruptly but not more so than the 12th verse of the parallel Psalm xxv; indeed we find the same words in each case, "Who is the man...?"

Verse 2 contains two thoughts, (a) the personal deliverance of the speaker and (b) the fact that other sufferers would find courage from that deliverance. These two thoughts are expanded in verses 4, 5, the relation being seen as follows:

v. 2 ^a . In YHVH my soul exulteth.	v. 4. { I sought YHVH and He answered me, And from all my fears He set me free.
v. 2 ^b . Sufferers shall hear and rejoice.	v. 5. { They looked unto Him and were drawn, And their faces were not ashamed.

Those who "look" are "sufferers" and the One to whom they are "drawn" is either God or *the* Sufferer: the reason why they are drawn is because (v. 6), "This Sufferer cried and YHVH heard." The word which we have translated "drawn" (v. 5) occurs only in five other passages, two of which (Is. ii. 2 and Mic. iv. 1) are identical. In all these passages the word is applied to People or Nations which "flow together" as a river, drawn by some overmastering attraction. Thus:

Is. ii. 2 (Mic. iv. 1) "...all nations *shall flow* unto it," i.e. to the uplifted Temple of God.

Jer. xxxi. 12 "And they shall come singing with joy to the height of Zion and shall *flow together* (or *be drawn*) to the goodness of YHVH...."

Jer. li. 44 "And I will visit upon Bel in Babylon and will bring forth from his mouth that which he hath swallowed down, and the nations shall not *flow unto* him (i.e. *be drawn* unto him) any more."

Is. lx. 4, 5 "Lift up thine eyes round about thee, and see; they all gather together and come unto thee; thy sons come from far.....then shalt thou fear and *flow together* (or *be drawn*), yea, thy heart shall fear and be enlarged; for the abundance as of a sea shall be turned unto thee, the host of the nations shall come unto thee."

This last passage is not without difficulty, but the general sense is clear. The Daughter of Zion is compared to a river into which tributary streams (the Gentile nations) suddenly pour themselves, so that the River 'fears as it is enlarged' and flows onward to its goal with a volume never felt before.

Thus in every passage in which our word occurs it signifies an overmastering attraction to which the Nations are drawn and in which they are united. In the present Psalm the attraction is by means of a Sufferer. The Christian will read it in the light of St John xii. 32 "I if I be lifted up out of the earth (cf. Is. ii. 2; Mic. iv. 1) will draw all men unto myself."

PS. XXXIV (*First half*).

The Covenant
(Duty to God) the key
of life.

- ⌘ 1 I can bless YHVH at all times,
His praise is continually in my mouth.
⌘ 2 In YHVH my soul exulteth,
Sufferers shall hear and rejoice.
⌘ 3 O magnify YHVH with me
And let us extol His Name together.
⌘ 4 I sought YHVH and He answered me,
And from all my fears He set me free.

It means safety in
suffering.

- ⌘ 5 They looked unto Him and were drawn,
And their faces were not ashamed.
⌘ 6 This sufferer cried and YHVH heard
And saved him out of all his afflictions,
⌘ 7 The Angel of YHVH encampeth round them that fear
Him and delivereth them.

The test of expe-
rience.

- ⌘ 8 Taste and see that YHVH is good,
Happy the man that finds refuge in Him.
⌘ 9 Fear YHVH, O ye saints of His,
For there is no lack to them that fear Him.
⌘ 10 Young lions may need and may hunger,
But those that seek YHVH shall never lack one good
thing.

⌘ 11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me,
I will teach you the fear of YHVH.]

v. 7. This verse must be read with v. 19. The angel host of Mahanaim (Gen. xxxii. 2) is a pledge of Jacob's victory (cf. Gen. xlviii. 16) but not of freedom from "misfortunes." The history of Jacob is the history of Israel.

PS. XXXIV (*Second half*).

The Covenant
(Duty to man) the key
of life.

- D 12 Who is the man that delighteth in life,
 That loveth to see good days?
 J 13 Keep thy tongue from evil,
 Thy lips from speaking fraud.
 D 14 Turn away from evil and do good,
 Seek peace and pursue it.
 Y 15 The eyes of YHVH are toward the righteous,
 His ears are toward their cry.

It means safety in
suffering.

- D 22 YHVH redeems the souls of His servants,
 And none that trust in Him shall be held guilty.
 S 17 They cry and YHVH hears,
 And from all their afflictions He frees them.
 7 19 Many are the misfortunes of the righteous,
 But YHVH frees him out of them all.

The test of expe-
rience.

- P 18 Near is YHVH to the contrite-hearted,
 He saveth the crushed in spirit.
 W 20 He keepeth all his bones,
 Not one of them is broken.
 N 21 A misfortune brings death to the wicked,
 And those that hate the righteous shall be held guilty.

[D 16 The face of YHVH is against evil-doers,
 To cut off their remembrance from the earth.]

v. 15 f. If following the alphabetical arrangement of Lamentations, we transpose the verses D and D the sense becomes clearer and the parallelism more complete.

v. 21. "A misfortune brings death to the wicked." Contrast v. 19 "Many are the misfortunes of the righteous, but YHVH frees him out of them all" (cf. v. 7), but one single misfortune may bring destruction upon those whose lives are not stayed upon God, who become "as natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed" (2 Pet. ii. 12); cf. the "young lions" of v. 10.

PSALM XXXVII.

If in this alphabetical Psalm we omit as before the letters *Vav* and *Lamed* (i.e. *vv.* 10, 11 and *vv.* 21, 22) we see at once that the Psalm divides itself into *four* equal parts of *five letters each*, with two verses (originally) to each letter, i.e. we have four tens of verses so arranged that Part I corresponds closely with Part III and Part II with Part IV, as may be seen from the marginal notes. We are further confirmed in the omission of letters *Vav* and *Lamed* when we remember that, in two other alphabetical Psalms (xxv and xxxiv, see notes), these same letters *Vav* and *Lamed* had no place in the original structure. I suggest therefore that, in the present Psalm, the letters *Vav* (*vv.* 10, 11) and *Lamed* (*vv.* 21, 22) are due to a later editor who recognized the fact that the Psalm consisted of *four tens* of verses and therefore was obliged, while introducing four new verses, to retain the original number of forty. This he did by making the letters ך, ם, ן and ס consist of one verse each instead of two (see *vv.* 7, 20, 28^b and 34); thus, by taking one verse out of each of the four parts, the original number of forty was somewhat violently retained. If the reader will compare the parallel stanzas of Part I and Part II he will see that whereas Part I refers to the Duty to *God*, Part II refers to the Duty to *Man*. 'Blessed are the patient' (toward *God*), 'Cursed are the violent' (toward *Man*) is the moral of each.

In like manner it will be seen that Part III refers to *God*, Part IV to *Man*; the moral of Part III being 'Blessed are the righteous' (regarded as imitators of *God's* mercy; see note on *v.* 26), i.e. 'Blessed are the merciful,' while the moral of Part IV is 'Cursed are the wicked,' i.e. the unmerciful. The number *ten*, which is the number of the Covenant, enters doubly into the structure of this Psalm, for, if we regard the *verses*, each of the four Parts consisted originally of *ten* verses; if, on the other hand, we regard the alphabetical *letters*, of which each Part has five, we see that Parts I and III, which refer to *God*, have *ten* letters, while Parts II and IV, which refer to *Man*, have also ten letters.

Just as the words "inherit the Land" (*vv.* 9, 11, 22, 29, 34) imply all the promises of the Covenant, so the words "cut off" (9, 22, 28^b, 34, 38) imply all that is included in being "cut off" from the Covenant (cf. Exod. xii. 15; Lev. xviii. 29 &c.). This technical use of the *Niphal* which is so common in the Priest-code is found nowhere else in the Psalms.

I have again transposed the letters ק and ך (i.e. *v.* 35 f. and *v.* 34) because the parallelism of the stanzas seems to require it and also because the ך stood before the ק in other alphabetical arrangements.

As to the letters ץ, פ I think it probable that the original text of the Psalm followed the order of the alphabetical chapters of Lamentations (see p. 18), and placed פ before ץ. The transposition of these verses has caused a confusion between עולם נשמרו "the unrighteous are destroyed" (Sept. *Alex.*) and עולם נשמרו (ל) "they are preserved for ever" (E.V.; the P.B.V. combines both readings). If we might transpose the ץ and פ verses the sense would be clearer and the correspondence indicated in the margin by the letters *d d₁ d₂ d₃; e e₁ e₂ e₃* would become symmetrical.

The parallel texts as printed will shew the relation of Part I to Part II and of Part III to Part IV, but the reader is specially asked to study the still closer relationship between Part I and Part III and between Part II and Part IV.

PART I.

- (a) Patience towards God, **Ⲛ** 1 Fret not thyself about the evil-doers,
Be not jealous about the workers of iniquity.
2 For like grass they shall quickly fade,
And like the green herbage shall wither.
- (b) being the reflex of His Patience, inherits the promises of the Covenant, **Ⲛ** 3 Trust in YHVH and do good,
Dwell in the Land,
And feed on (His) Faithfulness.
4 Delight thyself also in YHVH,
And He shall grant thee thy heart's desires.
- (c) is seen in its end. **Ⲛ** 5 Cast (the burden of) thy way on YHVH,
Trust in Him and He will act,
6 And will bring forth thy righteousness as light
And thy judgement as the noon-day.
- (d) The moral of letter **Ⲛ**, i.e. of *vv.* 3, 4. **Ⲛ** 7 Hold thou still in YHVH
And wait for Him;
Fret not thyself about one whose way prospers,
About the man who effects his bad designs.
- (e) The moral of letter **Ⲛ**, i.e. of *vv.* 1, 2. **Ⲛ** 8 Cease from anger,
And forsake wrath;
Fret not thyself—it merely tends to harm,
9 For evil-doers shall be cut off,
But those that wait for YHVH—
They shall inherit the Land.
-
- Summary of the above. **Ⲛ** 10 Yet but a little while and the wicked is no more,
Thou mayest ponder over his place—but he is not!
11 But the meek shall inherit the Land
And delight themselves in abounding peace.

v. 3. "Trust in YHVH"—here we have man's duty to God (First Table)—"and do good," *χρηστέγητα*, i.e. man's duty to man (Second Table). The reward of the Second Table is "dwell in the Land." The reward of the First Table is "feed (lit. *pasture*) on (God's) faithfulness." The unusual expression brings out the parallelism. Those whose love of God is shewn in "trust" will enjoy His *trustworthiness* (cf. *v.* 5 and 1 Pet. ii. 7) just as those whose love of man is shewn in "doing good" will enjoy the promise of earth. It seems necessary to take the *imperatives* "dwell in the Land &c." as promises, cf. *v.* 27 "...do good and dwell for evermore," but if this be a difficulty in grammar it is no difficulty in Theology.

PART II.

- (*a*₁) Violence toward man, 12 The wicked layeth plans for the righteous
And gnasheth his teeth at him.
13 The Lord will laugh at him
For He sees that his day is coming.
- (*b*₁) being opposed to Nature, ends in self-destruction, 14 The wicked draw the sword and bend their bow
To cast down the poor and needy,
To slaughter those that go right.
15 Their sword shall pierce their own heart
And their bows shall be broken.
- (*c*₁) is seen in its end. 16 A righteous man's little is better
Than the abundance of many wicked;
17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken,
While YHVH upholdeth the righteous.
- (*d*₁) The moral of letter Π, i.e. of vv. 14, 15. 18 YHVH noteth the days of the upright
And their inheritance shall be for ever.
19 They shall not be shamed in the time of evil
And in the days of dearth they shall have enough.
- (*e*₁) The moral of letter 1, i.e. of vv. 12, 13. 20 But the wicked perish—
And the enemies of YHVH,
Like the beauty of the meadows,
Are gone as smoke—
They are gone.
-
- Summary of the above. 21 The wicked borrows—but cannot pay,
While the righteous is gracious and giving.
22 For those that are blessed of Him shall inherit the Land,
And those that are cursed of Him shall be cut off.

v. 21. "The wicked.....but cannot pay." It is not through his wickedness that he *will not* but through his misfortune that he *cannot* pay. He has no real root (cf. vv. 35, 36) and so perishes like the bad tree. Herein he is contrasted with the righteous who being 'rooted and grounded in love' partakes of God's own attribute of mercy (see v. 26) and so becomes himself "gracious and giving" out of an endless store.

PART III.

(*a*₂) Righteousness towards God, **D** 23 From YHVH it is that the steps of a man are established,
 And his way gives Him pleasure.
 24 Though he fall he is not cast away,
 For YHVH upholds his hand.

(*b*₂) being the reflex of His Mercy, inherits the promise, **J** 25 I have been young and now am old,
 Yet never saw a righteous man forsaken
 [So that his seed should beg for bread]^a.
 26 He is always merciful and lending
 And his seed is for a blessing.

^a Possibly a gloss

(*c*₂) seen in its end. **D** 27 Turn from evil and do good
 And dwell for evermore,
 28 For YHVH loveth right
 And will not leave His saints.

(*c*₂) *Out of place. Transpose with D stanza.* **Y** [The unrighteous are destroyed]
 And the seed of the wicked is cut off.
 29 Righteous ones inherit the Land
 And dwell therein for ever.

(*d*₂) The moral of letter J, i.e. of vv. 25, 26. **D** 30 The mouth of a righteous man meditates wisdom
 And his tongue will be speaking of judgement.
 31 The Law^b of his God is in his heart
 So his steps do not falter.

^b Ps. i. 2

v. 26. "*He is always merciful and lending.*" It is worthy of note that in the pair of alphabetical Psalms cxi and cxii which compare the character of God with the character of the God-like man it is said of God (cxi. 4) that He is "gracious and merciful," and of the God-like man (cxii. 4) that he is "gracious, merciful and righteous." So here, the good man is "gracious and giving" because his roots touch the springs of God's grace and bounty.

PART IV.

- (a₂) Injustice toward man, **ז** 32 The wicked sets watch for the righteous
 And seeketh to slay him.
 33 YHVH will not leave him in his hand,
 Nor condemn him when he is judged.
- (b₂) being opposed to Nature, ends in nothingness, **ו** 35 I have seen the wicked tyrannically strong
 Outspreading like a verdant native tree.
 36 But one passed—and lo he was gone!
 I sought him but he was no more!
- (c₂) seen in its end. **פ** 34 Wait for YHVH
 And keep His way,
 And He shall exalt thee to inherit the Land.
 Thou shalt see the cutting off of the wicked.
- (d₂) The moral of letter **ו**, i.e. of vv. 35, 36. **ז** 37 Observe the perfect and regard the upright,
 That there is a future to the man of peace;
 38 While transgressors are utterly destroyed,
 The future of the wicked is cut off.
- (e₂) The moral of letter **ז**, i.e. of vv. 32, 33. **ו** 39 The salvation of the righteous is from YHVH,
 Their stronghold in time of distress.
 40 And YHVH helped them and delivered them—
 Will deliver them from the wicked and will save them—
 Because they confided in Him.

v. 35 f. The contrast between this stanza and the parallel stanza of Part III reminds us of the "two ways" of Psalm i and Jer. xvii. 5-8. The bad man is "like the heath in the desert." Compare also verses 19, 20 in Part II of our Psalm.

v. 37. "Observe the perfect." We are reluctantly compelled to give up the rendering of the P.B.V., "Keep innocency..." Both the usage of the language and the parallelism of the thought are against it.

THIRD COLLECTION, ALPHABETICAL PSALMS.

The four Alphabetical Psalms of the Third Collection would seem to have been moulded upon the pattern of the four Alphabetical Psalms of the First Collection. Not only are they alike in number but they begin with the same words, "I thank YHVH with my whole heart" (Ps. ix 1, and Ps. cxi 1), and have several thoughts in common, such as *inheriting the Land* (Ps. xxv 13, xxxvii 11, 22, 29, with Ps. cxii. 2), *The Promise of the Covenant*; *The Kingship of God on Earth*, etc.

Perhaps it is not altogether an accident that as the Alphabetical Psalms of the First Collection begin with a closely related *pair* (Psalms ix—x) so the Psalms of the Third Collection begin with a closely related *pair* (Psalms cxi—cxii). In the Third Collection there are traces of the same use of the number *ten*, the same allusions to the Covenant, and in one case (Ps. cxi—cxii) we find the same peculiar redundancy of the letters י and ל: but, whereas in the First Collection we have shewn that י stood before פ, and probably ב before י, we note that *in the Third Collection the order of the Alphabet was fixed as we have it now*. This is extremely important, tending, as it does, to shew that the order of the Hebrew Alphabet, as we have it now, was fixed between the dates of the First and Third Collections.

In the Psalms of the First Collection the number *ten*, the sacred number of the Priest Code, governs the whole construction, but in the Psalms of the Third Collection (Pss. cxi—cxii excepted) this is no longer the case. Thus Ps. cxix is governed by the number *eight* (see *ad loc.*), while in Ps. cxlv the Holy Name occurs *eight* times, the reference to the Covenant number *ten* is much less clear than in the Psalms of the First Collection.

These later Alphabetical Psalms approach more nearly to the nature of the simple acrostic.

PSALM CXI.

Psalm cxi. and cxii. form a pair and must be studied together. Their structure is identical. Both have 10 verses in 22 alphabetical lines. Each verse consists of two lines with the exception of verses 9 and 10, which have three lines apiece. If we might follow the pattern of earlier Alphabetical Psalms (see p. 34) and omit the letters } and { each Psalm would fall naturally into *two parts of 10 lines (i.e. 10 letters) each*, the division being at the letter D, the middle letter of the alphabet. The number *Ten* is as we have seen (p. 26) the number of the Covenant which plays such an important part in the Alphabetical Psalms. In order to preserve the structure I have enclosed the } and { lines in square brackets. If the reader will study the parallel texts he will see, especially in the case of the } line, how easily these lines may have been introduced and how much more complete and symmetrical the parallelism is if we ignore them.

For the purpose of comparison I have printed in parallel columns each Psalm twice; the first table enables us to compare Part I with Part II of each Psalm; the second table shews Psalm cxi. (of the good God) with Psalm cxii. (of the good man).

PS. CXI (PART I).

The good God as He is in Himself.

His blessedness and stability.	{	א ¹ I thank YHVH with my whole heart, ב In the Communion of Saints and Assembly. ג ² Great are the works of YHVH, ד Exquisite to all desire.	}	cf. <i>Vulg.</i>
His liberality.	{	ה ³ Splendour and Majesty is His work ו And His Righteousness abideth for ever]. ז ⁴ He hath made a Memorial-Name for His wonders. ח "Gracious and Merciful is YHVH."	}	
The practical result.	{	ט ⁵ He hath given provision to them that fear Him, י He will remember His Covenant for ever. יא ⁶ The power of His works He declared to His People, יב To give them the heritage of the Gentiles.]	}	

v. 1^a. "*I thank &c.*" This line is identical with the first line of Ps. ix., which is also an alphabetical Psalm. It should also be compared with the first line of the alphabetical Psalm xxxiv., with which our present Psalm has much in common in point of structure. The motive for the thankfulness of line א is found in line ד, "The works of His hands are truth and judgement." The collocation of "truth and judgement" is rare and reminds us of Ps. cxix. 160, "The sum of Thy Word is truth, each righteous judgement of Thine is eternal." The Hebrew word for *Truth*, consisting as it does of the *first, middle and last* letters of the Hebrew alphabet, became in later times the sign-manual of God, Who is not only the *Alpha* from which all things proceed and the *Omega* to which they tend but also the Middle Term by which they exist. When then the poet says, "The sum of Thy word is truth" he expresses the thought that "All creation is one act at once—the birth of light."

v. 1^b. "*In the Communion of Saints and Assembly*"—i.e. This joy in God is mine not only in the familiar intercourse of like-minded friends but also in great congregations. When joy in God is shared with others it gains stability—there is a *firmament* in our Heaven. The parallel line (letter ב) gives the outward justification of this inner joy, for "All His precepts are sure."

v. 2^b. "*Exquisite...*"—i.e. 'worthy of searching study':—Vulg. "Exquisita in omnes voluntates ejus." All God's works are exquisitely adapted in all their purposes to His great ends, being (as the parallel line 8^b tells us) "wrought in truth and right." Hence it follows that

"This world's no blot for us,
Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good."

Thus the other rendering is virtually implied—God's meanings must be "sought out by all them that have pleasure therein." And so we must complete the quotation:—

"To find its meaning is my meat and drink."

v. 3^a. "*Splendour and Majesty.*" These words bespeak the glory of a King, but this glory is shewn in "sending forth Redemption for His People" (see the parallel line 9^a).

"Conquering kings their titles take
From the foes they captive make;
Jesu, by a nobler deed,
From the captives He has freed."

v. 3^b. "*His Righteousness &c.*" Though we do not accept these words as part of the original text we

PS. CXI (PART II).

The good God as He is towards the world.

His blessedness and stability.	}	<p>𐤁 7 The works of His hands are truth and judgement, 𐤓 All His precepts are sure. 𐤁 8 They are stable for ever and ever, 𐤕 Being wrought in truth and right.</p>
His liberality.	}	<p>𐤁 9 He hath sent forth Redemption for His People, 𐤕 He hath enjoined His Covenant for ever, 𐤑 Holy and reverend is His Name.</p>
The practical result.	}	<p>𐤒 10 The fear of YHVH is the foundation of wisdom, 𐤔 A good intelligence comes to all those that practise them. 𐤓 His praise abideth for ever.</p>

are bound to interpret them as they stand. When then we take them with the parallel passages in Ps. cxii. 3 and 9, where it is also stated of the good man that "his righteousness abideth for ever," we are compelled to give to the word its *later* significance of *beneficence* [cf. St Paul's quotation of Ps. cxii. 9 in II Cor. ix. 9]. The active beneficence of God is continued through Creation and must be imitated by man: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

v. 4^a. "*A Memorial-Name for His wonders*"—i.e. *A Memorial-Name* to which all His wonders point. The word translated *Memorial* signifies the revelation of God's nature, e.g. Ex. iii. 15. "This is My Name for ever, and this is My *Memorial* unto all generations" [cf. notes on Pss. xxx. 4 (5); xcvi. 12]. The Memorial-Name which summed up all the Old Testament revelation was that Name revealed to Moses in Exod. xxxiv. 6 "And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, *merciful and gracious...*" Our Psalm does not quote the whole passage because the object was merely to set forth those attributes of God in which He could be imitated by men; thus in the parallel verse of Ps. cxii. it is said of the good man that "*he is gracious and merciful.*"

Without founding any argument on the date of Exodus it is clear that such a revelation of the *attributes of God* had been made in early times, for it is alluded to in Joel ii. 13; Jonah iv. 2 [cf. also Neh. ix. 17, 31; Pss. lxxxvi. 15; ciii. 8; cxvi. 5; cxlv. 8].

This word 'Memorial' which is almost identical with 'Name' is also used of the righteous man in the Companion-Psalm (cxii. 6). "For an eternal Memorial (i.e. name) he is 'Righteous,'" i.e. As God is known by His Name (Character) of "Gracious and Merciful" (Ps. cxi. 4) so the good man is known by the name (character) of "gracious and merciful *and righteous*" (Ps. cxii. 4). This is his name for ever (Ps. cxii. 6) even as it is God's "Name for ever" (Exod. iii. 15). The added term "righteous," cf. v. 4, does not, of course, imply that the good man is something *more* than a copy of the good God; it merely qualifies the attributes of 'gracious and merciful' in so far as they can be copied by man on earth. God is the great Almsgiver; man must copy Him in this.

v. 4^a. "*His wonders*":—The word carries with it the thought of darkness, terror and mystery. God's way was terrible, His footsteps were not known, but through all He was carrying out His purpose of Redemption and revealing His hidden Name of Love. See also note on the parallel verse of the next Psalm. The same thought is repeated in verse 6, "The power of His works He declared to His People, so as to give them the heritage of the Gentiles."

v. 5^f. The parallelism between the lines 𐤁, ' , 𐤓, and the lines 𐤒, 𐤔, 𐤓 is not easy to trace. In both cases they sum up the practical result of the two preceding stanzas.

PS. CXII (PART I).

The good man in his inner life.

- { **ן** 1 Oh happy is the man that feareth YHVH,
 { **ב** In His commandments he finds exceeding joy.
 { **ג** 2 Mighty on earth shall his seed become,
 { **ד** The generation of the saints shall be blessed.
 { **ה** 3 Wealth and riches are in his house
 { **ו** [And his righteousness abideth for ever].
 { **ז** 4 There is risen in darkness a light for the saints.
 { **ח** "He is gracious and merciful and righteous."
 { **ט** 5 It is well with the man, he is gracious* and giving, * Prov. xxii. 8;
II Cor. ix. 7
 { **י** He will maintain his words aright.
 { **יא** 6 Everlastingly he remains unmoved.
 { **יב** For an eternal Memorial he is "Righteous."]

PS. CXII. COMPARISON OF PARTS I AND II.

Letters **ן** and **ט**. The man who fears God need have no other fear. If we apply the Psalm to Christ then His courage in persecution is the best commentary.

ב and **ג**. He delights in doing his Father's will (Matt. xi. 25 f.) and so finds perfect peace and rest of heart (cf. also Is. xxvi. 3, "the *stable* mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace because it is *stayed* on Thee"). The Midrash, which applies the Psalm to Abraham, gives instances of his ready obedience.

ד and **ט**. He will not fail nor be discouraged until he sees a seed that shall prolong its days and the purpose of YHVH prospers in his hand. Compare the confidence with which Christ in the presence of death looked forward to the triumph of His work.

ה and **ט**. He is rich in himself and rich in his bounty, he empties himself, that the poor through his poverty may become rich.

ז and **ח**. Because he thus pours himself out for others therefore in his darkness the sunrise of a new Day begins, and it is a "Sun of Righteousness." His righteousness (i.e. his *justification before God and man*) shines forth and 'abides for ever.' The shining forth of righteousness like light is also found in the alphabetical Ps. xxxvii. 6, "He will bring forth thy righteousness as light." This is a characteristic of the second Isaiah (see Chap. lxii. 1 f., and compare for the thought of a *revelation* of righteousness, Chaps. lxvi. 1; lxi. 11; xlv. 8; li. 5). We also read of a sowing of righteousness as if it were a seed, e.g. Hos. x. 12, "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in grace;" cf. Prov. xi. 18. The double thought of the springing forth of righteousness like seed and the springing forth of righteousness like light is curiously combined in the prophecies of the 'Branch' (lit. *Outspring*) which becomes in St Luke "The Day-spring from on high." The outspring of the sun out of the darkness and the outspring of seed from the cold earth are closely kindred thoughts; compare the double reading of Ps. xcvi. 11, "Light is sown (*or* risen, like a sunrise) for the righteous." This double thought seems to have been in St Paul's mind when he quotes our present Psalm as an inducement to almsgiving II Cor. ix. 9 f. At first sight when we compare the parallel lines, "There is risen in

PS. CXII (PART II).

The good man in his outer life.

- { ד 7 He will not fear because of evil tidings,
 נ His heart is fixed—stayed upon YHVH.
 { ד 8 Stable is his heart—he feareth not,
 י Until he see his desire upon his enemies.
 { ד 9 He hath scattered abroad, he hath given to the poor,
 צ His righteousness abideth for ever,
 ק His horn is exalted with honour.
 { ג 10 The wicked shall see and be vexed,
 ש He will gnash with his teeth and melt away.
 ת The desire of wicked men perishes.

darkness a light for the saints," and "his righteousness abideth for ever," the connexion does not appear obvious, but when we have studied the texts which speak of the rising of righteousness like a glorious sunrise we see that the connexion is most close and exact. The first denotes the reward that the good man has in himself, the second the reward that he has in the world. Thus if we applied the Psalm to Christ we should say that the 'light that rose' for Him 'in the darkness' was the transfiguring consciousness that He was doing His Father's will, while His 'righteousness abiding for ever' was His victory, with all its fruits in the world.

ן and ק. 'He (i.e. the righteous man) is gracious and merciful and righteous,' i.e. the very Name of God is named upon him, so 'His horn is exalted with honour,' cf. Phil. ii. 9, "Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name."

In the three lines which follow, ד, י, נ with ג, ש, ת, we have, not parallelism, but sharp contrast.

The allusion to the wicked man in the three lines ג, ש, ת, should be compared with the three last verses of Ps. i. "Far otherwise with the wicked!" &c. and also with the ת line of Ps. xxxiv.

"A misfortune brings death to the wicked,
 And those that hate the righteous shall be held guilty."

The thought of the "two ways" (see notes on Ps. i.) is constantly present to the Psalmist's mind.

PS. CXI (PART I).

The good God as He is in Himself.

[Hallelu-Yah.]

{	Ⲛ 1 I thank YHVH with my whole heart,
	ⲛ In the Communion of Saints and Assembly.
{	ⲓ 2 Great are the works of YHVH,
	Ⲕ Exquisite to all desire.
{	ⲕ 3 Splendour and Majesty is His work
	[ⲓ And His Righteousness abideth for ever].
{	ⲓ 4 He hath made a Memorial-Name of His wonders.
	ⲕ "Gracious and Merciful is YHVH."
{	ⲛ 5 He hath given provision to them that fear Him,
	ⲓ He will remember His Covenant for ever.
{	ⲓ 6 The power of His works He declared to His People,
	ⲛ To give them the heritage of the Gentiles.]

NOTES ON PS. CXI (PART I) COMPARED WITH PS. CXII (PART I).

cxii. 1 with cxii. 1. I thank God for the Covenant—Happy alone is the man who finds his joy therein.

cxii. 2 with cxii. 2. God's works are mighty and enduring so that man (through the Covenant) shall be mighty and enduring.

cxii. 3* with cxii. 3*. His state is kingly—so too the good man's.

cxii. 4 with cxii. 4. The mystery of God's terrible wonders unfolds at last the Divine Name as "Gracious and Merciful." So out of the darkness which seems to beset the good man there rises a Divine Nature: he too is "gracious and merciful and righteous."

cxii. 5 with cxii. 5. As the good God gives food to all so the good man shares His joy in giving.

As the good God abides by His Covenant in spite of all provocation, so of the good man—his word is his bond.

(cxii. 6* with cxii. 6*). These words are difficult. They do not mean that God "shewed" i.e. *caused* His People to see "the power of His works," for then a different verb would have been used (as in Exod. ix. 16). They must mean that God "declared" or "told," as a revelation to His people, what the whole bearing of His mighty works had meant; thus the line is similar in meaning to verse 4. The relation with cxii. 6* is not evident, but we notice in both Psalms the same relation between verses 6 and 4.

Psalm cxii. should never be separated from its companion—Psalm cxii. Read together they become a prophecy of the Incarnation. The Latin Church (according to Blunt) appointed Pss. cxii—cxii. for Christmas Day; but our Church, misled by a Patristic interpretation of "*provision*" (in cxii. 5), reads

PS. CXI (PART II).

The good God as He is towards man.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>God's <i>works</i> and
<i>thoughts</i> are stable.</p> <p>His liberality is
(α) <i>free</i>,
(β) <i>continuous</i>,
(γ) <i>and brings</i>
<i>him honour</i>.</p> <p>See the practical
result !</p> | { | <p>ד 7 The works of His hands are truth and judgement,
 נ All His precepts are sure.
 ח 8 They are stable for ever and ever,
 ע Being wrought in truth and right.
 ט 9 He hath sent forth Redemption for His People,
 צ He hath enjoined His Covenant for ever,
 ק Holy and reverend is His Name.
 ר 10 The fear of YHVH is the foundation of wisdom,
 ש A good intelligence comes to all those that practise
 them.
 ת His praise abideth for ever.</p> |
|---|---|--|

PS. CXII (PART II).

The good man as he is towards man.

The good man's
works and thoughts
are stable.

His liberality is

(a) free,

(β) continuous,

(γ) and brings
him honour.

Contrast the wicked
man!

- | | | |
|---|----|--|
| { | 7 | He will not fear because of evil tidings, |
| | 8 | Stable is his heart—he feareth not, |
| | 9 | Until he see his desire upon his enemies. |
| | 10 | He hath scattered abroad, he hath given to the poor, |
| | 11 | His righteousness abideth for ever. |
| | 12 | His horn is exalted with honour. |
| | 13 | His horn is exalted with honour. |
| | 14 | He shall gnash his teeth and melt away. |
| | 15 | The desire of wicked men perishes. |
| | 16 | The wicked shall see and be vexed, |

PSALM CXIX.

“In each verse—so runs the Masoretic note on *v. 122*—*v. 122* alone excepted, there is found one of the ten expressions (pointing to the ten words of the Law given at Sinai).” (Delitzsch.) The ten expressions are (1) *Oracles*, (2) *Word*, (3) *Testimony*, (4) *Way*, (5) *Judgements*, (6) *Precepts*, (7) *Commandments*, (8) *Law*, (9) *Statutes*, (10) *Faithfulness* (according to another reading *righteousness*).

This Jewish tradition gives us a valuable hint but it is not strictly accurate. The characteristic number of Ps. cxix. is not *ten* but *eight*; each of the twenty-two letters being repeated *eight* times. Thus we are led to expect rather the number *eight* than *ten*. And so we find it.

The Divine Name, YHVH, occurs 22 times and, if we study the above ten expressions we shall find that *eight* of them occur (practically) 22 times each.

Thus <i>Law</i>	25 times, i.e. (22 + 3) times,
<i>Oracles</i>	19 times, i.e. (22 - 3) times,
<i>Word</i>	22 times,
<i>Commandments</i>	22 times,
<i>Judgements</i>	22 times,
<i>Statutes</i>	22 times,
<i>Testimonies</i>	23 times, i.e. (22 + 1) times,
<i>Precepts</i>	21 times, i.e. (22 - 1) times.

Thus, on an average, each of these *eight* terms under which the Law can be described occurs 22 times just as YHVH occurs 22 times, the letters of the alphabet being 22 in number.

Thus I conclude that these eight terms have a special significance and I have printed them in small capitals.

Of the other two expressions suggested by the Jewish tradition, “*faithfulness*” only occurs five times and can scarcely be said to be one of the names of the Law; “*way*” (דרך) occurs 13 times, in six of which, at least, it refers not to God’s way but to man’s way.

The significance of these eight terms must now be considered.

1. תורה *Thora* “Law,” lit. “teaching.” Nothing can be more misleading than to confine the word, as is usually done, to the Law of Moses. There is an inwardness in the word which makes it almost identical with *inspiration*. Thus of the priest, through whom it came continuously as a Divine message to men, it is said “The law of truth was in his mouth...” (Mal. ii. 6; cf. Jer. ii. 8; viii. 8; Ezek. vii. 26). The true seat of *Thora* is in the heart (Ps. xxvii. 31; xl. 8 (9); Is. li. 7). The

Law of God is properly the inspiration which proceeds from God just as the "*law of kindness*" (Prov. xxxi. 26) is the inspiration which proceeds from kindness, and "*the law of a mother*" (Prov. vi. 20) is the inspiration of a mother's influence. The *Law* is thus often compared to Light from Light (see notes on Ps. xix.), e.g. Is. li. 4 "a law shall proceed from Me...as a light to the nations." Zion is the centre from which this inspiration shall go forth: "The Law shall go forth from Zion..." (Mic. iv. 2). The prophets felt that the written Law was only a shadow of that Law which must at last be "written in the hearts" of men (see Jer. xxxi. 33). There is no one word in English to express the meaning of *Thora*; if we must use the word *Law* we must read into it the meanings which I have here stated. *Thora* is found 25 times in the 119th Psalm.

2. מצוה "*Commandment.*" This word differs from *Thora* as the command of a father differs from the influence of a mother; thus it is said "Observe, my son, the *Commandment* of thy father and forsake not the *Thora* of thy mother" (Prov. vi. 20). Or, to use another illustration, as a *lamp* differs from the *light* of the sun; so it is said (Prov. vi. 23) "the *Commandment* is a lamp and *Thora* is Light." *Commandments* may be many but *Thora* in its essence is one. "*Commandment*" occurs 22 times in Ps. cxix. i.e. as many times as there are letters in the alphabet.

3. משפּט "*Judgement.*" This word also occurs 22 times in our Psalm and in almost every passage it must be taken as a synonym for "*law,*" as in Ps. lxxxi. 4 (5), where it is translated "a *law* of the God of Jacob" (cf. Exod. xv. 25 &c.). This sense is common in Leviticus, where we often read of the "Statutes and the judgements." The "judgements" of God were the Divine *decisions* on special cases from time to time which came through the medium of the priest. "They shall teach Thy *judgements* to Jacob and Thy *Thora* to Israel" (Deut. xxxiii. 10).

4. חקִים "*statutes.*" There is a feeling of permanence in this word: it is used to describe what we should call the 'laws' of the sun, moon and stars (Jer. xxxi. 35; xxxiii. 25; cf. v. 24; Job xxxviii. 33), consequently it is often coupled with the words "for ever," i.e. a "perpetual statute" (Exod. xxix. 28; xxx. 21; Lev. vi. 18 (11), 22 (15); vii. 34; x. 15; xxiv. 9 &c.). It is a favourite thought with Jeremiah that the permanence of the laws of Nature is a type and pledge of the permanence of God's statutes to Israel (Jer. xxxi. 36; cf. v. 22—24). The word "statutes" also occurs 22 times in our Psalm.

5. עֵדָה (עֵדוּת) "*testimony.*" This is another name for the Law regarded as that to which God has *borne witness*. A stone upon which the Law was written might be called a "testimony" (Josh. xxiv. 27) or "witness"; so the "two tables" are called the "tables of the testimony" (Exod. xxxi. 18; xxxii. 15; xxxiv. 29), and the Ark which contained them is constantly called the "Ark of the testimony." The word "*testimony*" is found 23 times in our Psalm.

6. אִמְרָה "*word, oracles* or *logia.*" It generally signifies speech of a more solemn nature than the more common term *dabar*, and it is worthy of note that the

Mémra of later Judaism which prepared the way for the doctrine of the *Logos* is derived from this same word.

It is often coupled with the thought of *purity out of a fiery trial*, e.g.:

Prov. xxx. 5 "Every *oracle* of God is purified" (i.e. as by fire).

Ps. cxix. 140 "Thy word (*oracle*) is purified exceedingly and Thy servant loveth it."

Ps. xii. 6 (7) "The *oracles* of YHVH are pure *oracles*, silver purified &c."

Ps. xviii. 30 (31) "The word (*oracle*) of YHVH is purified &c."

Compare also my suggested text in Ps. xix. 10.

Ps. cxix. 103 "How sweet are Thy *oracles* unto my taste—more so than honey to my mouth."

Prov. xvi. 24 "Sweet oracles are (like) dripping honey, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."

Compare also note on Ps. xix.

Not only is the *word (oracle)* of God "tried," "purified" but it is itself the *trier*; it is ζῶν...ἐνεργῆς...κρῖτικὸς (Heb. iv. 12): so it is said of Joseph "the *oracle* of God *tried* him" (Ps. cv. 19).

דבר "*Word.*" *Davar* differs from *Imra* somewhat as *logos* differs from *logia*. In Psalm cxix. the *Word* points to a written word of Scripture but undoubtedly it must not be confined to the written word.

8. פקודים "*Precepts.*" This word, which is used only in the plural, occurs 21 times in Ps. cxix. The only other passages being Pss. xix. 8 (9); ciii. 18; and cxi. 7. It signifies a *sacred deposit*. This root-meaning is not always obvious but it should always be present to the mind of the reader in studying verses 4, 15, 27, 40, 45, 56, 63, 69, 78, 87, 93, 94, 100, 104, 110, 128, 134, 141, 159, 168 and 173 of Ps. cxix.

Though Ps. cxix. appears to be merely a collection of aphorisms arranged under the letters of the Alphabet, I feel sure that there is a deeper meaning if only it could be discovered. The analogy of the other Alphabetical Psalms would lead us to expect a division in, at least, two parts, so that the letter *Mem* should correspond with the letter *Aleph* etc. I have indicated traces of this in my marginal notes.

There are, I believe, three leading thoughts in the Psalm, viz. *Happiness, Guidance, Revelation* (compare the Way, the Truth, the Life) which recur in the following order:

<i>Happiness</i>	א	ב	ג	ד		ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	}
<i>Guidance</i>	י	יא	יב	יג		יד	טו	טז	יז	יח	}
<i>Revelation</i>	יט	כ	כא	כב		כג	כד	כה	כו	כז	}

The vertical line marks the chief division of the Psalm at the letter **ב**, which the Jews call the middle letter of the alphabet.

The student is specially asked to study the references to Ps. xix.; the reason for this will appear when we come to that Psalm.

PSALM CXIX.

God's Word brings
happiness when ac-
cepted with a whole
heart.

- ❧ 1 Happy are they who are heart-and-soul in the way,
That walk in the LAW of YHVH ;
 ❧ 2 Happy are they that keep His TESTIMONIES,
That seek Him with a whole heart ;
 ❧ 3 Yea they do no unrighteousness,
In His way do they walk.
 ❧ 4 Thou hast ordained Thy PRECEPTS
For a strict observance.
 ❧ 5 Oh that my ways were established
So as to observe Thy STATUTES.
 ❧ 6 Then I should not be put to shame
When I have respect unto all Thy COMMANDMENTS.
 ❧ 7 I will thank Thee with an upright heart
When I learn Thy righteous JUDGEMENTS.
 ❧ 8 Thy STATUTES I will observe ;
Oh forsake me not utterly.

God's Word brings
guidance when stored
in the heart as the
heart's chief treasure.

- ❧ 9 Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way ?
By observing Thy WORD.
 ❧ 10 With my whole heart^a have I sought^a Thee ;
Let me not wander from Thy COMMANDMENTS.
 ❧ 11 I have stored^b Thy ORACLES in my heart^b,
That I should not sin against Thee.
 ❧ 12 Blessed art Thou, YHVH,
O teach me Thy STATUTES.
 ❧ 13 With my lips do I rehearse
All the JUDGEMENTS of Thy mouth.
 ❧ 14 In the way of Thy TESTIMONIES I delight,
As it were in all manner of riches.
 ❧ 15 I will meditate on Thy PRECEPTS
And have regard to Thy ways.
 ❧ 16 I will delight myself in Thy STATUTES,
And will not forget Thy WORD.

^a 2 Chr. xxx.
18 f.

^b Luke ii. 51

v. 3. "In His way, &c." The P. B. Version "For they who do no wickedness : walk in His ways" reads rather like a truism. The LXX clearly felt the difficulty for they translate, "for they that work wickedness do not walk in His ways." This third verse, as it stands, does not contain one of the eight synonyms for the Law ; if however we might venture to change וַלְכֹךְ into וַלְכֹךְ i.e. *His way* into *His word* we should gain, I think, a deeper meaning, which would be parallel to that of verse 9, viz. that the walk of life must be guided by the Word of God. The same would apply to the text of v. 37.

God's Word (Revelation) draws back the veil and lets the eye see wonders though apostasy seem to prevail (cf. letter *Samech*).

- י 17 Deal bountifully with Thy servant that I may live,
For I would fain observe Thy WORD.
- י 18 Unveil mine eyes that I may behold
The marvels of Thy LAW.
- י 19 I am but a sojourner^a on earth;
O hide not Thy COMMANDMENTS from me.
- י 20 My soul is crushed with longing
For Thy JUDGEMENTS at all times.
- י 21 Thou hast rebuked the proud, as accursed,
Who go straying^b from Thy COMMANDMENTS.
- י 22 Roll away from me reproach and contempt
For I have kept Thy TESTIMONIES.
- י 23 Yea though princes sit and speak against me,
Thy servant will meditate in Thy STATUTES.
- י 24 Thy TESTIMONIES also are my great delights;
They are my counsellors^c.

^a cf. v. 54

^b v. 118

^c lit. *the men of my counsel*

God's Word the remedy for depression. The soul that cleaves to His testimonies (v. 31) will not long cleave to the dust (v. 25).

- י 25 My soul cleaveth to the dust;
Quicken me according to Thy WORD.
- י 26 I have rehearsed my ways and Thou hast answered me;
Teach me Thy STATUTES.
- י 27 Make me to understand the way of Thy PRECEPTS
That I may meditate in Thy wondrous works.
- י 28 My soul droopeth through heaviness;
Uphold me according to Thy WORD.
- י 29 Put from me the false way,
And be gracious unto me (with) Thy LAW^d.
- י 30 I have chosen the way of faithfulness,
Thy JUDGEMENTS have I set before me.
- י 31 I cleave unto Thy TESTIMONIES,
O YHVH put me not to shame.

^d ? text;
see v. 58

v. 21. "*The proud*"—i.e. not in a social but in a religious sense. The word is almost a synonym for a *scorner* (Prov. xxi. 24; Mal. iii. 15; iv. 1 (iii. 19)). In the Psalter it is only found eight times, of which *six* are in our present Ps. (vv. 21, 51, 69, 78, 85, 122), *one* in the closely related Ps. xix. 13 (14) (see notes), and *one* in Ps. lxxxvi. 14. In all these passages "*the proud*" denote, I believe, the *freethinkers* in Israel who made common cause with the heathen. Compare also the allusions to the *proud* in the *Psalms of Solomon*.

v. 29. "*And be gracious unto me (with) Thy LAW.*"—In v. 58 we read "be gracious unto me according to Thy ORACLES" which gives much more intelligent meaning. May it not be that in the present instance תורתך *Thy Law* has been read by mistake for תורתך *Thy Oracles*?

We have already seen (p. 50) that LAW occurs three times too often in Ps. cxix. while ORACLES occurs three times too seldom to make up the number of twenty-two.

7 32 I will run the way of Thy COMMANDMENTS,
For Thou dost enlarge my heart.

God's Word the
remedy against the
lust of the eyes and
the pride of life (1
Joh. ii. 16).

7 33 Teach me, O YH\YH, the way of Thy STATUTES;
And I will keep it unto the end.

7 34 Give me understanding that I may keep Thy LAW;
And I will observe it with my whole heart.

7 35 Make me to go in the path of Thy COMMANDMENTS,
For therein is my delight.

7 36 Incline my heart to Thy TESTIMONIES,
And not to covetousness.

7 37 Turn away mine eyes from seeing vanity;
Quicken me in Thy way*.

* ? text

7 38 Establish Thy ORACLE(S) to Thy servant
Which tend unto Thy fear.

7 39 Take away my reproach which I am afraid of;
For Thy JUDGEMENTS are good.

7 40 Behold I long for Thy PRECEPTS;
Quicken me in Thy righteousness.

God's Word gives
heart-freedom and
boldness.

7 41 Let Thy lovingkindness come unto me O YHVH,
Thy salvation according to Thy ORACLE(S).

7 42 So shall I have a word of answer for my reviler,
Because I trust in Thy WORD.

7 43 Take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth;
For I hope for Thy JUDGEMENT(S).

7 44 I would keep Thy LAW continually,
Even for ever and ever.

7 45 I shall walk at liberty,
Because I seek Thy PRECEPTS.

v. 37. "Quicken me in Thy way."—This verse does not contain one of the eight words for God's Law. I suspect that the original text read *word* instead of *way* as in v. 3. This would bring it into line with such expressions as "Quicken me according to Thy Word" (v. 25, 107), "Strengthen me according to Thy Word" (v. 28). This suggestion is confirmed from a study of the eight other passages in which "quicken me" occurs in the Psalm. Thus:—

- v. 25. "Quicken me according to Thy word."
- v. 40. " " " in Thy righteousness."
- v. 88. " " " according to Thy lovingkindness."
- v. 107. " " " according to Thy word."
- v. 149. " " " according to Thy judgement (i.e. Thy wont?)."
- v. 154. " " " after Thy oracles."
- v. 156. " " " according to Thy judgements."
- v. 159. " " " according to Thy lovingkindness."

- ‡ 46 I would speak of Thy TESTIMONIES even before kings,
And would not be ashamed.
- ‡ 47 I delight myself in Thy COMMANDMENTS which I love,
And will lift up my hand to [Thy COMMANDMENTS
which I love].
- ‡ 48 And will meditate in Thy STATUTES.

God's Word (Pro-
mise) gives hope in
dark hours (cf. letter
Daleth).

- ‡ 49 Remember the WORD to Thy servant,
Seeing Thou hast caused me to hope.
- ‡ 50 This is my comfort in my affliction :
That Thy ORACLE(S) quicken me.
- ‡ 51 The proud have scoffed at me exceedingly
(Because) I have not swerved from Thy LAW.
- ‡ 52 I remember thy JUDGEMENTS of old time, YHVH,
And I console myself.
- ‡ 53 Indignation seized me because of the wicked,
The forsakers of Thy LAW.
- ‡ 54 Thy STATUTES have been my songs
In my pilgrimage home.
- ‡ 55 I remember Thy Name in the night, YHVH^a,
And observe Thy LAW.
- ‡ 56 This much hath been mine
Because I keep Thy PRECEPTS.

^a v. 147 f.

God's Word makes
God Himself my por-
tion.

- ¶ 57 My portion is YHVH,
I have promised to observe Thy WORDS.
- ¶ 58 I have sought Thy favour with my whole heart ;
Be gracious unto me according to Thy ORACLE(S).
- ¶ 59 I have bethought me of my ways,
And have turned my feet unto Thy TESTIMONIES.
- ¶ 60 I made haste and did not delay
To keep Thy COMMANDMENTS.
- ¶ 61 The cords of the wicked surround me
(Because) I forget not Thy LAW.
- ¶ 62 At midnight I rise to give Thee thanks^b
Because of Thy righteous JUDGEMENTS.
- ¶ 63 I am a companion of all them that fear Thee,
And of them that observe Thy PRECEPTS.
- ¶ 64 Thy lovingkindness, YHVH, fills the earth ;
Teach me Thy STATUTES.

^b v. 147 f.

God's Word reveals God as the One who is Good and brings Good, even out of evil.

- ☞ 65 Thou hast dealt with Thy servant,
O YHVH, according to Thy WORD.
- ☞ 66 Teach me good discernment and knowledge,
For I believe in Thy COMMANDMENTS.
- ☞ 67 Before I was afflicted I went astray,
But now I observe Thy ORACLES.
- ☞ 68 Good art Thou and doest good,
Teach me Thy STATUTES.
- ☞ 69 The proud have forged a lie against me,
I keep Thy PRECEPTS with my whole heart.
- ☞ 70 Their heart is gross as fat!
As for me, Thy LAW is my great delight.
- ☞ 71 It is good for me that I was afflicted,
That I might learn Thy STATUTES.
- ☞ 72 Better to me is the LAW of Thy mouth
Than thousands of gold and silver.

God's Word shews me to be the work of His hands; therefore His hands must still mould me, correct me and complete His work.

- ☞ 73 Thy hands have made me and fashioned me,
Give me understanding that I may learn thy COMMANDMENTS.
- ☞ 74 They that fear Thee shall see me and be glad,
Because I set my hope on Thy WORD.
- ☞ 75 I know O YHVH that Thy JUDGEMENTS are right,
And that in faithfulness Thou hast afflicted me.
- ☞ 76 Let Thy lovingkindness be to comfort me
According to Thy ORACLE(S) unto Thy servant.
- ☞ 77 Let Thy compassion visit me that I may live,
For Thy LAW is my great delight.
- ☞ 78 Let the proud be shamed for that they have falsely
wronged me,
Whereas I for my part meditate in Thy PRECEPTS.
- ☞ 79 Let those that fear Thee be turned to me,
And they shall^a know Thy TESTIMONIES.
- ☞ 80 Let my heart be whole in Thy STATUTES,
That I be not put to shame.

^a or, they that know

God's Word my one stay in utter desertion.

- ☞ 81 My soul longeth for Thy salvation,
In Thy WORD do I hope.
- ☞ 82 Mine eyes long for Thy ORACLES,
Saying "When wilt Thou comfort me?"

- 83 Though I am become like a bottle* in the smoke, * i.e. wine-s
 I have not forgotten Thy STATUTES.
 84 How many are the days of Thy servant?
 When wilt Thou execute JUDGEMENT on my persecutors?
 85 The proud have dug pitfalls for me,
 (They) who are not in accord with Thy LAW.
 86 All Thy COMMANDMENTS are faithfulness,
 Wrongly do they persecute me;—help Thou me!
 87 They had well nigh made an end of me in the Land,
 Whereas I had not forsaken Thy PRECEPTS.
 88 According to Thy lovingkindness quicken me,
 So would I observe the TESTIMONY of Thy mouth.

God's Word lets
me see the stability
of Nature as the
pledge of a faithful
Creator—I trust what
He will do.

- 89 For ever, O YHVH,
 Thy WORD hath its stand in the heavens.
 90 From age to age is Thy faithfulness,
 Thou hast founded the earth and it stands.
 91 They stand to-day according to Thy JUDGEMENTS,
 For the whole are Thy servants.
 92 Except Thy LAW had been my delight,
 I should then have perished in my affliction.
 93 Never will I forget Thy PRECEPTS,
 For through them Thou hast quickened me.
 94 Thine I am: Oh save me,
 For I enquire into Thy PRECEPTS.
 95 The wicked wait for me to destroy me,
 I ponder over Thy TESTIMONIES.
 96 To all perfection I see a limit,
 Thy COMMANDMENT is exceeding broad.

God's Word has
the promise of the life
that now is (cf. letter
Aleph).

- 97 Oh how I love Thy LAW,
 It is my meditation all the day.
 98 Thy COMMANDMENTS make me wiser than mine enemies,
 For it^b is ever with me. ^b i.e. Thy
Law

v. 90. This verse as it stands does not contain one of the eight synonyms for Law. I cannot doubt but that the original text, instead of אֱמֻנָתְךָ "*Thy faithfulness*," read אֱמֻרָתְךָ "*Thy ORACLES*."

It may also be worth noting that, out of the nineteen verses in this Psalm in which the word ORACLES is found, eight times at least it comes in connexion with WORD in the preceding or following verse (see vv. 41, 50, 58, 82, 140, 148, 162, 170). If the readings I have suggested in vv. 29, 38 and 90 be adopted, we should have three additional instances of this juxtaposition of WORD and ORACLES.

- D 99 I have more insight than all my teachers,
 For Thy TESTIMONIES are my meditation.
 D 100 I ponder more than the aged,
 For I keep Thy PRECEPTS.
 D 101 I have refrained my foot from every evil way,
 That I may keep Thy WORD.
 D 102 I have not swerved from thy JUDGEMENTS,
 For it is Thou who teachest me.
 D 103 How sweet to my taste are Thy ORACLES—
 More than honey to my mouth.
 D 104 Through Thy PRECEPTS I have understanding,
 Therefore I hate every false way.

God's Word is a
guiding light in this
 dark world (cf. letter
Beth).

- J 105 Thy WORD is a lamp to my feet,
 And a light unto my path.
 J 106 I have sworn, and will make it good,
 To observe Thy righteous JUDGEMENTS.
 J 107 I am humbled exceedingly,
 Quicken me, O YHVH, according to Thy WORD.
 J 108 Graciously^a accept the freewill-offerings of my mouth,^a Ps. xix. 14
 O YHVH,
 And teach me Thy JUDGEMENTS.
 J 109 My life is ever in my hand,
 And I do not forget Thy LAW.
 J 110 The wicked have set a snare for me,
 And I stray not from thy PRECEPTS.
 J 111 Thy TESTIMONIES are mine heritage for ever,
 For the very joy of my heart are they!
 J 112 I have inclined my heart to perform Thy STATUTES,
 Eternal is (their) after-gain^b.

^a cf. v. 33 and
 Ps. xix. 11
 (12); Prov.
 xxii. 4

God's Word is the
stay amid apostasy
 which prevails (cf.
 letter *Gimel*).

- D 113 The double-minded I hate,
 And Thy LAW do I love.
 D 114 My covert and my shield art Thou,
 For Thy WORD I hope.
 D 115 Depart from me ye evil-doers,
 For I would keep the COMMANDMENTS of my God.
 D 116 Uphold me according to Thy ORACLES that I may live,
 And let me not be disappointed of my hope.

- D¹¹⁷ Hold Thou me up and I shall be safe,
 And shall regard Thy STATUTES continually.
 D¹¹⁸ Thou lightly esteemest all those that err from Thy
 STATUTES,
 For their artifice is but a lie.
 D¹¹⁹ Thou puttest away as dross all the wicked of earth,
 Therefore I love Thy TESTIMONIES.
 D¹²⁰ My flesh trembleth for fear of Thee,
 And I reverence Thy JUDGEMENTS.

The *Eye of the
 Servant* is unto God's
 Word (cf. Ps. xix. 11
 and letter *Daleth*).

- Y¹²¹ I have executed JUDGEMENT and righteousness;
 Oh leave me not to mine oppressors!
 Y¹²² Be surety for Thy servant for good;
 Let not the proud oppress me!
 Y¹²³ Mine eyes long^a for Thy salvation, ^a cf. v. 82
 For Thy righteous ORACLE(S).
 Y¹²⁴ Deal with Thy servant according to Thy lovingkindness,
 And teach me Thy STATUTES.
 Y¹²⁵ I am Thy servant, Oh give me understanding,
 That I may know Thy TESTIMONIES.
 Y¹²⁶ YHVH's time for action is come:
 They have made void Thy LAW.
 Y¹²⁷ Therefore I love Thy COMMANDMENTS
 More than gold^b—more than fine gold^b. ^b Ps. xix. 10
 Y¹²⁸ Therefore all (Thy) PRECEPTS in all things I approve;
 Every false way I hate.
 D¹²⁹ Marvellous are Thy TESTIMONIES,
 Therefore my (very) soul keeps them.
 D¹³⁰ The revelation of Thy WORD giveth light,
 Making the simple wise^c. ^c Ps. xix. 8
 D¹³¹ I opened my mouth and drew in my breath,
 I have such longing for Thy COMMANDMENTS.
 D¹³² Turn Thou to me and shew me favour;
 As JUDGEMENT^d should be to those that love Thy Name. ^d i.e. as Thy
 manner is
 to...

v. 122. This verse is without one of the eight words. The verb in the first line has two meanings (*a*) to be sweet, (*b*) to be surety. The Prayer Book Version follows the former "Make Thou Thy servant to delight in &c." a rendering which could scarcely be justified grammatically as a paraphrase. The other meaning, of *surety*, is undoubtedly correct. Compare Is. xxxviii. 14, "I am oppressed; be surety for me."

- D** ¹³³ Uphold my steps in Thy ORACLES;
 So shall no wickedness obtain the rule over me^a. * Ps. xix. 14
D ¹³⁴ Redeem me from the oppression of man;
 So shall I observe Thy PRECEPTS.
D ¹³⁵ Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant,
 And teach me Thy STATUTES.
D ¹³⁶ Mine eyes flow streams of water;
 For that they^b have not observed Thy LAW. ^b or, men

God's Word is "tried" and *righteous* and is also the trier of hearts to make them *righteous*.

- Y** ¹³⁷ Righteous art Thou, O YHVH,
 And right are Thy JUDGEMENTS.
Y ¹³⁸ Thou hast enjoined the righteousness of Thy TESTIMONIES;
 And in exceeding faithfulness.
Y ¹³⁹ My zeal hath consumed me,
 Because mine adversaries have forgotten Thy WORDS.
Y ¹⁴⁰ Thy ORACLE is tried^c exceedingly,
 And Thy servant loveth it. ^c i. e. as by fire
Ps. xix. 9
(note)
Y ¹⁴¹ I am small and despised,
 (But) I do not forget Thy PRECEPTS.
Y ¹⁴² Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness,
 And Thy LAW is truth.
Y ¹⁴³ Trouble and anguish have found me out,
 (Then) Thy COMMANDMENTS were my delights.
Y ¹⁴⁴ The righteousness of Thy TESTIMONIES is everlasting;
 Grant me understanding and I shall live.

God's Word is music in the night (cf. letter *Zain*).

- P** ¹⁴⁵ I cry with my whole heart;
 Answer me, O YHVH, I would keep Thy STATUTES.
P ¹⁴⁶ I cry unto thee, Oh save me,
 For I would keep Thy TESTIMONIES.
P ¹⁴⁷ I anticipate the dawn and cry aloud,
 For Thy WORD do I hope.
P ¹⁴⁸ Mine eyes anticipate the night-watches^d
 To meditate in Thy ORACLES. ^d cf. v. 55
P ¹⁴⁹ Hear my voice according to Thy lovingkindness;
 Quicken me, O YHVH, according to Thy JUDGEMENT.
P ¹⁵⁰ They draw near who follow iniquity,
 From Thy LAW they are estranged.

P 151 (But) near art Thou, O YHVH,
 And all Thy COMMANDMENTS are truth.
 P 152 I know that Thy TESTIMONIES are of old,
 That Thou hast established them for ever.

God's Word *sums*
 up the '*many things*'
 in the one thing need-
 ful, which is Truth.

7 153 See mine affliction and rescue me,
 For I do not forget Thy LAW.
 7 154 Plead Thou my cause and redeem me;
 Quicken me after Thy ORACLES.
 7 155 Safety is far from the wicked,
 For they seek not Thy STATUTES.
 7 156 Many are Thy compassions, O YHVH,
 Quicken me according to Thy JUDGEMENTS.
 7 157 Many are my persecutors and adversaries,
 (Yet) I swerve not from Thy TESTIMONIES.
 7 158 I saw the treacherous-dealers and was grieved;
 Because they have not observed Thy ORACLES.
 7 159 See how I love Thy PRECEPTS,
 Quicken me, YHVH, according to Thy lovingkindness.
 7 160 The sum of Thy WORD is truth:
 Each righteous JUDGEMENT of Thine is eternal.

God's Word brings
 perfect *Peace* to the
 heart that loves it
 and accepts it as a
 whole.

W 161 Princes have persecuted me without a cause;
 Yet my heart is in awe of Thy WORDS.
 W 162 I rejoice over Thy ORACLES
 As one that findeth great spoil.
 W 163 Lies I hate and abhor;
 Thy LAW do I love.
 W 164 Seven times a day do I praise Thee,
 Because of Thy righteous JUDGEMENTS.
 W 165 Great peace there is to those that love Thy LAW,
 And to them there is no stumbling-block.
 W 166 I hope for Thy salvation O YHVH,
 And perform Thy COMMANDMENTS.
 W 167 My soul observeth Thy TESTIMONIES,
 And loveth them exceedingly.
 W 168 I observe Thy PRECEPTS [and Thy TESTIMONIES],
 For all my ways are before Thee.

v. 168. The structure of the Psalm leads us to expect only one of the eight synonyms for Law in each verse, whereas the Hebrew text in this verse has two viz. PRECEPTS and TESTIMONIES. Of these, TESTIMONIES may easily have been copied from verse 167.

The letter *Tav* signifies *desire* (Job xxxi. 35) and also a *mark* or *cross* (Ezek. ix. 4, 6).

- א 169 Let my plaint draw nigh before Thee O YHVH,
 Give me understanding according to Thy WORD.
 א 170 Let my supplication come before Thee;
 Give me deliverance according to Thy ORACLES.
 א 171 Let my lips overflow with praise-song;
 Because Thou teachest me Thy STATUTES.
 א 172 Let my tongue respond to Thy ORACLES;
 Because all Thy COMMANDMENTS are righteous.
 א 173 Let Thy hand be to help me,
 Because I have chosen Thy PRECEPTS.
 א 174 I long for Thy salvation O YHVH,
 And Thy LAW is my great delight.
 א 175 Let my soul live and it shall praise Thee,
 And let Thy JUDGEMENTS help me.
 א 176 I have wandered like a sheep that is lost;
 Seek Thy servant: for I do not forget Thy COMMAND-
 MENTS.

v. 172. Here again, according to the structure of the Psalm, we should not expect to find ORACLES and COMMANDMENTS in one verse. The parallelism too with *v.* 171 would lead us rather to expect that as 'my lips overflow with praise-song' so 'my tongue responds *with words.*' Such a reading would only require the omission of one letter in the Hebrew, that being the letter with which the next word begins.

PSALM CXLV.

In this, the last of the Alphabetical Psalms, the division into stanzas is by no means clearly defined, there is however a sequence of thought which is indicated in the marginal notes. After an Introduction of two verses we have four verses in praise of God's *Greatness* followed by four verses in praise of His *Mercy* as revealed in the Covenant Name (Exod. xxxiv. 6; cf. Ps. cxi. 4). This completes what we may call the first half of the Psalm in ten verses. The second half repeats and expands the same two thoughts. It begins with three verses (or four, if we grant the genuineness of the J verse) on the *Greatness* of God in His Kingdom on Earth; followed by six verses on His *Mercy*: these six verses are again subdivided, the first three (*vv.* 14—16) denoting God's mercy towards His creatures generally, the second three (*vv.* 17—19) denoting His mercy towards His own people who call upon Him. Thus, granting the genuineness of the J verse, the second half of the Psalm would consist of ten verses, divided like those of the first half, between the Greatness and the Mercy of God with more special reference to His Kingdom upon Earth. The Psalm concludes, as it opens, with a summary of two verses (*vv.* 20 and 21) which should be compared with *vv.* 1 and 2. Possibly *v.* 20 should be read with *vv.* 17—19. If so I should be inclined to think that the author of the Psalm had intentionally omitted the J verse in order that the verses in praise of God's greatness and mercy might form a ten-stringed lute in the second half just as they do in the first half.

Introduction.

- 1 I will extol Thee, my God, as King,
 I will bless Thy Name for ever and ever.
 2 Every day will I bless Thee,
 And praise Thy Name for ever and ever.

His greatness.

- 3 GREAT is YHVH and highly to be praised^a,
 His greatness is unsearchable. ^a Ps. xlviii. 1
 4 Generation to generation shall laud Thy acts,
 And proclaim Thy mighty deeds.
 5 The splendour of the glory of Thy majesty shall they tell,
 And of Thy wondrous works will I meditate.
 6 Of the might of Thy works of awe they shall speak,
 And I will recount Thy greatness.

His mercy.

- 7 The Memorial-Name of Thy abundant goodness^b shall^b they utter,
 And ring out with songs to Thy righteousness. ^b Vulg. suavitatis
 8 "GRACIOUS and COMPASSIONATE is YHVH,
 LONG-SUFFERING and of GREAT KINDNESS."
 9 YHVH is GOOD to all,
 His tender mercies are over all His works.
 10 All Thy works praise Thee, O YHVH,
 And Thy saints bless Thee.

v. 7. "The Memorial...shall they utter."—God's Memorial is His Covenant-Name (see p. 64). That Name was revealed as Mercy "unto thousands of generations" (Exod. xxxiv. 7). The words "they shall utter" imply an exuberant speech which breaks out like the waters of a fountain (Prov. xviii. 4; Ps. cxix. 171; Ps. xix. 2 (3)).

v. 9. "His tender mercies are over all His works."—The canopy of heaven always remains centred over us whichever way we go;—so it is with God's Love, we never reach its bounds (Eph. iii. 19) but it remains as completely ours as if we alone formed the Centre of the Universe. The interesting passage on God's mercy in *Wisdom* xi. 23—26 is quoted by Neale.

v. 10. "All Thy works praise Thee...And Thy saints bless Thee."—This verse sounds the key-note of the Psalm. Throughout the Universe God's works have only one meaning of "Glory" (cf. Ps. xxix. 10) but this is not so dear to Him as His "little human praise," the heartfelt *blessing* of His saints (cf. on Ps. xix.). Man is Nature's priest; he must present the offering of "all flesh." But this soulless character of Nature is only for a time; for, through man the Creation itself shall pass into the liberty of conscious Sonship (Rom. viii. 19 ff.). I find a hint of this in *v. 21* which reverses the thought of *v. 10* thus:—"My mouth shall speak the praise of YHVH, And let all flesh bless His holy Name for ever and ever."

‘DAVIDIC’ PSALMS RESUMED.

N.B. The Alphabetical Psalms being now completed the order of the 'Davidic' Psalms of the First Collection is resumed at Ps. xi. All that comes between pages 18 and 67 must be regarded as a parenthesis.

It would, no doubt, have been more logical to have placed the Alphabetical Psalms of the First Collection as an Appendix to the First Collection and the Alphabetical Psalms of the Third Collection as an Appendix to the Third Collection (the Second Collection having no Alphabetical Psalms), but it seemed to me that the advantage of studying all the Alphabetical together in one group outweighed the objections that might be urged on the other side.

PSALM XI.

The circumstances of the Psalm would seem to be similar to those of Ps. cxx. The 'Servant' of God is in danger, not so much of open foes as, of treacherous calumny. The "pillars," whether they be great men of the time or the foundations of society, are being cast down and righteousness seems in vain (*v.* 3; cf. Mal. ii. 17; iii. 14 f.). At such a time the 'Servant' was tempted to a policy of earthly expediency (Stanza I.) but meets it by the fact that he has once for all taken shelter (*v.* 1; cf. Ruth ii. 12) under the wings of the Eternal (cf. Ps. xxxvi. 7 (8); lvii. 1 (2); lxi. 4 (5); xci. 4). In Stanza II. he comes to the central thought—The Eternal is, even now, passing calm judgement in Heaven. Stanza III. then answers the temptations of Stanza I. but in the reverse order (see marginal notes). The feeling of useless failure (*v.* 3) 'What can the righteous effect in such disorder?' is answered by (*v.* 5), God is *testing* him by that very failure. The wounding words of the wicked (*v.* 2) recoil on their own heads (*v.* 6). The simple fleeing to God for refuge (*v.* 1) is accounted to God's Servant for righteousness and the reward is to see His Face.

The Psalm might be classed as a Psalm of the "two ways" and compared with Pss. i., v. and vii.

Thus:—

- | | | |
|---|-------|--|
| { | i. 6 | "For YHVH taketh note of the way of the righteous,
And the way of the wicked perishes." |
| | xi. 7 | "For YHVH, the Righteous, loveth righteousness:
The upright shall behold His Face." |

Again, as in Ps. v. 11, 12 it is God's "trusting ones" (i.e. those who have "taken refuge" in Him) who are gladdened by the joy of His Presence and called "the righteous" in *v.* 12. So Ps. xi. begins "In YHVH *I have taken refuge*" and ends (*v.* 7) "The upright shall behold His Face." Once more; if we compare Ps. vii. we find still more striking resemblance:—

- | | | |
|---|------------|--|
| { | vii. 1 | "YHVH...in Thee I have taken refuge." |
| | xi. 1 | "In YHVH I have taken refuge." |
| | vii. 6 ff. | YHVH sitting in Judgement; cf. xi. 4 ff. |
| { | vii. 9 | "Elohim the Righteous is the Trier of hearts, &c." |
| | xi. 5 | "YHVH trieth the righteous." |
| | vii. 13 | God's burning arrows; cf. xi. 6. |

PS. XI.

- (a) God only shall be my Refuge. 1 In YHVH I have taken refuge—
How say ye then to my soul,
“Flee as a bird^a to your mountain^b : ^a Lam. iii. 52
- (b) True, the wicked wound us with words like arrows. 2 For lo, the wicked bend the bow,
They fit their arrow on the string,
To shoot^c, in the dark, at the upright of heart : ^b Gen. xix. 17
- (c) True, all is confusion and the righteous is helpless. 3 When the pillars^d are torn down,
What can a righteous man do? ” ^c Ps. lxiv. 3 f.
- God's in His heaven —All's right with the world. 4 YHVH is in His holy Temple^e,
YHVH's throne is in Heaven. ^d Is. xix. 10. only
His eyes behold,
His eyelids try the sons of men. ^e Palace
- (c₁) The righteous is being tested for his good. 5 YHVH trieth the righteous,
But the wicked and lover of violence
His soul hateth.
- (b₁) The arrows of the wicked will recoil (cf. Ps. cxx.) in a rain of fire upon themselves. 6 May He rain coals^f on the wicked,
Fire and brimstone^g with scorching blast, ^f So Sym.
(Such be) the portion of their cup. ^g Gen. xix. 24
- (a₁) I shall (when tried) see Him as He is. 7 For YHVH, the Righteous, loveth righteousness :
The upright shall behold His Face^h. ^h 1 John iii. 2 ; Rev. xxii. 4

v. 1. “*In YHVH I have taken refuge.*”—The E. V. “In the Lord put I my trust” is too vague. The verb is constantly used of that *trust which takes shelter* e.g. under the shadow of *protecting wings* (Ruth ii. 12 ; Pss. xxxvi. 7 (8) ; lvii. 1 (2) ; xci. 4 ; cf. Jud. ix. 15 ; Is. xxx. 2) or under a *shield* (II Sam. xxii. 31 ; Pss. xviii. 30 (31) ; Prov. xxx. 5 ; cxliv. 2) or under a *protecting rock* (Deut. xxxii. 37 ; II Sam. xxii. 3). The word is never used of that *trust* which may exist between equals but always of the refuge which the weak must find in the strong.

v. 1. “*Flee as a bird &c.*”—Nothing is more easy, nothing more dangerous, than to suggest historical allusions ; but without assigning the Psalm to Nehemiah we may illustrate it from the noble answer he gave to his faithless advisers : “Should such a man as I flee? and who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the Temple to save his life?” (Neh. vi. 11). History repeats itself. It is rash to assume that because a Psalm suits a certain occasion it was necessarily written for that occasion.

PS. XII.

Worldly men are
making an end of us!

1 Save, O YHVH, for the godly is no more;
For faithfulness^a is ended because^b of the sons of men.
2 Falsehood they speak,
Each one to his fellow,
With lip of flattery,
With a double heart do they speak.

^a or, the faith-
ful

^b or, from
among

May God judge the
levity of their words.

3 May YHVH destroy all flattering lips!
The tongue that speaketh great things.
4 Who say, "We are masters of our tongues,
Our lips are our own,
Who is lord over us?"

God will judge:
His words are any-
thing but levity.

5 "Because of the oppression of the poor,
Because of the sighing of the needy,
Now can I arise," saith YHVH,
"I can place (him) in the safety he longs for."
6 The oracles^c of YHVH are pure oracles,
Silver smelted^d from dross in the crucible,
Seven times refined.

^c Ps. xviii. 31

^d Prov. xxx. 5

v. 1. "For faithfulness is ended because of the sons of men."—The words "sons of men" must be interpreted by the last line of the Psalm. In themselves they denote mankind from a low point of view (Ps. lxii. 9 (10) &c.) but occasionally they denote the low worldly party which is opposed to God; e.g. Ps. lvii. 4 (5) "I lie among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows," also Ps. lviii. 1 (2) "Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?" This, I think, is their significance in the present Psalm.

v. 6. "The oracles.....are pure oracles."—There is nothing in English which answers to the Hebrew *imra*. We cannot use *word*, for that is required for *davar*; *saying* is feeble. Perhaps we might naturalize the Greek *logia*, meanwhile *oracles* seems least objectionable. For a note on this word and its special connexion with a *fiery test* see p. 52. We have seen that this word, which occurs so often in Ps. cxix., is used also in connexion with the *promises* of God which are all "yea" (II Cor. i. 19; Rom. xi. 29). These promises can be trusted to the uttermost, they are therefore here called "pure oracles" and are contrasted with the vain words of the wicked in the preceding stanza (*v. 4*). The connexion between verses 5 and 6 is, I think, as follows: God longs to fulfil His promises and to come to the help of His saints; but this Divine longing is conditioned by human action; hence there arises a fiery trial in which the promises of God "are tried" even as silver is tried.

It should be noted that, whereas in the preceding Psalm (xi. 4 f.) God "tries" ($\sqrt{\text{b}^{\text{h}}\text{n}}$) men by delaying His help, in the present Psalm the Divine Word or promise is itself "tried" ($\sqrt{\text{srf}}$) by a still severer test (cf. note on Ps. cv. 19, p. 52).

The cry of the oppressed (*v. 5*) sets God free to act (cf. Exod. iii. 7 f.).

He will keep us,
and His promise; the
wicked rise only as
scum.

7 Thou YHVH wilt preserve us*,
Wilt keep us from this generation, for ever.
8 The wicked go their round,
As the rising of the scum of the sons of men.

* So Sept.,
Heb. *them*

v. 8. "*As the rising of the scum of the sons of men.*"—What is vile and worthless rises to the top by its very levity. In verse 4 we hear the levity of the words of the wicked which, in verse 6, is put in sharp contrast to the weighty words of God which have run out, as it were, pure metal from the crucible. Thus the contrast between pure metal and dross is still in the poet's mind when, in verse 8, he would picture the end of the wicked. They rose only as dross; as dross they will be rejected.

The Septuagint read a different text, not easy to account for. See Schleusner's lexicon s.v. *πολυπρω*.

PSALM XIII.

This Psalm falls naturally into three Stanzas after the manner of Psalm vi., with which it should be closely compared.

The first Stanza is all *Despondency*; the second is all *Prayer*; the third is all *Joy*.

Despondency, though it may have many causes, is always the result of earth-born clouds. The soul must fight its way through these clouds with the weapon of All-Prayer (cf. Jas. v. 13 ff.). By Prayer we do not mean the lip-service of "Lord, Lord" but the patient performance of unpraised duty. Matthew Arnold has truly said

"We cannot kindle when we will
Thy fire, which in the heart resides;
The spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery our soul abides:
But tasks in hours of insight willed
Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled."

The Psalmist teaches a still deeper lesson. Every vision of God's Face involves a task: God then stands aside; the servant is being tested; his first feeling is of Despondency (Exod. iii. 11; Is. vi. 5, 8; Jer. i. 6, &c.); then follows Prayer, the task is done, and the servant comes out into the Joy of still nearer vision of God. This threefold movement of an upward widening spiral gives the law of all growth.

The relation which we have pointed out between the three Stanzas of the Psalm will bear minute subdivision. Thus:—

<i>Despondency.</i>	{	v. 1 Desertion of God.
	{	v. 2 Hostility of man.
<i>Prayer.</i>	{	v. 3 for God's Presence in answer to v. 1.
	{	v. 4 for protection against enemies in answer to v. 2.
<i>Joy.</i>	{	v. 5 God's Presence experienced. Cf. vv. 1, 3.
	{	v. 6 Thanksgiving for a victory over foes. Cf. vv. 2, 4.

PS. XIII.

Despondency.	{	1 How long, YHVH! wilt Thou utterly forget me? How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me?	
	{	2 How long must I plan in my soul in daily heart-grief? How long ^a must mine enemy exalt himself against me? ^a Ps. vi. 3	
Prayer.	{	3 Consider, and answer me, O YHVH my God; Lighten mine eyes lest I sleep the (sleep of) death ^b ;	^b Ps. vi. 5
	{	4 Let not mine enemy say "I have mastered him," Let not my foes ^c exult when I stumble.	^c Ps. vi. 7
Joy.	{	5 As for me—in Thy kindness I trust, My heart shall exult in Thy salvation.	
	{	6 Let me sing unto YHVH because He has dealt lovingly ^d with me.	^d Pss. cxvi. 7; cxlii. 7
		[<i>Yea, I will praise the name of YHVH, Most High.</i>] ^e	^e Sept., not in Heb.

v. 6. "*Yea, I will praise &c.*" Though this occurs only in the Septuagint the symmetry of the Psalm would seem to require a line here. Thus:—

v. 1 ^a . "How long wilt Thou forget...!"	}	answered	{	v. 5 ^a . Absolute trust in God's kindness.
v. 1 ^b . The sense of God's Face hidden!	}	by	{	v. 5 ^b . A heart that exults in salvation.
v. 2 ^a . How long this lonely grief!	}	answered	{	v. 6 ^a . A heart-song of gratitude.
v. 2 ^b . How long must the enemy triumph!	}	by	{	v. 6 ^b . I have triumphed in God.

The four '*How longs*' seem to require four corresponding lines in the last Stanza, so that the Prayer Book rendering, which inserts a line from the Septuagint, may possibly be correct.

The reader will not fail to note how the four prayers of the middle Stanza take the four sorrows of Stanza I. and change them into the four joys of Stanza III.

Perhaps Trench's sonnet on Prayer is the best comment on this Psalm.

PSALM XIV.

This Psalm, which occurs again in an Elohistic form as Ps. liii., would seem to belong to a period of practical atheism. The "fool" (*v.* 1) is one who ignores God and thus becomes no better than the brutes that perish. Verse 2 brings to mind Gen. vi. 12 "And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." St Paul was therefore justified in giving to our Psalm (Rom. iii. 10 ff.) a wider meaning than its author probably intended and in making it prove that both Jews and Gentiles "are all under sin."

The text of the Psalm, especially in *vv.* 5, 6, is corrupt. A careful comparison with the duplicate Psalm liii. obliges us to conclude that the variations sprang from one original text.

I would refer the Hebrew scholar to a short article on the texts of Psalms xiv. and liii. which I published in *Hebraica*, July 1886, p. 237 ff.

The translation I now offer is based upon the text there suggested, and as I am writing for English readers I have not thought it necessary to reproduce the arguments there used.

As the *seventh* Psalm is a Psalm of Judgement so the *fourteenth*, which closes the second group of seven, is also a Psalm of Judgement. The allusions to Genesis vi. are certainly not accidental.

PS. XIV.

Godless oppressors
as in Gen. vi. 1-4.

1 The fool hath said in his heart
"There is no God."
They are vile and corrupt in their ways*,
There is none doeth good.

* Rom. iii. 10
ff.

God "looks upon
the earth" (Gen. vi.
12).

2 YHVH from heaven looketh forth
On the children of men,
To see if there were that took heed,
That sought after God.

“And behold it was corrupt...” (Gen. vi. 12).

These are “like natural brute beasts...” (2 Pet. ii. 12 f.: Jude v. 10).

Sudden judgement (as on the Babel builders).

- 3 But all was perverse,
One and all were corrupt,
There was none doing good,
No not one!^a
- 4 They do not know^b God,
They are all evil-doers,
Eating^c My people
As they eat bread.
They do not call^d upon YHVH.
- 5 There they feared a fear,
For God has scattered the oppressor.
- 6 The counsel of the hypocrite He hath put to shame,
For YHVH hath spurned them.

^a P. B. V. inserts three verses here

^b Jer. x. 25: Ps. lxxix. 6

^c Jer. x. 25: Ps. lxxix. 7

^d Jer. x. 25: Ps. lxxix. 6

Possibly a later addition.

- 7 O might but Israel's help come forth from Zion,
When YHVH brings back His captive people
Jacob shall rejoice, Israel shall be glad.

vv. 3, 4. The three verses inserted in the P.B.V. “Their throat is an open sepulchre.....before their eyes” are taken from the Septuagint, where they were doubtless inserted from Rom. iii. 13—18. St. Paul, in quoting our Psalm (Rom. iii. 10ff.), coupled with it similar passages from Ps. v. 10; Ps. cxl. 4; Ps. x. 7 and Is. lix. 7f. These passages thus found their way into the Septuagint, Vulgate and P.B. V.

v. 4. For the interrogative ׀ I suggest either the usual contraction for the Divine Name or the word *El* “God” (cf. Ps. lxxxv. (6) 7, where the Septuagint read *God* for the interrogative ׀). This reading brings out the parallelism “They have not known God.....they have not called upon YHVH,” and is well illustrated by the kindred passage in Jer. x. 25 “Pour out Thy wrath upon the heathen *who know Thee not* and on the families that *call not upon Thy Name, for they have eaten Jacob, and eaten him up...*”

v. 5f. “*There they feared a fear.*” The parallel text of Ps. liii. adds “*where no fear was.*” This is probably a gloss but it is true in thought and is best explained by the interpretation of the plague of darkness given in *Wisdom xvii.*

The last line of *v.* 5 and *v.* 6 in the present Hebrew texts runs thus:

“For Elohim is in the generation of the righteous
The counsel of the poor ye put to shame
But YHVH is his refuge,”

or in text of Ps. liii.

“For Elohim hath scattered the bones of thy besieger (LXX. of the hypocrites)
Thou (?) hast put them to shame
For Elohim hath spurned them.”

These two passages, which differ so widely, are represented in the Hebrew by similar sounding words, so that a common text can be reproduced with some degree of certainty.

PSALM XV.

The question of verse 1, 'Who can dwell as a guest with God?' is answered in four stanzas which postulate perfection, in *heart, tongue, eye and hand*, while the three lines of each stanza follow the threefold division of a "*godly, righteous, and sober*" life, i.e. duty to God, to man, and to self. This has been indicated in the marginal notes. We may also observe that these four stanzas represent, alternately, positive and negative virtues. Thus, every way, an absolute perfection is predicated for the Man who shall ascend to God. The Psalm should be studied in connexion with Ps. xxiv., both being proper Psalms for Ascension Day. There is an interesting paraphrase of this Psalm in the Poems of Henry Vaughan.

PS. XV.

God's guest must be perfect 1 YHVH, who can sojourn* in Thy Tent?
Who can dwell in Thy Holy Mountain?

* i.e. as a guest

in *heart*

(a) toward God. 2 One that walketh blameless;
(b) toward man. That doeth justice;
(c) toward self. And that communes truly with himself;

v. 1. The first verse must be taken as the question which is answered in the other verses of the Psalm "Quod ergo interrogavit propheta, nunc respondet Spiritus Sanctus. Et quid ei dicit? Vis scire, O propheta, quis habitabit in tabernaculo meo, aut quis requiescet in monte sancto meo? Audi quae sequuntur: si haec feceris quae sequuntur, habitabis in monte sancto meo." (S. Hieron. Presb. *Tract. in Psalmos* p. 28, Morin's Edition.)

v. 1. Cheyne has well shewn that the idea of dwelling as a *guest* with God was common to the early Semitic religions. The Psalmist takes this idea, which to the heathen was an empty form, and shews what dwelling with a holy God must involve. His words go further than he himself probably intended and fit the Psalm for its use on Ascension Day. (See also on Ps. xxiv.)

v. 2. The *blameless* walk is the walk with God (Gen. xvii. 1: 2 Sam. xxii. 24, 26).

"*That doeth justice.*" Few words have gone through such significant phases of meaning as the Hebrew word for *righteousness* or *justice*. The context here decides for the latter meaning of justice between man and man. I am glad to see that Jerome takes this view of *justice* in the passage before us. "Other virtues give pleasure to him who possesses them; *justice* gives pleasure, not to him who possesses it, but to outsiders. If I am wise, my wisdom delights myself; if I am brave, my courage delights myself; if I become chaste, my chastity is my own joy; but *justice* bestows its benefits, not on the man who possesses it, but on other wretched creatures who possess (it) not.... Justice knows neither brother, nor father, nor mother; what it knows is the truth, it accepts not persons, it imitates God" (*Tract. in Psalmos* Vol. III. Part ii. p. 29, Morin's Edition).

"*and that communes truly with himself,*" lit. "that speaketh the truth in his heart." The participle *Kal* of *dabar* has, not unfrequently, an inward sense, as of a voice speaking within the

in *tongue*

- (*a*₁) toward God. 3 That never let his tongue go slandering,
 (*b*₁) toward man. Nor wrought his fellow wrong,
 (*c*₁) toward self. Nor dealt in tales against his neighbour.

in *eye*

- (*a*₂) toward God. 4 One in whose eyes the vile is despicable,
 (*b*₂) toward man. And that honours the fearers of YHVH,
 (*c*₂) toward self. That sweareth to his hurt, yet changeth not.

in *hand*

- (*a*₃) toward God. 5 That doth not put his money out to usury,
 (*b*₃) toward man. Nor take reward against the innocent.
 (*c*₃) toward self. And doing such-like things he never swerves.

man, e.g. "the angel *that communed with me*," lit. "*that spake in me*" (Zech. i. 9, 13, 14, 19 (ii. 2); ii. 3 (7); iv. 1, 4, 5; v. 5, 10; vi. 4; cf. Gen. xvi. 13; Jonah iii. 2). In the present passage it denotes not merely truthfulness of speech but that inner communing which places self in true relation (altruistic) to the whole. Thus it is parallel to St Paul's *ἀληθεύοντες... ἐν ἀγάπῃ* (Eph. iv. 15).

v. 3. "*That never let his tongue go slandering.*" Only in one other passage is this word used of *slandering* (viz. 2 Sam. xix. 27 (28)). Elsewhere it signifies to *go about as a spy*. The connexion of thought between *v.* 2 (*a*) and *v.* 3 (*a*₁) is the same as in Jas. iii. 2, the "perfect man" is the man who does not offend with his tongue.

v. 4. "*One in whose eyes the vile is despicable.*" The words are difficult. We may certainly dismiss the P. B. V. "He that setteth not by himself, but is lowly in his own eyes," for humility does not require that a man should hold himself as "vile" and "despicable." The key to the passage may possibly be found in Jer. vi. 30, "despicable silver shall men call them, for YHVH hath despised them" (cf. Ps. liii. 5 (6)). Thus we might paraphrase 'One who holds vile that which God holds vile.'

v. 5. "*That doth not put...to usury.*" At first sight it might appear that this is rather the fulfilment of a duty towards *man* than towards *God*. But it is not so. See Levit. xxv. 36—38.

"*And doing...he never swerves.*" This line must be interpreted by the parallel line of the preceding Stanza; we then read that 'if he swear to his own hurt he changes not,' so here, there is a fixedness of purpose in all he does. Compare Horace, Ode III. Lib. iii.

It is suggestive that a Psalm (xiv.) which declares that the earth is corrupt, that 'there is none that doeth good, no not one,' should be followed by a Psalm (xv.) which makes nothing less than perfection the condition of dwelling with God! Such Divine paradox is often found in the Old Testament and is full of promise.

PSALM XVI.

The writer of this Psalm lived at a time when the world, the flesh and the devil were expressed in a voluptuous idolatry. But, says he, I choose God above all things (*v. 2*)... I know the end of idolatry (*v. 4*)... Having God I have all things (*v. 5*)... Just as Levi had no portion in the division of the Land but the Lord was his portion (Deut. xviii. 1 f.). So God is my Portion... This Portion is, in my eyes, most lovely (*v. 6*)... This for two reasons:—

(*a*) His Presence means my *progress under His guidance* (*v. 7*; cf. Ps. lxxiii. 24)... Even pain contributes to this...(note on *v. 7*).

(*b*) His Presence means also my *security from falling* (*v. 8*)... It was not always easy to realise His Presence...but "I have set the Lord always..." thus it has become to me a second nature. I now live in the strength of His Presence... Thus I know to whom I have entrusted each day's work... My labour is not in vain in the Lord (*v. 8*).

Hence I find peace. Spirit, soul and body trust Him absolutely for death and all that is beyond it (*vv. 9, 10*)...

Beyond the grave God will still be mine; and therefore the work will go on... "Thou wilt acquaint me with the path of Life."

(*a*₁) Then, as now, Thy Presence will mean my progress—but not, as now, through pain. "The fulness of joy (is) in Thy Presence"...

The Presence constitutes the joy...

(*b*₁) Then too Thy Presence will be my *security from falling...my security for retaining those joys*. "Pleasures that, in thy right hand, are evermore" (see note). No need there to "set the Lord always before me"...

The Son of Man has already gone through this experience.

He chose God above all earthly good.

His "Father" became to Him a "lovely heritage" (St John xvi. 15).

He thanked His Father for "giving Him counsel" even when that counsel crossed His human will (St John iv. 34; vi. 38). "Even so, Father."

He set His Father always before Him so that He remained unmoved by world or flesh or devil.

Thus He looked calmly at death and saw beyond it (*vv. 9, 10*).

Through death He entered immediately on "the path of Life": body, soul and spirit entered with new powers into "the fulness of joy."

And into the reward which the Love of the Father and the gratitude of the redeemed makes ever new.

PS. XVI.

I choose God above all things.	<p>1 Preserve me O God^a for in Thee I take refuge.</p> <p>2 As to YHVH I say: "Thou art my Lord^b, My good, beyond which there is none."</p>	<p>^a <i>El</i></p> <p>^b <i>Adonai</i></p>
I reject idolatry and all its works.	<p>3 As to "the holy ones," that are in the earth, And mighty ones whose joy is all in them (I say):</p> <p>4 "Many shall be their pangs that wed with a stranger-god, I would not pour their blood-libations, Nor take their (very) names^c upon my lips."</p>	<p>^c Exod. xxiii. 13</p>
Having God I have all things.	<p>5 YHVH, mine allotted portion and my cup! Thou Thyself dost uphold^d my lot!</p> <p>6 The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, Yea a beauteous inheritance is mine.</p>	<p>^d or <i>make wide</i></p>
His Presence means (a) my progress, though through pain, and (b) my security from falling.	<p>7 I bless YHVH for giving me counsel^e, Yea nightly my reins instruct me.</p> <p>8 I have set YHVH always before me^f, While He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.</p>	<p>^e Ps. lxxiii. 24</p> <p>^f Acts ii. 25</p>

v. 3. The meaning of (*Q'doshim*) "holy ones" may be determined from the following passages taken from the Revised Version:

Job iv. 18, v. 1. "Behold, He putteth no trust in His servants;
And His angels He chargeth with folly:
... to which of the *holy ones* wilt thou turn."

Job xv. 15. "Behold He putteth no trust in His *holy ones*;
Yea the heavens are not clean in His sight."

Ps. lxxxix. 5—7. "The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord;
Thy faithfulness also in the assembly of the *holy ones*."

"Who among the sons of the gods (*margin*) is like unto the Lord?
A God very terrible in the Council of the *holy ones*."

Compare also Dan. viii. 13, where the "holy ones" are angels (cf. Dan. iv. 13 (20); also Zech. xiv. 5; Hos. xi. 12 (xii. 1)). It is therefore evident that, in our Psalm, the word is not to be translated "saints" (for which *hasidim* would have been used as in v. 10) but "holy ones" in a semi-mythological sense (cf. v. 4). This interpretation was, I find, suggested long ago by Kennicott. So also with *addirim*, "mighty ones": the word is never used to denote the moral quality of "excellent" (E.V.) but rather of *power* and *splendour*. The reading I have adopted, "whose joy is all in them" for "all that delight in them," involves only a slight change in the vowel points. The "mighty ones" are the "nobles" who delight in idolatry.

v. 7. God's "counsel," in this life, is the *guidance* of His eye (see on Ps. xxxii. 8, where the same word is used). This involves the trial of faith, therefore the Psalmist goes on to say "Yea

Therefore spirit,
soul, and body trust
Him for the future.

9 So my heart^a is glad,
And my glory^a rejoices,
Yea my flesh^a too can rest secure.

^a 1 Thess. v.
23

10 For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheôl,
Nor wilt Thou let Thy loved-one see the Pit^b.

^b Ps. lxxiii. 26

Then, as now, His
Presence will mean
(a₁) my *progress*, in
joy, and (b₁) my *se-*
curity in retaining joy.

11 Thou wilt acquaint me with the path of Life;—
The fulness of joy, which is Thy Presence;
Pleasures that, in Thy right hand, are evermore.

nightly my reins instruct me" or "*my reins also chasten me etc.*" The same word signifies both to *instruct* and to *chasten*. The *reins* are the seat of feeling and emotion. God tries the hearts and reins (Ps. vii. 9 (10); xxvi. 2; Jer. xi. 20; xvii. 10; xx. 12). When then it is said "my reins instruct me" it implies a discipline which the man himself consents to and for which he even blesses God, knowing it to be for his good.

v. 11. According to the punctuation the "fulness of joy...pleasures," &c. are an expansion of the thought contained in "the path of Life." The "fulness of joy" results directly from the "Presence," and the fact that the "Pleasures are evermore," i.e. *lasting pleasures*, is because they are "in (not *at*) God's right hand to give, and therefore are eternal like Himself.

PSALM XVII.

This Psalm contrasts the ideal of the children of this world with that of the children of light. The Psalmist speaks in the name of Israel, indeed he drops accidentally into the *plural* in v. 11.

In vv. 1—5 the child of light claims, not indeed perfection, but the steadfast will and purpose of following God (Righteousness).

Because God is Righteous, therefore He must at last mark the difference between His children and the children of the world (vv. 6—8), who are then described in all their proud hostility (vv. 9—12). Their ideal, their whole desire, for their present, is eating, drinking and pleasure (v. 14, see note); and, for their future, there is no thought beyond having children and leaving their all (!) to others (v. 15, see note).

In contradistinction with this ideal the child of light gives his own in v. 16. This verse consists of two lines, of which the first answers to v. 14, the second to v. 15. The first gives Israel's ideal for the present, "As for me, in righteousness I behold Thy Face," i.e. in striving to follow God (vv. 1—5) I gain even now a growing vision of His Face; all things in nature, all events in history, all sorrows and all joys become outward and visible signs of His Presence, so that I find "God, always, everywhere, and all in all." Then, as to the future, "I would be satisfied, in the upwaking, with Thy Image"—i.e. I look forward to a time when I shall see Thee, not as now, "in Righteousness," but, in bodily *Form* (see note) on Earth.

PS. XVII.

Thou knowest I am set to do right (cf. Ps. xviii. 20—23).

1 O YHVH hearken unto righteousness^a,
Attend my cry—Give ear unto my prayer—
from lips unfeigned.

^a Cf. v. 16

2 Let judgement for me come forth from Thy presence^b,
Let Thine eyes regard uprightness^c.

^b Cf. v. 16

^c i.e. my just cause

3 Thou hast tried my heart—hast visited me by night—
Hast tested^d me—yet findest nothing:
No evil thought shall pass my mouth;

^d i.e. as by fire

4 As for the works of men—by the word of Thy lips
I have kept me from the paths of the robber^e.

^e Dan. xi. 14

5 My steps have held fast to Thy tracks,
My footsteps did not slip.

Therefore Thou wilt distinguish between me and

6 As for me I call on Thee, for Thou, God, wilt hear me;
Incline Thine ear to me; hear Thou my speech;
7 Distinguish (such) with Thy favour, O Saviour of them
that trust,

From such as resist Thy right hand.

8 Keep me as the very apple of an eye;
Hide me under the covert of Thy wings.

my proud persecutors.

9 Because of these wicked ones that would destroy me,
My foes that greedily encompass me.

10 They are enfolded in lusty strength;
With their mouth they speak out proudly.

11 Even now they dog our steps,
Their eyes are set to cast us to the ground.

12 Like as a lion that is famished for prey,
And like a young lion lurking in the coverts.

13 Arise, O YHVH! Meet him to the face and bow him low;
Deliver my soul from the wicked—who is Thy sword.
From men—Thy instruments^f O YHVH—

^f Thy hand

Their ideal for the present,

14 From men who wholly are of earth,
Whose portion is in living;
Whose bellies Thou fillest with Thy treasure^g.

^g Cf. Job xxi. 7—14

v. 4. "I have kept...paths of the robber." The word translated *robber* (cf. Jer. vii. 11; Ezek. vii. 23 &c.) signifies literally *one who breaks through*. It seems to be used here, and in Dan. xi. 14, to denote those lawless Israelites who sympathised with heathen ways as opposed to "the old paths" (Jer. vi. 16). Possibly the Hebrew word was in our Lord's mind when He said "He that entereth not by the door...the same is...a robber" (John x. 1). The Psalmist is not one of these—"My steps have held fast to Thy tracks."

for the future.

15 They are satisfied with children,
And leave their plenty to their offspring^a!

^a Job xxi. 11

My ideal
for the present,
for the future.

16 As for me, in righteousness I behold Thy Face^b,
I would be satisfied, in the upwaking, (with)^c Thy Image.

^b Presence

^c or of Thy
Image. See
Greek ver-
sions

v. 15. "They are satisfied with children." The word "satisfied" is far too weak both here and in v. 16. It signifies a *satiating*, a *filling to the full*. God is good to the just and the unjust (Matt. v. 45). He opens His hand and all things are "satiated with good" (Ps. civ. 28). But each thing can receive only according to its *desire* (Ps. cxlv. 16). The earth is "satiated" with rain (Ps. civ. 13); the beast with food (Ezek. xxxii. 4); the good man with God. The desire of the children of this world as to their future does not rise beyond having children, founding a family, and leaving their abundance to others! God gives them their desire. Compare Browning's Poem, *Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day*, xxii. to end.

"And to leave their plenty..." There is a solemn irony in the word we translate "plenty." It signifies literally *all that is left* of them! but has occasionally a secondary meaning of "excellency" (Gen. xlix. 3). The irony lies in the combination of the two meanings exactly as in Job iv. 21, "Doth not their *excellency* (which is) in them go away? they die even without wisdom." We are reminded of the Parable of the Rich Fool.

v. 16. "As for me, in righteousness..." These words are in sharp contrast with v. 14 as though he said, 'They are carnal, I am spiritual. They are of this world, I am not of this world.' *Righteousness* has many meanings in the Old Testament: in the present passage we must interpret it from v. 1. As there he confidently appealed to God to "hearken unto righteousness," so here he is assured that by following whatsoever things are right he gains an ever clearer vision of God's Face.

"I would be satisfied...Thy Image." Here again we note the contrast with v. 15. The children of this world are "satisfied" to have children in their own likeness, etc. but the children of light can only be "satisfied" with God and with the Divine Image. The word *Temunah* here translated Image is never used of likeness of *character* but always of likeness of *form*. Thus the Israelites are forbidden to represent God by an *image* of any thing (Exod. xx. 4; Deut. iv. 16, 23, 25; v. 8) because they "saw no image" (E.V. *similitude* Deut. iv. 12, 15). On the other hand, of Moses it is said, "With him will I speak mouth to mouth...and the *image* of YHWH shall he behold" (Numb. xii. 8). Job also saw the "image" of a spirit that stood before him (Job iv. 16). These are the only other passages in which the word occurs, it is therefore evident that, in our Psalm, it must have an objective sense so that we must not translate "after Thy likeness" but "I shall be satisfied...with Thy Image." The Psalmist expects, in the future, a far nearer vision of God—almost in human *form*. Compare the Vulgate "Satiabor cum apparuerit gloria tua." The key-note of the Psalm is the twice-repeated "as for me" (v. 6 and v. 16). In v. 6 this introduces the ground of Israel's hope, viz. the righteousness which he can claim as contrasted with the Nations of the world. This 'righteousness' he sets forth very boldly in the Introduction (vv. 1—5). In v. 16 the words "as for me" again mark sharply the contrast between the aim and the end of Israel and that of the World-Nations. The children of this world have but one object for the present, a mere animal existence (v. 14). And but one hope for the future, to transmit their goods to others (v. 15). Israel, on the other hand, has a *present possession*, not of goods but of God, discerned through that single eye which is here called 'Righteousness,' and a *hope for the future* in the upwaking of the Divine Form on Earth.

Another interpretation of the *upwaking* is however quite possible, viz. that it is used in contrast with the state of *vision* in the first member of the verse. In that case we should translate

"As for me, in righteousness, I have a vision of Thy face.

I would (fain) be satisfied in the upwaking, with Thy Image."

The sense would then be similar to that of St Paul,

'We now in a glass darkly;—

But then face to face.'

In either case the Psalmist's hope for the future is fixed on such a Presence of God as has been granted to us in the Incarnation.

PSALM XVIII.

This Psalm occurs also, with some slight verbal changes, in 2 Sam. xxii. The author, whoever he may have been, makes frequent allusions to the Exodus. He was clearly familiar with the Book of Deuteronomy (see marginal references). This alone makes the Davidic authorship absolutely impossible; unless we are prepared to set aside all the results of modern scholarship. The title runs as follows: "*To the Precentor: (A Psalm) of [David], the servant of the Lord, who spake to the Lord the words of this song (Shirah) in the day the Lord delivered him from the hand of [all his enemies], and from the hand of [Saul]; and he said:—*" I would suggest that an ancient title which originally alluded to Israel, the "servant of the Lord," has been modified by a later writer who intended to imply that the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt was repeated in the deliverance of David from his enemies. The original title would probably have run somewhat as follows:—*For the servant of the Lord, who spake to the Lord the words of this Shirah in the day when "the Lord delivered him from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh"* (Exod. xviii. 10). Kay who maintains the Davidic authorship notes that *Shirah*, "song," is "a rare form;—used of the two songs of Moses (Exod. xv. 1; Deut. xxxi. 19 ff.), of the song of Israel on the borders of the wilderness." He accounts for "the prolonged reference to the Exodus in the early part of this Psalm" by asserting that "David's deliverance out of Saul's hand was not less God's own deed than the deliverance of Israel out of Pharaoh's was." The fact is that the Psalm refers to Israel.

Verses 4 to 24 depict in vivid colours the Baptism (1 Cor. x. 2) of Israel in the Red Sea (and at Sinai). When Israel went down into the Sea he was like Jonah (compare vv. 4—6 with Jonah ii.). Like Jonah he cried to God (v. 6; cf. Exod. xiv. 10). Then, in a passage of marvellous poetic beauty, God is depicted as coming to his help (vv. 7—19). No doubt the shaking earth, the fire and the darkness remind us rather of Sinai (Exod. xix. and xx.) but we must not forget (Exod. xiv. 19, 20) that the Pillar of Cloud was changed and became "cloud and darkness" to the Egyptians and that St Paul tells us that the fathers "were all baptized...in the Cloud and in the Sea" (1 Cor. x. 2).

The 10th verse, "He...came swooping on wings of the wind," reminds us of Ex. xix. 4, "...how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself."

In the 14th verse—"He sent forth His arrows and scattered them, He shot out His lightnings and *routed* them"—we clearly have the same picture as in Exod. xiv. 24, "And...the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of cloud, and *routed* the host of the Egyptians." And again in the Asaph Psalm (lxxvii. 16 ff.), "The waters saw Thee, O God, &c..." Compare also the grand Theophany in Habac. iii.

So too, *v.* 15, "The bed of the waters was seen...at the blast of the breath of Thy nostrils," is best explained by the song of Moses, *Exod.* xv. 8, "And with the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea."

The following passages should also be compared:—

Deut. xxxii.	Ps. xviii.
<i>v.</i> 4 <i>He is the Rock, His way is perfect.</i>	God as the Rock, <i>vv.</i> 2, 31, 46; <i>v.</i> 30 <i>His way is perfect.</i>
<i>vv.</i> 11, 12 God coming as an eagle to Israel's help.	<i>v.</i> 10 Same image in the word "swooping."
<i>v.</i> 13 <i>He made him to ride upon the high places...</i>	<i>v.</i> 33 <i>He maketh me tread the high places.</i>

St Paul would seem to have recognised our Psalm as relating to Israel when, in *Rom.* xv. 9, 10, he quotes it *in connexion with Deut. xxxii.* to prove that the Gentiles share with Israel in the deliverance of God:—"And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written,

Therefore will I give praise unto Thee among the Gentiles
And would sing unto Thy name (*Ps.* xviii. 49).

And again he saith,

Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people" (*Deut.* xxxii. 43).

We conclude, therefore, that this Psalm depicts the Baptism of Israel, God's "Beloved," in the 'Cloud and in the Sea,' including in that Baptism the Sinai covenant wherein God willing to save the world chose Israel as a nation (*cf.* *v.* 19: see *Exod.* xix. 5 f.), and Israel chose God's service (*Exod.* xxiv. 3). This pure intention constitutes Israel's 'righteousness' (see *vv.* 20—24 of our Psalm: *v.* 22 especially should be compared with *Deut.* vi. 2; vii. 11; viii. 11). The connexion of thought in *v.* 25 f. is, I think, as follows:—The 'Cloud and the Sea' are the (seeming) terrors into which Israel in his obedience goes down, but in as far as he is 'loving,' 'perfect,' 'pure' the Cloud is a guiding light, the Sea a protecting wall. To the Egyptians, on the other hand, who 'contend' with God, the Cloud becomes a stormy terror and the Sea an overwhelming destruction. This verse is the central verse of the Psalm and contains the central thought.

If the interpretation I have here sketched be correct the Christian application becomes a very interesting one: Christ is in truth what Israel was only in part, the Beloved; He too had a 'baptism to be baptised with' when He obediently went down into "the overflowings of ungodliness," but inasmuch as He was absolutely "loving," "perfect" and "pure" He saw the Fatherhood through all and the Father came to His aid and highly exalted Him, giving Him a glorious deliverance not for Himself alone but that He might be God's salvation unto the ends of the world.

PS. XVIII.

- 1 Thee will I love, O YHVH, my Strength!
 2 YHVH my Cliff, my Fortress, my Deliverer,
 My Strong-One, the Rock^a I can trust in!
 My Shield^b, my Horn of Salvation, my Tower!
 3 I call upon YHVH the Praised-one,
 And from my foes I am saved!
- Israel at the Red Sea.
- 4 The toils^c of Death came round me,
 The floods of Chaos terrified me,
 5 The toils of Sheol were round me,
 The fetters of Death confronted me.
- 6 In my distress (I thought)
 "I will call^d upon YHVH,
 And will make my cry to my God:
 He will hear my voice from His Palace-temple,
 My crying will come before Him, even into His ears^e."
- Israel delivered at the Red Sea by a Theophany.
- 7 Then Earth itself quivered and quaked^f,
 The mountains' foundations were troubled,
 Yea, they quivered because He was wroth.
 8 There went up a smoke from His^g nostrils,
 And a fire consumed from His mouth,
 Yea, flames were kindled from Him.
 9 So He bowed down the Heavens and came,
 With the Darkness under His feet.
 10 He rode on the Cherub and flew,
 Came swooping^h on Wings of the wind.
 11 He made darkness His covert,
 His pavilion all round Him—
 The dark of abysses—dense clouds of the skies.
 12 Through His splendour opposing His dense clouds removed,
 There was hail with flames of fire.
 13 For YHVH thundered in heaven,
 The Most High uttered His voice—
 [There was hail with flames of fire.]ⁱ
- ^a Deut. xxxii. 4, 37
^b Deut. xxxiii. 29
^c "breakers of Death," 11. Sam. xxii. 5
 Cf. Jonah ii.
^d Exod. xiv. 10
^e Exod. ii. 23
^f Ps. lxxviii. 8
 Ps. lxxvii. 16 ff.
 Cf. also the Psalm in Hab. iii.
^g Exod. xix. and xx.
^h Deut. xxxii. 22
ⁱ Omitted in Sept. and in 11. Sam. xxii.

- 14 He sent forth His arrows and scattered them,
He shot out His lightnings and routed^a them. * Exod. xiv. 24
- 15 Then the bed of the waters was seen,
The foundations of Earth were laid bare,
At the blast of the breath^b of Thy nostrils. ^b Exod. xv. 8
- 16 He reaches from high, He takes me,
Draws me forth from many waters, Cf. v. 4
Ps. lxxviii. 22 :
Is. lxiii. 12
- 17 Frees me from my mighty foe,
From enemies too strong for me. Cf. v. 5
- 18 They confronted me in the day of my weakness,
So YHVH became my stay. Cf. v. 6
- 19 He brought me forth at large,
He frees me because He loves^c me. ^c lit. "takes
pleasure in
me"
- Israel is now keeping the Law and conscious of no defection from God.
- 20 YHVH requites me according to my righteousness,
Renders me according to the cleanness of my hands.
- 21 Because I have observed the ways of YHVH,
And not gone wickedly against my God.
- 22 Because all His ordinances are before me,
And His statutes I put not from me. Deut. vi. 2 : vii. 11 ; viii. 11
- 23 And I am become perfect^d with Him,
And have kept me from mine iniquity. ^d i.e. whole-hearted
- 24 So YHVH rendered me according to my righteousness,
According to the cleanness of my hands in His eyesight.

v. 16. "He reaches from high, He takes me, &c." This description of the sudden deliverance of Israel in answer to the cry of misery may be compared with Browning's *Instans Tyrannus* :

"When sudden...how think ye, the end?
Did I say 'without friend' ?
Say rather, from marge to blue marge,
The whole sky grew his targe,
With the sun's self for visible boss,
While an Arm ran across,
Which the earth heaved beneath like a breast,
Where the wretch was safe prest !
Do you see? Just my vengeance complete,
The man sprang to his feet,
Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed !
—So, I was afraid !"

v. 19. Israel sums up God's dealings in this one line.—Such a Providence manifests a purpose of love for the future. Possibly the Psalm at one time ended here. A different word is used (v. 1) of Israel's love of God. Israel's love springs out of God's choice: "We love Him because He first loved us."

Therefore Israel's future is assured.

- 25 With the loving Thou shewest Thyself loving,
 With the perfect man Thou shewest Thyself perfect.
 26 With the pure Thou shewest Thyself pure,
 And with the contentious Thou shewest^a Thyself a contender.
 27 Surely it is Thou that wilt save the lowly People,
 And abase (all) lofty looks.
 28 Surely it is Thou that wilt light^b my lamp,
 YHVH, my God, will make my darkness shine.
 29 Surely through Thee I can break^c a host,
 Yea, through my God I can leap the wall.

Wisdom xvi., xix.

^a Prov. iii. 34

So II. Sam. xxii. 28

^b not in II. Samuel xxii.

^c so Lagarde

God's way is thorough: through pain to glory.

- 30 As for God^d, His way is perfect^e,
 The promise^f of YHVH is tried to the proof,
 A Shield He is to all that trust in Him.

^d *El*

^e Deut. xxxii. 4

^f lit. *oracle*.

See note, Ps. xii. 6

v. 25. "With the loving, &c." Delitzsch expresses the meaning thus:

- (a) "Towards the *loving* Thou shewest Thyself *loving*,
 (β) Towards the man of *entire surrender* Thou shewest Thyself *giving*,
 (γ) Towards him that *purifieth himself* Thou shewest Thyself *pure*" (i.e. bright and clear).

We may regard (a), (β), (γ) as the three upward steps to the Clear Vision of God.

(a) "*Loving*" (*hasid*) very rarely applied to God, but often to men as *attached to God*, i.e. "*godly*," cf. the word "saint" in the New Testament. Towards such God *shews Himself loving*.

(β) The second step is *entire surrender*.—The word denotes *whole-hearted men*—such men as forsook all and followed Christ. To such God *shews Himself giving* (Matt. xix. 29). God never lets His servants out-do Him in generosity.

(γ) But there is something better than giving gifts and that is giving ourselves: and there is something better than receiving God's gifts and that is receiving God. So the last step is to *purify oneself*—a word much wider than moral purity, denoting that single-hearted self-surrender which keeps nothing back from God. Such men would see God bright and clear. "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee; but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me" (St John xvii. 25).

v. 26^b. "*With the contentious Thou shewest Thyself a contender*." As the upward course ends in the Clear Vision of God through growing inner light so the downward course ends in putting out the eyes of the soul.—"How great is that darkness!" The eye only sees what it brings the power of seeing—for good or evil—hence "to the scorner God Himself seems a scorner" (Prov. iii. 34). If he "seek wisdom it (simply) does not exist" (Prov. xiv. 6). Reproof and kindness are useless upon him (Prov. ix. 7; xiii. 1; xv. 12). The Pharisees were very near this stage when they said "This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils" (Matt. xii. 24, cf. v. 31).

"For I say, this is death and the sole death,
 When a man's loss comes to him from his gain,
 Darkness from light, from knowledge ignorance,
 And lack of love from love made manifest."

Thus the soul may create for itself a world without God! I know nothing in literature more terrible than Richter's Vision of a soul awaking in such a world.

The thought in these two verses of our Psalm seems to me to be alluded to and expanded in Rev. xxii. 11 (R.V. margin).

v. 30. "*As for God, His way is perfect*..." The thought is similar to that of the 'Asaph' Psalm lxxvii. 13 (see ad loc.). There is a *thoroughness* about God's way which does not stop at

- 31 For who is God other than YHVH,
Or who is a Rock save our God?
32 As for God^a He girdeth me with strength,
And hath made my way perfect.
33 He giveth me feet like the hind's,
And letteth me tread^b the heights.
34 He traineth my hands for war,
So the steel bow is snapped^c by my arms.
35 Thou hast given me the shield of Thy help,
Thy right-hand sustains me,
Thy lowliness^d exalts me.
36 Thou makest me room to tread,
And that my feet should not falter.

^a *El*^b Deut. xxxii.
13: xxxiii.
29^c or *bent*^d P.B.V. "lov-
ing correc-
tion"
follows the
Septuagint

A vision of Israel's
future.

- 37 I shall follow my foes and o'ertake them,
Nor shall I turn back till I have destroyed them.
38 I shall smite them that they be not able to rise,
They shall fall under my feet.
39 Thou hast girded me with strength for war,
Thou humblest mine adversaries under me.
40 Thou hast given me the grip of my enemies,
And I cut off those that hate me.
41 They cry—but there is none to help—
To YHVH—but there is none that answers them.

pain. By this very fact that "*His* way is perfect," He "hath made *my* way perfect" (v. 32).

"Perfect I call Thy plan:

Thanks that I was a man!

Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what Thou shalt do!"

"*The promise (or word) of YHVH is tried to the proof.*" Just as God's *way* does not stop at pain so His *promise* does not stop at fire, but comes out as gold from the fiery trial (see note p. 52). All the promises of God are without repentance (Rom. xi. 29). From these two facts it follows that God is "A shield to all that trust in Him" (cf. v. 35).

v. 35. "*...the shield of Thy help.*" As in v. 30 the Psalmist explains the shield of God's help by two sharply contrasted thoughts:—

(a) "Thy right-hand (i.e. Thy power) sustains me,"

(b) "Thy lowliness (i.e. Thy condescension) exalts me."

For similar contrast see Ps. cxlii. 5 f.; cxxxviii. 6: Is. lvii. 15. God's *power* sustains Israel in life and makes room for him to go along the way; while God's *lowliness*, which is always closely akin to His *Word* moved in Israel as "the hope of glory" before the days of the Incarnation.

v. 41. "*To YHVH.*" The thought of the enemy crying unto YHVH is certainly strange. Possibly the name *Elohim* originally stood here: the Psalm has many points of contact with the Elohistie 'Asaph' Psalms. If the Editor who arranged the Psalms had placed it in the Jehovistic 'Davidic' group he may very possibly have changed Elohim into YHVH.

- 42 I beat them as small as the dust before the wind :
 I pour them out as the mud of the streets.
 43 Thou deliverest me from the strivings of the people ;
 Thou makest me the chief of the nations :
 A people I knew not obeys me.
 44 They but hear^a of me with rumour's ear :
 And aliens pay me homage.
 45 Aliens fail—
 They come trembling out of their strongholds.

^a Exod. xv.
 14 f.

- 46 YHVH liveth, and blessed is my Rock,
 And exalted^b be the God of my salvation.
 47 As for God^c He granteth me vengeance,
 And hath subdued the peoples under me.
 48 He delivers me from mine enemies :
 Yea from mine adversaries Thou settest me up on high ;
 From the violent Thou rescuest me.
 49 Therefore I thank Thee among the nations O YHVH,
 And would strike the harp to Thy Name.
 50 As One who giveth great salvation to His King,
 And sheweth loving-kindness to His Anointed,
 To David and his seed for evermore.

^b Exod. xv. 2

^c *El*

v. 50. "*His King...His Anointed...David.*" It is clear that these words refer to one and the same person; but are we therefore compelled to interpret them of David the son of Jesse? Those who say Yes must account for the following passages written long after David's death:

Hos. iii. 5. "They shall seek unto YHVH their God and unto David their King...in the latter days."

Jer. xxx. 9. "And they shall serve YHVH their God and David their King, whom I will raise up for them."

Ezek. xxxvii. 22 and 24. "One King shall be King to them all"...*"David My Servant (shall be) King."*

PS. XIX.* PART I.

The Light of Nature.

- Day I. 1 The heavens are telling the glory of God^a,
 Day II. And the firmament sheweth his handiwork.
 Day III. 2 Day unto day abounds^b with speech,
 Day IV. And night unto night discourseth knowledge.
 †[3 Not speech, not words—without their voice being heard].
 Day V. 4 Through all the earth is gone forth their strain,
 Day VI. Their words through the confines of the world.

^a *El*

^b Ps. cxix. 171

The blessings that it brings.

- Day I. He appointed the sun to tent in them,
 Day II. 5 And he, like a bridegroom goes forth from his canopy,
 Day III. Rejoicing as a giant in running his course.
 Day IV. 6 His ingress is upon one bound of heaven,
 Day V. His regress on the other bound thereof,
 Day VI. So that nothing is hid from his heat.

* For the Introduction to this Psalm see page 94.

† Regarded as a gloss by Olshausen and Wellhausen.

v. 1^a. The *Glory* of God is His manifestation to the world. Its natural emblem is *Light*. The first Day tells of the creation of Light, from which all else follows. Thus, by way of parable, the first Day tells the whole story of creation as the Manifestation of God. We notice that the parallel line of Part II (i.e. v. 7^a) contains the parallel thought:—just as “All Creation is one act at once—the birth of light,” so all Revelation is one act at once—the birth of Thora. If any word of God ever came to man that word must ultimately reach to the highest expression.—“In the beginning was the Word—And the Word became flesh.” Our Psalm is appointed fitly for Christmas Day. There is also, I believe, a correspondence between the two stanzas of Part I, so that the line 1^a answers to the line 4^c, “The heavens are telling the Glory of God,” because “He appoints the sun to tabernacle in them.”

v. 1^b. “*And the firmament sheweth...*” The *firmament* was the work of the second Day. There is a thought of firmness and stability in the word which is quite foreign to our modern conception. The firmament was a partition between the upper and lower worlds (cf. Gen. i. with Ezek. i. 22—26). It gave stability to the Universe, upon it was the Throne of God (Ezek. i). What the firmament “sheweth” of God’s handiwork is that it is *sure* and stable. If we compare the parallel line in Part II we find the parallel thought that “The TESTIMONY of YHVH is *stable*.” The TESTIMONY of YHVH (see p. 51) is that which He has attested, limited and defined, as a rule of human conduct. The word was in later times specially applied to the Decalogue (Exod. xvi. 34, xxv. 16, 21 f. &c., &c.) though it would be rash to assume that the “Ark of the Testimony,” and “the tabernacle of Testimony,” were originally so called because they contained the “tables of Testimony”! Indeed, when the word “Testimony” stands alone, as in Exod. xxvii. 21, Numb. xvii. 4 (19), it seems to require a wider meaning.

In a difficult passage, Ps. lxxxix. 37, we read

“...his throne is as the sun before Me,
 It is established for ever as the moon,
 And as the witness in the sky it is sure.”

of the Zodiac or the Spheres. The word we have translated *regress* always denotes in Biblical Hebrew "the turn" of the year (Ez. xxxiv. 22; 1 Sam. i. 20; 2 Chr. xxiv. 23; Ps. xix. 6 (7) are the only passages). In later Hebrew it was used to denote the solstices. The Babylonian Year was a repetition of the day on a larger scale. As the day consisted of equal periods of light and darkness so their year consisted of six months (decline), during which the sun was moving from his birth to his death, and six months (ascent), during which he was moving from his death to his birth. Thus the thoughts of day and night were transferred to the year: each night he went "beneath the waters" and traversed the underworld, so in what we may call the night of the year he was "beneath the waters." This gives a much deeper meaning to the words of verse 6 "and nothing is hid from his heat."

Compare the hymn, *Veni Redemptor Gentium*, of St Ambrose, quoted by Neale:

"From God the Father He proceeds;
To God the Father back He speeds:
Proceeds—as far as very hell,
Speeds back—to light ineffable."

If we compare the fourth line of Part I with the fourth line of Part II we are reminded at once of the work of the fourth Day; as on that Day the luminaries became "for signs and for seasons" causing "night unto night to discourse knowledge" so (in the world of Revelation) the "commandment," which is likened to a *lamp* (Prov. vi. 23), shone out in man's darkness—"bright, enlightening the eyes" so that man can say (v. 11^a) "Thy servant too gets warning-light from them."

v. 4^a. "Through all the earth is gone forth their strain."—This, omitting the gloss, is properly the fifth line. In Creation the fifth Day introduces for the first time the marvel of animated life:—for the first time too we read "And God blessed them." The birds are God's preachers. To them, as giving voice to Creation's Hymn, we might apply the words, "Through all the earth is gone forth their strain."

We must compare this line with the fifth line of Part II (v. 9^a), "The oracles of YHVH are pure &c...." The oracles of YHVH (see note, p. 51) are those Divine utterances 'whose very sweetness yieldeth proof that they were born for immortality'; while they satisfy the heart they enlarge it for a wider fulfilment to come. In this sense they are "enduring for ever."

If the reader now passes to v. 10^b which we have coupled with v. 9^a he will note how the thought is expanded. "Sweeter are they than honey—and the dripping honey-comb." The words are almost identical with Ps. cxix. 103, "How sweet are Thy oracles unto my taste—more so than honey to my mouth."

v. 4^b with 9^b. "Their words, &c." "The judgements of YHVH..." This sixth line answers to the work of the sixth Day. In the world of Nature the "Heavens" arrive, on the sixth Day, at articulate speech in the creation of Man, so that, through him "their words (go) through the confines of the world." So too in the world of Revelation the sixth Day is associated with God's judgements (see notes on 'Asaph' Psalms), thus it is said, "The judgements of YHVH are truth"—not merely true but truth itself, as the final expression of His thought seen and justified before men and angels. So it is added—"righteous altogether." The same idea is expressed Ps. cxix. 160, "The sum of Thy word is truth. Each righteous judgement of Thine is eternal."

v. 4. "their strain."—The Hebrew text gives "their line," i.e. their measuring-line. The going forth of a measuring-line implies the establishment of a claim (cf. Jer. xxxi. 39), which would give a very possible sense here. But the parallelism seems to suggest that we should read (with LXX), and Wellhausen קלם instead of קום, and translate "their voice" or "their strain."

v. 9. The text reads "The fear of YHVH." I am, however, convinced that the text here is wrong, and that instead of אִתּוֹ יְהוָה, "the fear of YHVH," we ought to read אִתּוֹת יְהוָה, "the word, or rather the oracles, of YHVH. And this for the following reasons:

1st. The other five terms *Law, testimony, precepts, commandments, judgements*, are all synonyms for the Law (see notes on Ps. cxix. page 50 f.), consequently we should expect some such expression as "the oracles of YHVH are pure and endure for ever," instead of the present text, which scarcely makes sense.

2nd. The very expression is found in Ps. xii. 6 (7) "The oracles (אִתּוֹת) of YHVH are pure oracles, silver purified (צִרּוּפָה)..." And again, Ps. cxix. 140, "Thy word (i.e. oracles, אִתּוֹת) is purified (צִרּוּפָה). And again, Ps. xviii. 31 (30) and 2 Sam. xxii. 31, "The word of YHVH is pure" Thus we find that this particular name for the word (or oracles) of God is constantly

coupled with the idea of *purity from a fiery trial*. A similar thought is found in Ps. cv. 19, "The word (אֱמֶת) of YHVH purified him (וְצִדְקָתוֹ)," i.e. tried him as by fire [cf. Heb. iv. 12 f.].

Thus I conclude that the proper reading in our Psalm is "The word (אֱמֶת) of YHVH is pure and endureth for ever," i.e. the oracles of YHVH have stood the fiery test and abide. If the reader object that the words "אֱמֶת" and "אֱמֶת" were not likely to be confounded, I reply that the Septuagint have actually made this confusion in Prov. i. 29, where the Hebrew has "the fear of the Lord," and the Greek "the word of the Lord."

v. 13, 14. Wellhausen regards v. 14 as a gloss, but the 13th verse is also very different in style and reads like a pious prayer written on the margin of a hymn. Probably it was suggested by the mention of "errors..." "hidden faults" in v. 12. The scribe feels that there is one other class of sins from which he must pray for deliverance—viz. *sins of presumption*. "Errors"... "hidden (things) mean to the Psalmist much more than the "ignorances"... "hidden sins" of the scribe. The cry, "Who can comprehend his errors" is not the wail of "an infant crying in the night...and with no language but a cry." It is rather man's thanksgiving for the Revelation as the Light of Life—"Apart from that Revelation who would have known right from wrong? but now that Light makes the simple wise."

Since however the gloss has become part of the text we must interpret it according to the later and more dogmatic theology of the scribe. In his eyes *ignorances...hidden sins...proud ones* denote the three steps on the downward road which ends in *the great transgression*. 'Ignorances' are sins which the sinner did not know to be sinful (Levit. iv. and v.). 'Hidden sins'—literally 'Hidden things.' Not secret faults which the sinner tries to hide from God and man, but sins which are hidden from himself, pitfalls into which he might sink unawares. Thus when Saul of Tarsus with a clear conscience persecuted the Church it was a sin of 'ignorance,' but when Abimelech took Sarah (Gen. xx.) it was 'hidden sin.' In the former case light was needed to the conscience, in the latter light to the intelligence. For all such sins of 'ignorance' the Jewish Law provided atonement through sacrifice (Numb. xv. 27 f.). Not so with 'proud sins,' i.e. sins of presumption; for these no sacrifice was provided (Numb. xv. 30 f.). Though there might be forgiveness for such, as in the case of David, yet it was beyond the Covenant; therefore the scribe prays 'also from proud ones hold Thou back Thy servant.' Man without the Divine Word (Law) would be like a universe without its sun; he would have no light to his conscience whereby he might avoid sins of ignorance, no light to his intelligence whereby he might escape hidden sins, no restraint upon life to keep him within the orbit of his being, and by force of attraction hold him back from ruin.

It is however only fair to say that the word we have translated "proud ones" might refer to "proud men" as in the closely parallel passage Ps. cxix. 122—125.

PSALM XIX.

I have shewn in my Akkadian Genesis that the six "Days" of Creation correspond with the six *spheres*, each having, according to Babylonian thought, its presiding planet or deity. The sun's course through these six spheres completed the ancient year of six months. This being so, the 'music of the spheres' is not an idle dream of the poets. Each season has its meaning and is a parable to the wise:—

"These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God. The rolling year
Is full of thee!"

This nineteenth Psalm interprets the music of the spheres. The Psalm consists of two parts, which are so different in style that many suppose them to have been originally distinct. Whether this be so or no the two parts have now a close relation to one another. Part I is a magnificent poem, setting forth the office of the sun as giving voice and meaning to the whole universe, which, but for him, would be a silent instrument, dumb to the glory of God, but which now brims over with such joy and praise as can scarcely find expression. All this new meaning which awakes in the heavens is due to the sun which 'tabernacles' among them and is, as the poet seems to suggest (*v.* 5), the Bridegroom of Nature.

Part II (*v.* 7 to end) is wholly different in style, and reminds us of Psalm cxix. It is all in praise of the Law. We should however be greatly mistaken if we supposed that the *Law* which the Psalmist found to be light and life was the letter of the Mosaic code; on the contrary, it was the Living Voice of God speaking through Priest and Prophet, sufficing for every need as it arose. To the Psalmist *Law (Thora)* was almost identical with *Revelation*. It is only when we have realized this that we can appreciate the relation between the two parts of the Psalm.

What the sun is in the world of nature that the *Law (Thora, Divine Word)* is in the world of men. Without this inspiration, or Divine Word, which indwells the ages, the world of man would be a voiceless chaos, but, with it, all things "mean intensely and mean well" (cf. Is. xlv. 18).

In Part I the Divine Name is *El*, as the God of Nature: in Part II it is YHVH, as the God of the Covenant.

The style of Part I is very different from that of Part II, but, on the other hand, they are similar in structure. Both (if we omit the portions marked as gloss) consist of two stanzas of six lines each, which seem to have reference to the six 'Days' or Spheres of Creation (see notes). Part II is much more artificial in its structure, and its two stanzas correspond in reverse order: it probably belongs to the same period as Ps. cxix., whereas Part I *may* be much earlier.

PSALM XX.

This Psalm is best interpreted from the story of Jacob at Peniel (Gen. xxxii. 24 ff.) There God "answered him in the day of his trouble" (Gen. xxxv. 3), shewing him that the Divine Name (Nature) could not be won without the struggle. The life of Jacob (Israel) was felt to be in this respect a type of the Nation (Israel): cf. Hos. xii. 3 f.

The mission of Israel is to win God's Name by struggle and to express that Name to the World. This involved separation from the World, and therefore the hatred of the World. Israel becomes the "Suffering Nation." Israel must conquer the World not by might or by strength but by winning and by imparting the Divine Name. Let the Psalm now be read with this meaning in view.

The lives of the Prophets (e.g. Jeremiah) led to the expectation that God's Ideal for Israel must find expression in the life of a Perfect Man. The world being what it is, such a Man *must* be a Sufferer (cf. Plato *Rep.* II. p. 44; *Davies and Vaughan's translation; Wisdom of Sol.* ii. vv. 13—20).

But the world will not always be what it is. The Redeemer will at last receive the gratitude of the redeemed. "This Psalm is the prayer which the Church might be supposed offering up, had all the redeemed stood by the Cross, or in Gethsemane, in full consciousness of what was doing there" (A. A. Bonar, quoted in *Treasury of David*).

Let vv. 1—5 be now read in this light—

We Christians know how the Father did "answer Him in the day of His trouble," and how the "Name above every name" became His Name and "set Him on high." Knowing this we can take to ourselves the lesson and comfort of vv. 6—8.

The chief division of the Psalm comes between verses 5 and 6. Many commentators from Ewald downwards suppose that a sacrifice had been offered at this point and that the second half of the Psalm (vv. 6—10) denotes the acceptance of this sacrifice. This is by no means improbable. The student should carefully compare the thought and structure of this Psalm with that of Psalm xxviii. which may be called its octave.

PS. XX.

- The Vision of Victory
 realized as an historic present.
- 1 YHVH answer thee in the day of *trouble;
 The Name of Jacob's God set thee on high^b!
- 2 Send thee thy help from the Sanctuary^c;
 And sustain thee from out of Zion!
- 3 May He remember all thy offerings;
 And graciously accept thy sacrifice!
- 4 Grant thee thy very heart's desire^d;
 And accomplish^e all thy purpose!
- 5 We sing for joy in Thy salvation,
 We exult in the name of our God;
 YHVH accomplishes all thy requests.
- Comfort from the Vision.
- 6 Now know I that YHVH helpeth His Anointed,
 That He answers him from His holy heaven,
 With the saving help of His right hand.
- 7 Some—in chariots, and some, in horses^f!
 But we—we make mention of the Name of YHVH our God,
- 8 As for them, they sink and they fall;
 But we, we arise and stand firm.
- 9 O YHVH save!
 In the day when we call the King answers us.
- ^a Gen. xxxv.
^b Prov. xviii. 10
 or in safety
^c Ps. xxviii. 2
^d John xvii.
^e Luke xii. 50
^f Deut. xvii. 16

v. 1. The Yalkut sees in these words a reference to Gen. xxxv. 3, where Jacob says, "Let us go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, *who answered me in the day of my trouble.*" The verb we have translated "*set thee on high*" has also the kindred meaning of *safety*. From the same root we have the Hebrew word for a "*high tower.*" The two meanings are again combined in Prov. xviii. 10. "The name of YHVH is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it *and is safe* (marg. *set aloft*)." Compare Prov. xxix. 25, "Whoso putteth his trust in YHVH *shall be safe* (marg. *set on high*)." The word is again coupled with the Name of God in Ps. xci. 14, "*I will set him on high* because he hath known my Name" (cf. Pss. lix. 1 (2); lxix. 29 (30); cvii. 41). When then it is said, "The Name of Jacob's God set thee on high" it must imply that as Jacob became Israel through partaking of the Name (Nature) of God, so too it must be in the history of Jacob's seed.

v. 9. Many commentators here, following the Septuagint, disregard the accents, and translate

*"O Lord save the King,
 He hears us (or and hear us) in the day when we call."*

This interpretation probably led to the use of the Psalm in the Accession Service.

The *Yalkut* draws attention to the fact that the Psalm ends as it began. It began, "YHVH answer thee in the day of trouble." It ends, "In the day when we call the King answers us."

The *Midrash* explains the readiness of the answer from the words,

*"He shall call me and I will answer him,
 I (myself) am with him in trouble..."* (Ps. xci. 15).

Though God may allow His People to be afflicted yet "in all their trouble He is troubled," (Is. lxiii. 9).

PSALM XXI.

The "King" in this Psalm is a reflex of God. In him God is well-pleased (*vv.* 1—3). God gives him an endless life (*v.* 4). God puts of His own Majesty upon him (*v.* 5). Through him God fulfils the old promise that all the world shall be blessed and makes him radiant of the very brightness of the Shechina (*v.* 6). This King places his whole trust in God and never can be moved (*v.* 7; cf. *Is.* xlii. 4).

Can such a description have been intended to apply to any monarch who ever sat upon a throne? I refuse to believe it. The fulsome flattery of Eastern hyperbole is alien to the spirit of the Old Testament. Early kings, like Saul and David, lived on familiar terms with their people, and, in later times, Isaiah ridicules with stinging words the god-like pretensions of the heathen kings (*Is.* xiv. 12 ff.).

The fact is that, from the very earliest time, God Himself was felt to be "the King" of Israel (*1 Sam.* xii. 12). When a king was afterwards appointed he "sat upon the throne of God" (*1 Chron.* xxix. 23). The Prophets looked forward to a time when the Kingship of God over Israel, and even over "the whole earth" (*Zech.* xiv. 9), would become a realized fact (*Is.* xxiv. 23; lii. 7 &c.). This thought finds expression in the Psalms of the Theophany (see on *Pss.* xciii. &c.). Side by side with this expectation of a visible reign of God upon earth we find another channel of expectation, not clearly defined, in which the Divine reign on earth is to be realized through an ideal "David" who should, as it were, so completely fill "God's throne" that what is said of God may fitly be said of him. Thus:—*Hos.* iii. 5, "They shall seek unto YHVH their God and unto David their King..."

Jer. xxx. 9, "And they shall serve YHVH their God and David their King..."

Ezek. xxxvii. 22 and 24, "Our King shall be King to them all..." "David My servant (shall be) King."

It is in this sense that I understand the word 'King' in many passages of the Psalms, e.g.

Ps. xviii. 50 (51) "Who giveth great salvation to His King
And sheweth loving-kindness to His Anointed,
To David and his seed for evermore."

The Jewish tradition is therefore to be accepted which asserts that the King in Psalm xxi. is none other than King Messiah (see *Yalkut*).

The division of the Psalm is as follows:—

Verses 1—6 are addressed to God.

Verses 8—12 are addressed to the King. (This is evident from *v. 9b*). Verse 7 is addressed neither to God nor to the King but forms a connecting link between the two main portions of the Psalm. Verse 13 drops, as it were, the parable of the King and claims for the People that triumph which strictly belongs only to their ideal Representative.

The first main division of the Psalm may be described as *the arming of the King*. The weapons of his warfare are all spiritual. God puts such Majesty upon him that he becomes the effulgence of His Glory, the expression of His essence (Heb. i. 3). But this same Glory that makes him a fount of endless blessing to his own People makes him a terror to his foes (contrast *v. 6* with *v. 9*).

Thus in the second main division of the Psalm the King is seen armed with terrors which remind us of Milton's description in *Paradise Lost*, Bk. vi. 824—866.

In *vv. 9, 10* the imagery is, I think, coloured by associations connected with Molok, "the King." To those who refuse the joy of God's Presence (*v. 6*) that Presence becomes a consuming fire. It is a fearful thing to reject God and "fall into the hands" of the Laws of Nature (Heb. x. 31).

PS. XXI.

The arming of the King.

Our King becomes the reflex of God and dispenser to us of His blessings.

- 1 O YHVH, in Thy might the King rejoices;
 O how exceeding glad he is through Thy Salvation!
 2 Thou gavest him his heart's desire^a;
 Thou didst not withhold the request of his lips.
 3 But didst meet^b him with blessings of goodness;
 Setting on his head a crown of gold.
 4 Did he ask life of Thee?—Thou gavest it—
 A length of days to all eternity!
 5 Great is his glory through Thy Salvation;
 Splendour and majesty^c Thou layest upon him.
 6 For Thou makest him an endless blessing^d;
 Gladdening him with the joy that is Thy Presence.

^a Ps. xx. 4

^b anticipate

^c Ps. viii. 5

^d Gen. xii. 2

Central thought.

- 7 For the King trusteth in YHVH,
 Through the lovingkindness of the Most High he shall
 never be moved.

The victory of the King.

Our King (*Melek*) becomes to his enemies a very *Molok*.

- 8 Thy hand shall reach all thine enemies;
 Thy right-hand shall reach them that hate thee.
 9 Thou shalt make them as a fiery furnace in the time of
 thy Presence;
 YHVH will devour them in His anger, the fire will consume
 them.
 10 Thou destroyest their fruit from off the earth,
 Their seed from among the children of men.
 11 Though they plotted evil against thee,
 They devised a device—but were powerless!
 12 For thou turnest them to flight,
 Aiming thy bow-strings at their faces.

Our victory, too, is only in God.

- 13 O YHVH be Thou exalted in Thy might^e:
 We sing, we strike the harp, through Thy power.

^e 2. 1

PSALM XXII.

The Suffering Servant feels himself forsaken in spite of prayer (*vv.* 1 and 2). He looks back to a time when men had only to cry and be helped (*vv.* 4 and 5) but not so now! The Sufferer must bear the reproach of being forsaken by God in whom he trusts (*vv.* 6—8). Yet he knows that God Himself caused him to be born and that the blind instinct of an infant's mother-trust had behind it the mother-care of God (*vv.* 9 and 10; compare *Aug. Confess. Book 1. [vi.] 7*); therefore, like an infant "crying in the night" his one prayer is "*be not far*" (*v.* 11). His thought turns naturally to the *strength* of the enemy (cf. *bulls* and *lions*, *vv.* 12, 13), and to his own *weakness* (*vv.* 14 and 15): next, the *cruelty* of the enemy (cf. *dogs*, *vv.* 16—18), and his own *meek submission* in their hands. Again the Sufferer commits himself to God with the same prayer "*be not far*" (*v.* 19): he prays to be delivered from the *cruelty* of the *dog* (*v.* 20), from the *strength* of the *lions* and *bulls* (*vv.* 20 and 21)—While this prayer is yet on his lips there breaks the full assurance that *God has answered him* (*v.* 21): instead of the *bulls* he sees now *brethren*, instead of the *assembly of evil-doers* like *dogs* (*v.* 16) he sees now a *Great Congregation* of worshippers (*v.* 22). The Sufferer has gone through the experience of Joseph and, like Joseph, now proclaims God's name to reconciled brethren.

Here the Psalm may be said to end. All that follows is the utterance, not of the Sufferer, but of the Congregation of Israel which, as a Chorus, draws the lesson from the Sufferer's experience. Thus (*vv.* 23 and 24);—All believers are called upon to thank God because the Sufferer's pain was *not* in vain and the Sufferer's prayer was *not* unheard. Since *his* pain was not in vain, all earth's suffering-ones can "feast and be filled" (*v.* 26). Since *his* prayer was not unheard, all "seekers of God" can praise Him so that his experience is the *Sursum Corda* of humanity (*v.* 26). But further—the Suffering Servant will bring the whole world to the feet of God (*vv.* 27 and 28); through him life's happiness becomes a sacrificial feast, life's misery a devoted homage (*v.* 29); all this is seen to spring from the fact that the Sufferer *did not save himself* (*v.* 29). Therefore an undying seed shall serve him, ever springing to tell new truths of his righteousness and of the finished work that he hath done.

Christians believe that this has found its fulfilment in Christ.

"Glory on glory compasseth Him round,
From henceforth unto all the deathless years;
The smile of God wherewith He sitteth crowned,
More sweet because the memory of tears
Is in His heart, and dieth not away;
And in exchange for every weary day
He spent on earth, some blessed soul forgiven,
Some face once darkened with our sin and night,
Is lifted up to Him in cloudless light,
And addeth glory to those days of heaven."

[Quoted by Bourne in *The King of Sorrow*, p. 58.]

But though I would maintain most strongly that the full meaning of the Psalm is to be found alone in Christ I have no wish to close my eyes to the fact that, in the mind of the writer, the Sufferer was Israel. This will appear in the notes. Meanwhile there is no fact in the Life of our Lord more certain than that He regarded Himself as sent to fulfil God's ideal of Israel. This appears at His baptism—in His Temptation in the Wilderness—in His choice of the name "Son of Man" (compare Dan vii. 13, 27)—in His forecast of His sufferings and the glory that should follow. When then, upon the cross, He takes upon His lips the first words (Matt. xxvii. 46) and probably the last words (John xix. 23) of the Psalm, we may conclude that the Psalm as a whole was in His mind and was His strong comfort in death.

Thus Jerome, commenting on *v.* 1, says, "Hoc versiculo Dominus in cruce pendens usus est: ex quo animadvertimus totum Psalmum a Domino in cruce posito decantari" (*Comment. in Psalmos*, p. 32).

PS. XXII.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>A cry of wonder
but not of doubt.</p> | <p>1 My God^a, my God^a, why hast Thou forsaken me?
Far from my help, from the words of my complaint!</p> <p>2 O my God^b I cry in the daytime, but Thou answerest not,
In the night-time also, but there is no rest for me:</p> <p>3 Yet Thou art Holy,
Throned on the Praise-songs of Israel.</p> <p>4 In Thee our fathers could trust,
They trusted and Thou didst deliver them;</p> <p>5 Unto thee they cried and escaped,
They trusted and were not shamed:</p> <p>6 But I am a worm and no man,
The reproach of men, the despised of the people.</p> <p>7 All that see me mock^c at me,
They shoot out the lip, they wag^d the head.</p> <p>8 "He casts (his burden) on YHVH—let Him release him,
Let Him deliver him, since He delighteth^e in him."</p> | <p>^a Matt. xxvii.
46, <i>Eli, Eli</i></p> <p>^b <i>Elohim</i></p> <p>^c Luke xxiii.
35</p> <p>^d Mark xv. 29</p> <p>^e Matt. xxvii.
39, 43</p> |
|--|---|---|

vv. 1—5. Israel cries to his Father; not doubting His goodness but asking to see the meaning of his sufferings, cf. Lam. v. 19 f. "Thou O Lord, remainest for ever; Thy throne from generation to generation. Wherefore then dost Thou forget us for ever, and forsake us so long time?"

But though "Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me" (Is. xlix. 14) still Zion knew, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee" (Is. liv. 7, cf. lxii. 4). The promise to Jacob, "I will not forsake thee until I have done all that I have spoken to thee of," was the promise to Israel (Deut. xxxi. 6). Still, while the suffering lasts it is strange:—strange that the Holy should let His Holy One suffer:—all the more strange in that the past history of Israel was a record of temporal blessings and deliverances (*vv.* 4, 5).

vv. 6—8. The language of these verses is elsewhere applied to Israel, e.g. *worm*. "Fear not, thou *worm* Jacob" (Is. xli. 14). *Reviled of men...despised of the people*. "Thus saith...the Redeemer

9 Yet it was THY doing I came from the womb,
 Thou wert my cause of trust upon my mother's breasts.
 10 On Thee have I been cast from my birth,
 Thou art my God^a from my mother's womb. * *Eli*
 11 BE NOT FAR from me, for trouble is nigh,
 And helper is none!

The *strength* of the foe. 12 Many bulls are come about me,
 Mighty ones of Bashan ring me round.
 13 They open their mouths at me,
 As a lion that rends and roars.

The *weakness* of the sufferer. 14 I am poured out like water,
 All my bones are out of joint,
 My heart is become like wax,
 It is melted within my body.
 15 My strength^b is dried up like a potsherd,
 My tongue cleaveth to my jaws,
 And in the dust of death Thou art laying me low. ^b or, *my palate*.
 Reading *hkt*
 for *hht*

The *cruelty* of the foe. 16 For dogs are come about me,
 The assembly of evil-doers have closed me round,
 They pierce^c my hands and my feet. * ? text

The *meekness* of the sufferer. 17 I may count all my bones,
 They^d look on!—they gloat over me. ^d emphatic

of Israel...to him whom *man despiseth*, to him whom a nation abhorreth..." (Compare also Jer. xlix. 15, where Edom is said to be "*despised among men*.") *All...mock at me*, compare Neh. ii. 19; 2 Chr. xxx. 10. *They wag the head*, "They hiss and *wag their head*" (Lam. ii. 15). *v. 8* should be compared with the remarkable passage *Wisdom* 11. 16, 17, which marks the transition between the thought of the righteous *Nation* and the righteous *Man*.

vv. 9—11. The thought goes back to the difficulty which remained unsolved in *vv. 1—5* but there is less of wonder, more of child-like trust. The God who has led me all my life through from helpless infancy will not leave me now in my distress.

If to any reader the language of these verses should seem to bespeak a love too individual to be applied to Israel he is invited to consider such passages as the following:—"Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne (by Me) from the belly, which are carried from the womb. And (even) to (your) old age I (am) He; and (even) to hoar hairs will I carry you..." (Is. xlvi. 3f. cf.; Hos. xi. 1, 3).

vv. 12—21. The Sufferer is laid at Death's door by *God Himself* (*v. 15*). His foes take this opportunity of shewing their hatred. Their blindness, ferocity and cowardice is described under the imagery of bulls, lions, dogs. The words "They pierce (lit. *they have dug through*) my hands and my feet" since they are used of *dogs*, probably imply the cowardly attack that a band of Syrian dogs would make upon a man who was lying helpless. I speak now only of the primary meaning. Those who believe in Inspiration will admit that the word may have been so chosen as to fit even the details of the Crucifixion. For my own part, were it proved that, in the Crucifixion, the feet of Christ were not pierced, the words would lose none of their force as a picture of His sufferings on the Cross.

While the Sufferer is crying to God, not merely for deliverance, but for a solution of the mystery of suffering (see on *vv. 1—5*), the sudden answer comes (*v. 21*). *Thou hast answered me!*

- 18 They part^a my garments among them,
And for my vesture they cast lots^a.
- His strong crying
unto Him that is able
to save.
- 19 But Thou, O YHVH, BE NOT FAR!
O my Strength, haste to my help!
- 20 Deliver my soul from the sword,
My dear-life from the power of the dog.
- 21 Save me from the mouth of the lion,
From the buffalo horns—
Thou hast answered me.
- The answer comes.
- 22 I can declare Thy name unto my^b brethren,
In the midst of the Congregation I shall praise Thee.
- The sufferer sees
the joy set before
him.
- (The Congregation of Israel now speaks and draws the lesson
from the above.)*
- The Chorus of Cre-
ation.
- 23 O ye fearers of YHVH, give Him praise;
O all ye seed of Jacob, give Him honour;
All ye seed of Israel, shew him reverence;
- 24 For He did *not* despise—He did *not* spurn the Sufferer's pain,
He did *not* hide His face from him,
But while he was crying unto Him He hearkened.
- 25 Thou art my theme of praise in the great Congregation,
I pay my vows amidst His worshippers.
- 26 The lowly shall feast and be filled,
Seekers of YHVH shall praise Him,
"May your heart live for ever."
- 27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto YHVH,
All the families of the Nations shall worship before Him.
- 28 For (now) the Kingdom is YHVH's,
And He rules among the Nations.
- 29 All earth's richest worship as they feast,
All that go down to the dust kneel before Him,
For His own life He did not save!
- 30 A seed shall serve Him,
It shall be counted as the "Lord's people."
- 31 They shall come and tell of His righteousness,
To a people yet to be born—how He hath finished^c it.
- ^a Mark xv. 24;
Luke xxiii.
34; Matt.
xxvii. 35;
John xix. 24
- ^b Heb. ii. 11,
12, cf. Matt.
xxviii. 10;
John xx. 17
- ^c John xix. 23

vv. 22—31. This answer, so far as Israel is concerned, gives the solution of the Second Isaiah. The suffering of Israel is not in vain. He becomes the reconciliation of the World. He gathers in the Gentiles. God's Kingdom, at last, is set up on earth.

PSALM XXIII.

Nothing can exceed the exquisite beauty of this Psalm unless it be its spiritual depth.

The Psalm falls naturally into two Stanzas of three verses each. In the *first* we see the Divine Shepherd caring for the *natural* needs of His sheep; in the *second* for the *spiritual* needs of man; or, to put the same thought in other words, the *first* stanza relates to what we call *joys*, the second to the deeper experience through what we call *trials*, including therein death itself.

In Stanza I we note 3 thoughts in the 3 verses.

(a) The all-embracing security of the Divine Shepherd's presence (*v. 1*).

(b) The green pastures and restful waters that He prepares (food and drink) for His sheep (*v. 2*).

(c) The kindly restoring guidance whereby He brings back the weary and the wanderers, and sets them in the track of His flocks (*v. 3*).

In Stanza II we find the same three thoughts, though, from the nature of the case, it was not possible to keep so closely to the image of the sheep when dealing with human trials.

Thus (*a*₁) the security of the Divine Shepherd's presence in the "Dark Valley" (*v. 4*) of pain, sorrow or death, is as all-embracing as the thought in *v. 1* to which it corresponds.

(*b*₁) The feast that the Shepherd spreads in *v. 5* answers to the green pastures and restful waters of *v. 2*; but there is now an added thought; it is "*in the presence of foes*." These spiritual enemies so far from hindering the feast are but evidence of the guardian care of the Shepherd.

(*c*₁) The same kindly guidance which brought back the weary wandering sheep in verse 3 is seen in verse 6 to work through all the changes and chances of life so as to make them all "work together" for good in bringing man to God his home. The word 'pursue' gives just a hint of hostile forces, but the same enchantment which had changed the Dark Valley has also changed the 'foes' to a 'feast' (*v. 5*) and the pursuers to 'goodness and mercy' (*v. 6*).

The words (*v. 6*) which we have translated "I am homed in the House..." lit. "I return into &c..." cannot, according to the Hebrew pointing, signify "I dwell in..." The analogy of verse 3 also requires the sense of *return*; as, in *v. 3*, the Shepherd brings the sheep back and sets it in the right tracks, so, in *v. 6*, He brings the man back, by many devices of love, to the only true home which is Himself.

All spiritual utterances are capable of meanings wider than the speaker's thought. Our Psalm may therefore justly be applied to the relation between God and the individual soul; still, even this relation will best be understood by interpreting it first of the relation between God and Israel, then between God and Christ (which gives the basis for individualism), and lastly between God and the Church (the true Israel). God is "the Shepherd of Israel" (Ps. lxxx. 1 (2); Is. xl. 11; Ezek. xxxiv. 12). The Wilderness was, for Israel, the "Dark Valley" (Jer. ii. 6), but the Shepherd of Israel 'turned this Shadow of Death into morning' (Amos v. 8) by the felt nearness of His Presence (cf. Is. xliii. 2; lxi. 9; Ps. xci. 15). Thus, through the Wilderness life (Deut. viii. 2 f.) Israel was intended to learn these three lessons of trust.

(a) *The absolute security of the Divine care.*

It was in the Wilderness that Israel (God's "Son," Exod. iv. 22) learnt to lean on his Father's Presence. His Father was "with him in trouble" (Ps. xci. 15). "In all his afflictions He was afflicted, while the Angel of His Presence was saving them" (Is. lxi. 9). Thus the Wilderness was eminently a season of Revelation, "I did know thee in the Wilderness, in the land of great drought" (Hos. xiii. 5).

(b) Again, in the Wilderness Israel learnt the 'Providence' of the Divine Shepherd. The gift of the Manna explained the hunger as well—"He suffered thee to hunger and He fed thee with manna...that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deut. viii. 3).

(c) Lastly, in the Wilderness Israel learnt that the Divine Shepherd had *guided them* in ways that to them were strange. "Thou leddest Thy people like a flock," (Ps. lxxvii. 20; cf. Is. lxi. 12, 13; Ps. lxxviii. 14, 53). When the Land of Promise was reached, Israel might say, 'Naught but goodness and kindness pursue me all the days of my life, and I am homed in the House of YHVH for ever and ever.'

But though Israel may have been said to have learnt these lessons there was only One who truly learnt them, and he was God's 'Only' Son—the Lamb of God.

(a) In the 'Dark Valley' of this world he "learned obedience by the things that he suffered" (Heb. v. 8). Every desertion of earth brought the Father's Presence nearer. "Thou art with me"—"I am not alone because the Father is with me." Thus the Dark Valley became a Revelation to man and God; to *man*, of a Divine Fatherhood; and to *God*, of a perfect human Sonship.

(b) In the Dark Valley of a hostile world God 'spread a feast' for him—He who could say 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me' must have found all life a feast. God 'anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows' and even his "cup" of sorrows was "fulness itself" of joy.

(c) His life was preeminently a *guided* life. He did not come of himself, the Father sent him. All through his ministry he 'did nothing of himself' (S. John v. 19, 30; viii. 28; ix. 4; xii. 49; xiv. 10). The Father guided him through the grave

and gate of death up to the highest place at His right hand ; so that, looking back on sorrows such as no other life has known, he can confess, "Naught but goodness and kindness pursue me all the days of my life and I am brought home to the House of YHVH for ever and ever" (cf. Heb. xiii. 20).

If we believe that Jesus is the Son of God we shall understand that "green pastures" and "restful waters" cannot mean for us the idle life of the well-fed beast but the 'food convenient' for the man.

"In pastures green? not always ; sometimes He
Who knoweth best, in kindness leadeth me
In weary ways, where heavy shadows be—

Out of the sunshine warm and soft and bright,
Out of the sunshine into darkest night ;
I oft would faint with sorrow and affright—

Only for this—I know He holds my hand ;
So, whether in the green or desert land,
I trust, although I may not understand.

And by still waters? no, not always so ;
Ofttimes the heavy tempests round me blow,
And o'er my soul the waves and billows go :

But when the storm beats loudest, and I cry
Aloud for help, the Master standeth by,
And whispers to my soul, "Lo it is I."

.....
And more than this : where'er the pathway lead
He gives to me no helpless broken reed,
But His own hand sufficient for my need.

So where He leads me I can safely go :
And in the blest hereafter I shall know
Why in His wisdom He hath led me so."

—Anon.

PS. XXIII.

- (a) The Shepherd's Presence is all-sufficing. 1 YHVH is my Shepherd^a, I can lack^b nothing! ^a Gen. xlviii. 15 (Heb.)
 (b) Makes life a feast. 2 In green pastures He maketh me lie down; He gently leads^c me by the restful waters. ^b Deut. ii. 7
 (c) Gives restoring guidance. 3 He restoreth my soul; He guideth me in the right tracks; ^c Is. xlix. 10
 for His own Name's sake.
- (a₁) The Shepherd's Presence is all-sufficing. 4 Yea when I go through the Dark-Valley^d I fear no ill, for Thou art with me; Thy staff and stay—they comfort me. ^d Jer. ii. 6
 (b₂) Makes life a feast. 5 Thou spreadest a table for me in the sight of my foes; Thou enrichest my head with oil, And my cup is fulness itself!
 (c₁) Gives restoring guidance. 6 Naught but goodness and kindness pursue me All the days of my life! And I am homed^e in the House^f of YHVH, for ever and ever! ^e am returned, cf. I Pet. ii. 25
^f Exod. xv. 17

v. 1. "Shepherd"—In the Old Testament when this title is applied to God it is always as the Shepherd of the People, not of the individual soul. See Is. xl. 11; Ezek. xxxiv. 11 ff.; Pss. lxxviii. 72; lxxix. 13; lxxx. 1, etc. There is, I believe, only one exception, viz. Gen. xlviii. 15 f. where Jacob says, "The God that was my Shepherd (EV *fed me*) all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil..." But this is really no exception because Jacob's life is a type and prophecy of that of Israel as a Nation. The promise, "Lo I am with thee" (Gen. xxviii. 15) was the secret of Jacob's life just as the Presence of the Shechina was that of Israel's (Exod. xiii. 21 f.; xiv. 19; Numb. x. 33; Deut. i. 33). By reason of this Presence every hostile event became to Jacob a blessing in disguise (Gen. xxxi. 25—55; xxxii., and xxxiii. etc.) and also to Israel, e.g. the Red Sea...Amalek...etc.

But if God be the Shepherd of Israel, and of Christ, how is Christ the Good Shepherd? The answer is in Ezek. xxxiv. where God after speaking of Himself as the Shepherd (*vv.* 11—22) says, v. 23, "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, (even) my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd." A Shepherd was needed upon earth who should be to men all that the Father is to him (cf. St John x. 14, 15 with Bp. Westcott's note).

v. 4. "The Dark-Valley"—Literally *the valley of gloom*. A mistaken derivation, which is at least as old as the vowel points, has given rise to "*the Valley of the Shadow-of-death*," but this sense has become so embedded in the language and literature of the Bible that it is mere pedantry to ignore it. I have intended by "*The Dark-Valley*" to hint at this, but, at the same time, not to exclude all those wider meanings which "the Wilderness" had for Israel (Jer. ii. 6) and which we include under 'the Wilderness of Temptation.'

v. 6. "All the days"—In the Septuagint the same words are used as in the promise of Christ's Presence with His Church (Matt. xxviii. 20).

PSALM XXIV.

An old tradition, preserved by the Septuagint, assigns this Psalm to the *first day of the week*. Now the *first day* is the beginning of the Creation of God—the birth of Light. But Light in Nature is only a parable of the “Glory of the Lord” (cf. John i. 9 and Ps. xix.). We might indeed modify the Poet’s words and say that ‘All Creation is one act at once, the incoming of God’s *Glory*.’

The Psalm is a Dedication-Psalm and will be best understood from the Vision that Ezekiel saw of the Dedication of his Temple. When the Temple at Jerusalem was lying in ruins God shewed Ezekiel a Vision of another Temple unlike the former (Chaps. xl.—end). Ezekiel describes its Gates and all its measurements most minutely; for everything was symbolical. But what avails a Temple unless God dwell in it? And Ezekiel had seen the “Glory of the Lord” desert the Temple at Jerusalem, being driven away by the sins of the People (Chap. xi. 22 f.). Will God then return to the Temple of the future?

This question is answered in Chap. xliii. 1 ff., “Afterward He brought me to the Gate, the Gate that looketh toward the East: And behold the Glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East and His voice was like the noise of many waters: and the earth shined with His Glory... And the visions were like the visions that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face. And the Glory of the Lord came into the House by the way of the Gate whose prospect is towards the East. So the Spirit took me up and brought me into the inner Court; and behold the Glory of the Lord filled the House” (xliii. 1—5)... That ‘Glory’ was not a Pillar of Cloud and Fire but “Upon the likeness of the Throne was the likeness as the appearance of a Man” (Chap. i. 26). Such was to Ezekiel the Dedication of the Temple of the future. God would not leave His Temple of the Universe, though men were sinners; He would enter that Temple through its eastern Gate, He would pass through the inner Gate into the inmost Shrine and His Glory would be “the likeness as the appearance of a Man upon the Throne”—a “King of Glory.”

Let us now turn to the Psalm (v. 1 f.) “*The earth is YHVH’S...upon the Ocean-floods.*” The Temple of Creation is finished... But what avails a Temple if God Himself dwell not in it?... The sin of man has driven God away... The Glory has deserted this Temple! There is no communion between God and man! Therefore the Psalmist says “Who can ascend...” [See vv. 3—6 with marginal notes.]

To man this seemed impossible. But God had promised “As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the Glory of the Lord” (Numb. xiv. 21). As in vision Ezekiel saw the Glory enter in through the Gates into the Temple, so now the Psalmist sees that same Glory enter, as a “King of Glory,” through the Gates of Earth and Heaven; and, filling all things with His Glory, restore the broken Communion between God and Man—“Lift up your heads...” [See vv. 7—10 with marginal notes.]

If we ask 'How has this been fulfilled?' the answer is (*vv.* 3—6) One Man *did* "ascend the Mountain of the Lord..." He was "clean of hands...pure of heart..." He did "bear away a blessing from YHVH..."

Just in so far as the Christian lives in the presence of this great Fact all "Heaven is opened" (John i. 51) for him... All life is transfigured. Earth becomes to him

"The broad foundation of a hōly place,
Man's step to scale the sky."

All things are his, the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are his, for he is Christ's; and Christ is God's (1 Cor. iii. 23).

Thus he can say, with a new meaning, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" (*v.* 1, see footnote).

The Psalm then is, in the fullest sense, a Psalm of Creation. In His Eternity all is "one act at once"; the incoming of the King of Glory. This being so the Psalm lends itself to all the stages of His incoming.

Milton was justified in applying it to the first creation of the worlds by the Son of God:

"heaven open'd wide
Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound,
On golden hinges moving, to let forth
The King of Glory, in his powerful Word
And Spirit, coming to create new worlds." (Book VII. 205—209.)

And again, on His completion of this work:

"Up he rode,
Follow'd with acclamation...
The heavens and all the constellations rung,
The planets in their station listening stood,
While the bright pomp ascended jubilant.
Open, ye everlasting gates! they sung;
Open, ye heavens! your living doors; let in
The great Creator, from his work return'd
Magnificent, his six days' work, a world." (Book VII. 557 ff.)

The Gospel of Nicodemus was justified in applying the Psalm to the entrance of Christ into Hades since this was one stage of His creative work:

"Then came again the voice, saying, 'Lift up your gates, ye princes! and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in!'"

"And Hades, hearing the voice, the second time, answered, as one forsooth unwilling, 'Who is this King of Glory?' And the Angels of the Lord answered, 'The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.' And straightway, with that word, the brazen gates were broken, and the bolts of iron torn asunder, and the bound in death were loosed from their chains, and we with them. And the King of Glory entered, in form even as a man, and all the dark places of Hades were lighted up" (see the whole passage in Bp. Forbes on *Article III.* and compare the use of the Psalm for Easter Eve, in the Latin Church).

But by far the most obvious use of the Psalm is for Ascension Day, as is appointed in our own Church.

PS. XXIV.

As the Heaven so
the Earth is God's *de
jure*.

- 1 The earth is YHVH'S and the fulness thereof*:
The world, and the dwellers therein.
2 For He it was that built it on the Waters,
That founded it upon the Ocean-floods.

* Quoted in
1 Cor. x. 26,
28

But no road from
Earth to Heaven ex-
cept a man could be

- 3 Who can ascend the Mountain of YHVH?
Who can stand within His Holy Place?

v. 1*. St Paul quotes this passage (1. Cor. x. 26) to shew that all God's creatures of food may be dedicated to God's use (cf. Ps. l. 12). "It is used in a very glorious sense by the Eastern Church in her Funeral Service, when at the moment in which the coffin is let down into the grave the Priest exclaims, '*The Earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof*:' that is, the multitude of the bodies of the faithful who there are awaiting His Second Coming" (Neale). Both these interpretations are but special instances of the great truth implied by the Psalmist. If we seek his original meaning it may be found from such passages as the following: "Behold the *Ark* of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you..." (Josh. iii. 11, 13), and "As truly as I live, *all the earth* shall be filled with the *Glory of the Lord*" (Numb. xiv. 21). When the Priests and Levites moved upwards in procession round the walls of Jerusalem (see later, on the *Songs of Ascents*) they were not merely 'dedicating' the *City* but were claiming the *whole earth* for God. Hence the "gates" and "the everlasting doors" are not so much the Gates of Zion as of the Heavenly Jerusalem of which Zion was the pledge. Many commentators, missing the connexion between v. 1 and v. 7, have followed Ewald in assigning vv. 7-10 to another writer.

The connexion of the verses may be traced as follows:

v. 1. *The Earth is YHVH'S and the fulness thereof*—This is the claim of the Seraphim. "The fulness of the whole earth is His Glory" (Is. vi. 3) but it is only prophetically true "The whole earth *shall* be filled with His Glory" (Ps. lxxii. 19), but at present "The Heavens are the Lord's Heavens but the Earth He has given to the children of men" (Ps. cxv. 16)—given to men to make it His. But herein comes a break in the Glory (i.e. the Manifestation) of God, for all men have "sinned and come short of the Glory" (Rom. iii. 23); therefore our Psalm says—

v. 3. "Who can ascend the Mountain of YHVH?" The "Mountain of YHVH" is the Heaven of Heavens which ought to have been conterminous with Earth so that every Earthly beauty and delight should have led up naturally to its Eternal counterpart in the Heavens. The life of man would then have been an Enoch-walk with God; the days of earth and the days of Heaven would have been 'linked each to each in natural piety.'—But now "Who can ascend...?" If *one* could be found of perfect purity and perfect truth (v. 4) he might walk that way that leads to God—nay more, (v. 5) hints that such an one might open the road for others, "He might bear away a blessing from YHVH..." (cf. the Psalm of the ideal King, Ps. xxi. 6). But alas 'no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth was able to open this (road) neither to look thereon' (Rev. v. 3). But now there comes to the Psalmist the same vision of victory that St John saw (Rev. v. 5-14). He sees the ideal King coming along that Road and he cries as a challenge to the Gates of Heaven "Lift up your heads, O ye gates...that the King of Glory may come in!"

The title "King of Glory" is unique. The *Glory* is the Manifestation of God: the King of Glory must therefore be the King who lies open to and reflects God, i.e. He is the ideal King of whom we read in Ps. xxi. All others had 'come short of the Glory' but He is the King of

Pure	{outwardly, inwardly;	4 One clean of hands, And pure of heart, That never set his mind to what is false, Nor swore in order to deceive,	
True	{inwardly, outwardly.	5 He might bear away a blessing ^a from YHVH, A boon of righteousness from the God of his salvation.	^a Gen. xxxii. 29
Such an one might open the way for God to man and for man to God.		6 Such must be the race of those that seek Him; Of those that seek Thy face—A very Jacob ^b !	^b John i. 47— 51
The Conqueror is seen coming		7 “Lift up your heads, O ye gates, Be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, That the King of Glory ^c may come in!”	^c 1 Cor. ii. 8; James ii. 1
as the “Hero-God.”		8 “Who then is the King of Glory?” “YHVH, a mighty one and a hero, YHVH, a hero in battle.	
The Conqueror is not alone, He comes with His “Hosts.”		9 Lift up your heads O ye gates, Lift yourselves ye everlasting doors, That the King of Glory may come in!”	
As the Heaven so the Earth is God’s <i>de facto</i> .		10 “Who is He then—the King of Glory?” “YHVH of Hosts—He is the King of Glory.”	

Glory—*ἀνάβυσσος τῆς δόξης* (Heb. i. 3). The Psalmist feels the mystery of this Holy Being so he cries—or hears a Voice that cries—(v. 8) “Who then is the King of Glory?”—The answer reminds us of the “Mighty God” of Is. ix. 6 and of the Conqueror from Edom (Is. lxiii. 1—6). As, in the latter passage, the Conqueror was “alone, and of the people there was none with him.” So here, at the first entry, he enters alone,

“YHVH, a mighty one and a hero,
YHVH, a hero in battle.”

But now the Vision changes; the Conqueror is seen not alone but with ten thousands of His saints. Once more the challenge sounds, “Lift up your heads O ye gates....” Once more the question, “Who then is He—the King of Glory?”—but the answer is significantly different, “YHVH of Hosts....”

The Lord of *Hosts* is not here a mere title of the God of battles as though this verse were an idle repetition of v. 8, but the *Hosts* are the ‘hosts’ of His redeemed (cf. Exod. xii. 41, 51; vii. 4 &c.) with whom He is seen now to enter into the Heavenly City. Thus we see that verses 7 and 8 speak of a single entry won through conflict and therefore correspond with verses 3 and 4; while verses 9 and 10 speak of the entry of all the redeemed and thus correspond with the hinted promise of verses 5 and 6.

“For lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day;
The Saints triumphant rise in bright array:
The King of glory passes on His way.

Halleluia!”

This Psalm is one of our Ascension Day Psalms. The reader would do well to study it in connexion with the Proper Preface for Ascension Day and the Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus that follows.

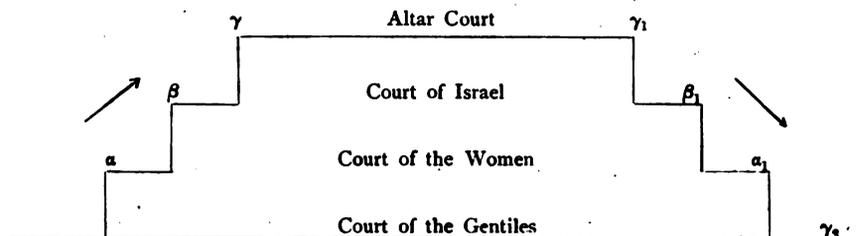
(Ps. xxv. is among the Alphabetical Psalms. See p. 26.)

PSALM XXVI.

This is essentially a pilgrim-Psalm. Doubtless it was composed for the use of those Processions which at the Feast of Dedication and at other times encompassed the Temple of God (see note on *v.* 6 f.). Such sacred Processions, rising upward from Court to Court, were felt to be a type of life's pilgrimage to God. (This will be seen more clearly when we come to the 'Songs of Degrees'.) It is evident that, to our Psalmist, the Procession was no mere empty form but a representation before God of his own life-struggle upwards to its goal. At the start he claims, not "*innocency*" P.B.V. but "*singleheartedness*." As his feet are aiming at the Upper Temple Court so his life is aiming at Truth (*vv.* 3 and 11). This implies that he leaves behind him (renounces) the lower World (*vv.* 4, 5). The brazen laver (Exod. xxx. 18 ff.) suggests to him that sanctification without which no man can see the Lord. While he washes in it he is washing, not in water, but *in innocency* (*v.* 6) for his whole being is set toward God. We might have expected the Psalm to end here. It does indeed come to a climax in verse 6, which is the middle verse of the Psalm. The six verses which follow take up the same thoughts *but in inverted order* (see marginal notes, the law of the Psalm being $\alpha \beta \gamma \gamma_1 \beta_1 \alpha_1 + \gamma_2$).

Thus the conditions would be exactly satisfied if we suppose it to be sung by two Processions, the one ascending, the other descending (the turning point being the Altar-Court, i.e. at $\gamma \gamma_1$); one singing the Stanzas $\alpha \beta \gamma$ as it ascends the three Courts to the Altar; the other singing Stanzas $\gamma_1 \beta_1 \alpha_1$ as it descends through the same three Courts and comes at last to γ_2 the Court of the Gentiles.

The order will be best understood from the following sketch.



The life of the ideal Israel is an ascending to God (Altar Court) as a Priest and a descending to bring God down to men (Court of the Gentiles). Thus the words (*v.* 12) "My foot has its stand on the level" have a double meaning (see note and γ_2 in sketch). When Israel reaches the Court of the Gentiles so that "In full Congregation he blesses YHVH" (*v.* 12 see note) then his work is done, "his foot standeth right." When γ_2 answers to γ_1 then all the World will be an Altar-Court. The above sketch would also explain the allusions to the "Congregation" in β and β_1 since this is the Court of Israel. Every true life has in it these two movements, ascending to God, descending to the World; and these two movements answer so closely the one to the other that they are always one movement in God's sight and form together the Dedicated walk with God.

PART II. (*The descent, from God to the World.*)

- (γ_1) This goal of mine shall be the goal of others. { 7 In order to make heard the voice of the Thanksgiving,
In order to recount all Thy wonders.
8 YHVH, I have loved Thy Temple's Home,
The place of the Shrine of Thy Glory.
- (β_1) Let me not be numbered with the Congregation of Satan. { 9 O gather not my soul with the sinners,
Nor my life with men of blood :
10 In whose hand is crime,
And their right-hand is full of bribes.
- (α_1) Let me become whole-hearted. { 11 But I in singleheartedness^a would walk,
Redeem me and shew me mercy. ^a v. 1
- (γ_2) I have reached my second goal (the Court of the Gentiles). { 12 My foot has its stand on the level,
In full-congregation^b I bless YHVH. ^b Vulg. in ecclesiis

v. 7. "*In order to make heard the voice of the thanksgiving.*" The "thanksgiving" was so closely associated with the religious processions that Nehemiah uses the same word for both. Thus:— xii. 31, "I appointed two great *companies of them that gave thanks* (lit. 'thanksgivings')." Cf. also 38 and 40. This passage will be fully considered later: suffice it now to remark that Nehemiah's two processions moved in opposite directions just as I have supposed the two choirs to do in my introduction to this Psalm.

The reader will observe that v. 7 may either be read with v. 6 or with v. 8. In either case the meaning is the same. Israel aspires to God that he may make God known. 'For their sakes I dedicate myself that they also may be dedicated.'

v. 9. "*O gather not...*" The word *asaph* signifies "*to gather in.*" The *Asaph* was the Feast of *Ingathering* at the end of the year, Nature's great yearly Parable of the final *ingathering* of souls. In the present passage this thought is latent. There are two homes, the home of sin and the home of God. The Psalmist, like Dante, has looked upon the home of sin. His words are rather a shudder than a prayer, "*O gather not my soul with the sinners, &c.*" In the parallel passage of the following Psalm he uses the same word to express his own confidence in God's mercy, "*Though father and mother should forsake me, yet let YHVH (or YHVH will) gather me in.*" See further on the word *asaph* under the '*Asaph*' Psalms.

v. 12^a. The word here translated "*the level*" is often used of *plain*, i.e. level country, but it is also used of *equity* (Is. xi. 4; Ps. xlv. 6 (7) &c.). Sometimes, as in our Psalm, the two meanings are combined, e.g. Ps. xxvii. 11, "*lead me in a plain path* (marg. 'way of plainness' E.V.)." When then our Psalmist says, 'My foot stands in the level,' I believe that he uses the word in its double meaning and thus interprets the ritual of the Procession: 'My foot stands on the level, for I have literally reached the lower Court, the Court of the Gentiles, and in full-congregation I bless God,' also 'My foot standeth in equity (cf. Mal. ii. 6) for the end of Israel's pilgrimage is to turn the Gentiles to God.'

v. 12^b. "*In full-congregation...*" A different word, though from the same root, is used in verse 5; there the thought was on the Congregation itself but here the form of the word fixes the thought rather on the place where the Congregation meets, i.e. the Court. The end of the Pilgrimage is reached at last.

PSALM XXVII.

Here again we have a Psalm of man's pilgrimage to God. It is closely related to Ps. xxvi. both in language and structure (see marginal notes). Both Psalms consist of two Parts, and in each case Part II differs so widely in its sad tone from the exultation of Part I that commentators who have not understood the connexion have resorted to the theory of independent Psalms.

Psalms xxvi. and xxvii. are both explained by the theory which I have suggested. Part I is an ascent, in three stages, from the World to God. Part II is a descent, in three stages, from God to the World. We might express this somewhat differently by saying that Part I gives the *ideal*, Part II the *actual*; Part I, the life of devotion, Part II, the life of service; the work of Israel (and of man) being to make the two coincide. The Processions ascending and descending the three Temple Courts gave, I believe, the outward form and clothing to these thoughts; but it would shew a marvellous lack of poetical imagination and of spiritual insight if we were to suppose that the "One thing" (v. 4), the goal of the Psalmist's life, could have been nothing more than to reside in the Temple! The commentator on Dante gives him credit for meaning within meaning; the thoughts of the Psalmist go quite as deep as those of Dante.

Psalms xxvi. and xxvii. should be carefully studied together. Both give God's ideal of Israel, who walks the dedicated Way, and by self-dedication brings all the Nations to God. This being so both Psalms find their full meaning only in Christ who 'dedicated Himself' that we men 'might be dedicated also in truth.' There is no doubt a difference in tone between these two Psalms. In Ps. xxvi. there is more of struggle, in Ps. xxvii. there is more of repose. The former is a Psalm for Gethsemane, the latter for the victory of the Cross. The Latin Church, guided by a true instinct, appointed the latter Psalm for Good Friday and Easter Eve.

PS. XXVII.

PART I. (*The ascent, from the World to God.*)

(a) I, God's Pilgrim, walk safely, through His Presence. He is the Way.

- 1 YHVH is my Light and my Salvation,
Whom should I fear?
YHVH is my life's defence,
Whom should I dread?
- 2 When the wicked made onslaught upon me,
To eat up my flesh*—
Those oppressors and foes of mine—
It was they that stumbled and fell.
- 3 Though a camp should encamp against me,
My heart should not fear.
Though there rose up war against me,
I still should be confident.

* v. 12

Ps. iii. 6

(β) "One thing" I desire; to be God's guest. He is the Truth.

- 4 One thing have I asked of YHVH,
And it I will seek;
That I may dwell in YHVH'S House
All the days of my life,
To behold the fair-beauty of YHVH,
And meditate in His Palace.
- 5 For He would hide me in His pavilion,
In the day of evil,
Would cover me in the covert of His tent,
Would set me high upon the rock.

v. 2. "*To eat up my flesh.*" In the late form of the language (Chaldee) a false accuser is called by a word which Aben Ezra explains as 'an eater of the flesh.' This derivation is not certain since the Hebrew word *to eat*, like the Latin *edere* came to have two meanings, *to eat* and *to edit* or *promulgate* (see Buxtorf s. v. *akl*), but, as Delitzsch well remarks, "even in Job xix. 22, to eat up one's flesh is equivalent to persecute one even to destruction by evil speaking (in Aram. by evil reports)." Thus we see that the enemies in verse 2 and the "false witnesses" of v. 12 are identical.

v. 3. "*Though a camp should encamp...*" When Jacob saw the Angels he said, "This is God's *host* (or *camp*): and he called the name of the place *Mahanaim* (the *two hosts* or *two camps*)," Gen. xxxii. 2 (3). When men fear God they have no cause for other fear; "the angel of the Lord *encampeth* round them and delivereth them" (Ps. xxxiv. 7 (8)). God promised this protecting Presence to Israel (Zech. ii. 5; ix. 8).

(γ) I have gained
my goal. The Altar
is the pledge of it.
He is the Life.

6 And now my head is high
Above mine enemies.
I have encompassed and sacrificed in His Tent
Sacrifices of Jubilee^a.
I sing, I hymn unto YHVH.

^a See Sept. and
Vulg. Cf.
Ps. xxvi. 6

PART II. (*The descent, from God to the World.*)

(γ₁) Leaving the
Altar I need that
pledge in the world.

7 Hear, O YHVH, I cry with my voice,
Shew me mercy^b, and answer me.
8 Thine—says my heart—is “Seek ye My Face,”
Thy Face, O YHVH, I seek.

^b Ps. xxvi. 11

(β₁) Turn not Thy
guest from Thy door.

9 Hide not Thy Face from me,
Turn not away Thy servant in anger,
Thou that hast been my help!
Cast me not off, forsake me not,
O God of my salvation!
10 Though father and mother should forsake me,
Yet let YHVH take^c me in.

^c Josh. xx. 4

v. 6. The Vulgate, following the Septuagint, has here an interesting reading. “*Circuivi, et immolavi in tabernaculo ejus hostiam vociferationis.*” The word *circuivi*, “I have encompassed,” is obtained by taking the Hebrew word, which the E.V. translates “round about,” as a verb. It cannot be denied but that the usual rendering “above mine enemies *round about me*” gives good sense, but the harder reading suggested by the Septuagint and Vulgate ought surely to be preferred when we bear in mind the fact that the same verb occurs in the same sense in the parallel verse of the parallel Psalm, i.e. Ps. xxvi. 6, “I would *encompass* Thine Altar....” If the view that I have suggested be correct the 6th verse in each of these Psalms represents the turning point of the Processions. The origin and significance of these Processions will be explained more fully when we come to the Songs of Degrees.

“*Sacrifices of Jubilee.*” Vulg. “*hostiam vociferationis,*” Jer. “*hostias jubili.*” The Hebrew word is translated in many ways in the E.V. Thus Lev. xxiii. 24, “blowing of trumpets”; xxv. 29, “the jubilee” (marg. “*loud of sound*”); II Sam. vi. 15, “shouting”; Ps. lxxxix. 15 (16) “the joyful sound” (but see note). The leading thought in the word both at the Feast of Trumpets and at the Jubilee is the *loud cry* (whether of shouting or of trumpets) in answer to which God has promised to come down to the deliverance of His people. The following passages in which the word occurs should be carefully considered: Numb. x. 8—10; Ps. xlvii. 5 (6), see note; II Chron. xiii. 12. As far as we can gather from Scripture the trumpets were never blown over the sacrifices of an individual but always over the sacrifices of the Community; hence our view is confirmed that the speaker in our present Psalm is Israel.

v. 7. “*I cry with my voice.*” These words denote a loud cry. We picture the Procession leaving the Altar-Court, going down, as it were, into the temptations and sorrows of the World with a loud cry to God. If we apply the Psalm to Christ we have a parallel in Heb. iv. 7, “in the

(α_1) Be Thyself the
Way. So shall Thy
Pilgrim be safe.

- 11 Teach me, O YHVH, Thy way,
And lead^a me in a level^b path,
Because^a of mine enemies^c.
12 Give me not over to the will of mine oppressors,
For false witnesses have risen against me
That breathe out cruelty.

^a Ps. v. 8

^b Ps. xxvi. 12

^c cf. v. 6

cf. v. 2 (note)

(γ_2) The Altar is
a pledge: therefore
Israel can afford to
wait (cf. γ and γ_1).

- 13 Oh^d if I did not believe to enjoy the goodness of YHVH ^d Sept. differs
in the land of the living!—
14 Wait for YHVH, be strong and let thy heart be firm,
And wait for YHVH.

days of His flesh having offered up prayers and supplications *with strong crying...*" It may be worth noting that the 7th verse of Ps. xxvi. begins the descent with the *voice* of thanksgiving just as this verse does with the *voice* of supplication.

v. 13. "*Oh if I did not believe....*" If I had not, as it were, gone up into the third Heaven and there contemplated God's goodness as it is (Part I), I should not have been able to understand the mystery of the World's sorrows (Part II); but now that I have gone into the Sanctuary (see note on Ps. lxxiii. 17), I understand His growing purpose; therefore I can say "*Wait for YHVH.*"

PSALM XXVIII.

This Psalm, in point of structure, has much in common with its octave, Ps. xx. The chief division, as in that Psalm, is between verses 5 and 6. The latter half, as in Ps. xx, implies some outward, visible sign of God's favour, possibly an accepted sacrifice, which is the pledge of Israel's victory in the future. But our Psalm has also points of contact with Pss. xxvi, xxvii. (See marginal references.) There is the same thought of the two Congregations (viz. the Congregation of God's People, and the Congregation of the wicked) that we saw in Ps. xxvi (cf. xxvi. 9 with xxviii. 3). Israel, conscious of choosing God, yet conscious of much failure, feels the horror of being "gathered in" at last with the sinful nations of the World. If God were to leave him such a fate must be his (v. 1); but the whole Ritual of Sacrifice is a pledge that God will *not* leave him to himself; this is his "*supplication...as he lifts up his hands to the Shrine of the Holy Place*" (v. 2).

In verse 6 there comes the full assurance that God "hath heard the voice of this *supplication.*" (Compare the 6th verse of Pss. xxvi. and xxvii.) The Sacrifice has been accepted (cf. Ps. xx. 6). The whole character of the Psalm is now one trumpet-peal of victory, a *Gloria in Excelsis*.

PS. XXVIII.

God is my portion.
How terrible if He
were not to hear me!

1 Unto Thee, O YHVH, I cry;
Thou art my Rock, be not deaf towards me;
For shouldst Thou be silent unto me
I am become like those that go down to the pit.

2 Hear the voice of my supplications^a as I cry unto Thee,
As I lift up my hands to the Shrine of Thy Sanctuary^b.

^a cf. v. 6

^b Ps. xx. 2

If He were to num-
ber me with the
wicked!

3 Draw me not in with the wicked^c,
Nor with the workers of wrong,
Men that speak peace to their neighbours
While evil is in their hearts.

^c cf. Ps. xxvi.

9

whose work I hate,
and whose end I know
too well!

4 Give them as their work is,
As the evil of their deeds,
As the work of their hands give to them!
Requite them as they do deserve.

5 Because they have no understanding of the doings of YHVH^d,¹ Rom. i. 21
Nor of the work of his hands;
He shall pull them down,
And not build them up.

Nay but God *has*
heard me.

6 Blessed be YHVH!
For He hath heard the voice of my supplications^e.
7 YHVH is my Strength and my Shield,
In Him my heart trusted and I am helped.
So that my heart exulteth,
And I praise Him beyond^f my song.

^e cf. v. 2 and
Ps. xx. 6

8 YHVH is a Strength for His People^g,
A Defence^h of safety to His Anointed.

^f i.e. *more than
song can tell*

^g so Sept.

^h Ps. xxvii. 1

9 Oh save Thy People!
Bless Thine Inheritanceⁱ!

ⁱ Deut. ix. 29

Tend them and bear^j them up for ever!

^j Is. lxiii. 9;
Mic. vii. 14

v. 4. These words need not be regarded as an imprecation. They denote that sensitive shrinking from Evil which springs from the desire of God's Presence (cf. notes on Pss. v. 4—10; vi. 8). We must, in justice to the Psalmist, exclude all thought both of personal enmity and of eternal condemnation; when then the Psalmist says "*Requite them as they do deserve*" he does not go beyond St. Paul's denunciation of Alexander, "The Lord reward him according to his works" (2 Tim. iv. 14). There are eyes so blinded that nothing but the flash of judgement can make them see. What would perfect Charity pray for in such a case? Meanwhile until our charity be perfect

it is safer for us to apply all such passages only to God's enemies who are fighting in our own hearts and striving to hinder us from communion with Him.

v. 5. "*Because they have no understanding...*" Their minds may have been enlightened but "their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. i. 21). The "fool" in Scripture is the man who puts out the eyes of his own soul.

v. 7. "*And I praise Him beyond my song*"—Compare "*Sacrifices of Jubilee*" Ps. xxvii. 6. When words have done their utmost there must still be that homage of Creation's Chorus of which the Trumpet of Jubilee is a type:

"The shout of the King is among them. One King and one song,
One thunder of manifold voices harmonious and strong,
One King and one love, and one shout of one worshipping throng." (c. Rossetti.)

v. 9. "*Oh save...*" This verse is not so much a prayer as a *Hosannah*. The certainty of God's help was attained in verse 6, which is exactly parallel to the 6th verse of Psalm xx. In Ps. xx. 9 we also read "O YHVH save!" just as here we have, "O save Thy People!"

The last words of this verse are a Pastoral Symphony with allusions to Deut. ix. 29 and Is. lxiii. 9, "They are Thy People and Thine *Inheritance* which Thou broughtest out by Thy great power..." "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence *saved them*: in His love and in His pity he redeemed them; and He *took them up and bare them up* all the days of old." It is a singular coincidence that this passage from Isaiah should also be quoted in the *Midrash* on Ps. xx. 9 (see note).

As the good shepherd carries the feeble lambs so will God carry His People.

PSALM XXIX.

It is impossible to understand this Psalm until we can dismiss from our minds the prevalent idea that it is "a magnificent description of a thunderstorm." It is true that the "Voice" of the Lord sometimes signifies the thunder. It is true also, that the Seven Voices of our Psalm and the Seven Voices and Seven thunders of Rev. viii. and x. have one and the same origin as we shall presently see, in the Symbolism of the Feast of Tabernacles: but no Commentator has been found to assert that Rev. viii. or x. is "a magnificent description of a thunderstorm which passed from north to south over the Isle of Patmos."

The very structure of the Psalm points to a mystical meaning. It consists of five Stanzas. Of these the first and last correspond as Introduction and Conclusion and each contains the Divine Name in every line. The body of the Psalm consists of the three middle Stanzas which alone contain the Seven Voices (see margin).

We learn from the Title of the Psalm in the Septuagint that it was assigned by tradition to the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. This "last day, the great day of the feast" (St John vii. 37 ff.) was I believe not the eighth day but the seventh day, i.e. *Hoshannah Rabba*, the day of the water-drawing Festival on

which the Jews used to surround the Altar seven times (Mishna, *Sukkah* iv. 5. See Appendix C in my translation of the *Yalkut on Zechariah*). This interesting tradition, preserved by the LXX., is also confirmed by the *Zohar* (*Parasche* 13) where, as Delitzsch states, "Ps. xxix. is connected with the pouring out of water on the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles (*Hoshannah Rabba*), since it is said, that by means of the seven 'Voices' (answering to the seven compassings of the Altar) seven of the Sephiroth open the flood gates of heaven."

Now the Feast of Tabernacles was in the *seventh* month. It closed the cycle of the Jewish Feasts. The *seventh* day of this Feast was closely associated with the gift of rain (and fruitful seasons) for the coming year. The *seven* compassings of the Altar represented, I believe, the cycle of the completed year which ended in the seventh month, each compassing representing one month. If this be so the seven 'Voices' of our Psalm would represent the course of God through the year that was closing; each 'Voice' answering to a month.

It need scarcely be said that the cycle of the year pointed onwards to God's increasing purpose and the coming of His Kingdom. Thus to sum up:—

The Jewish year began with the Vernal Equinox: it ended with the Autumnal Equinox in the *seventh* month; the first day of that month being called "New Year's Day." The Feast of Tabernacles, in this *seventh* month was the Sabbath of the year and was a thanksgiving for the Seasons and also a spiritual interpretation of God's great purpose for the world as seen in the seven cycles of months. We can now see why "The Voice of YHVH" is repeated *seven* times in the Psalm and why it should have given rise to the "seven thunders" of Rev. x. 3.

The *first* Voice is "*upon the waters*" (April); for the Spring of each year is a repetition of the Day when God's Spirit first "brooded upon the waters"; in Spring as Shelley says

"Through wood and stream, and field and hill and ocean,
A quickening life from the earth's heart has burst,
As it has ever done, with change and motion,
From the great morning of the world! when first
God dawn'd on chaos."

The *second* and *third* Voices are *with power* and *with Majesty* as the purpose of the year expands in May and June.

The *fourth* Voice *breaketh the Cedars*, for July is the month of the tempest's power.

The *fifth* and *sixth* Voices *cleave out the flaming fire* and desolate the *wilderness-pastures*, for this season is the season of greatest heat, the fifth month being called by the Babylonians "*the descent of fire*."

The *seventh* Voice is at the Autumnal Equinox; it *strips the forests bare*.

"When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs; where late the sweet birds sang."

The best comment on the whole Psalm is to be found in the beautiful words in which Thomson gathers up the lessons of the Seasons. The coincidence here is certainly undesigned.

- cf. Voices I and II
verses 3 and 4^a. { "These as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God. The rolling year
Is full of Thee! Forth in the pleasing Spring
Thy beauty walks, Thy tenderness and love.
Wide flush the fields; the softening air is balm;
And every sense, and every heart, is joy.
- cf. Voices III, IV
and V verses 4^b,—7. { Then comes Thy glory in the Summer months,
With light and heat refulgent. Then Thy sun
Shoots full perfection through the swelling year;
And oft Thy voice in dreadful thunder speaks;
.
- cf. Voices VI and
VII verses 8—9. { Thy bounty shines in Autumn unconfined,
And spreads a common feast for all that lives.
. with clouds and storms
Around Thee thrown, tempest o'er tempest roll'd
Majestic darkness! On the whirlwind's wing
Riding sublime Thou bidd'st the world adore.
.
- cf. verse 1.
cf. verse 9^c. { Nature, attend! Join every living soul
Beneath the spacious temple of the sky,
In adoration join; and ardent raise
One general song!
.
- cf. verse 10. { for the great Shepherd reigns
cf. verse 11. { And this un suffering Kingdom yet will come."

. The connexion of Psalm xxix with the octave of Psalms (xx.—xxviii.) which it closes is suggestive. If from this octave we omit the Alphabetical Psalm (xxv.) we obtain a series of Altar-Psalms with frequent allusions to an accepted sacrifice (e.g. Pss. xx. and xxviii.; xxvi. and xxvii.), also to a 'King' who goes forth to war (Ps. xx.), who fights only with spiritual weapons (Ps. xxi.) and who appears again as the "King of Glory" opening the Way to Heaven (Ps. xxiv.). We also find in this group of Psalms at least two allusions to the "encompassing" of the Altar (Pss. xxvi., xxvii.), while Ps. xxix., the Psalm of the seven 'Voices,' is directly connected by Jewish tradition with the seven "encompassings" of the Altar on the seventh day of Tabernacles. May we not venture to suggest that the whole group formed, as it were, a Passion Play for the Season of Tabernacles?

PS. XXIX.

- 1 Give unto YHVH, ye sons of God^a,
 Give unto YHVH glory and strength^b,
 2 Give unto YHVH His Name's due glory,
 Worship YHVH with hallowed^c pomp.

^a or of the mighty

^b v. 11

^c Sept. differs

- Voice I. 3 The VOICE of YHVH is upon the waters,
 YHVH is on the great waters.
 Voice II. 4 The VOICE of YHVH is with power,
 Voice III. The VOICE of YHVH is with majesty.

v. 1. The reading of the P.B.V., which is derived from the Vulgate and *Sept.*, is an interesting example of a reading creeping into the text from the margin of a manuscript.

Originally the Sept. would have read

“Bring unto the Lord, O ye sons of God,
 Bring unto the Lord glory and honour.”

But since the Hebrew words here translated “*sons of God*” are somewhat unusual and might be translated “*sons of rams*,” a scribe must have written this in the margin as an alternative rendering. A later scribe inserted it in the text. Hence the P.B.V.

“Bring unto the Lord, O ye mighty,
 [Bring young rams unto the Lord],
 Ascribe unto the Lord worship and strength.”

v. 3. “*The Voice...upon the waters...the great waters.*” The waters are the origin of all things. In Creation the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. Each year the Parable of Creation begins afresh in Spring. Voice I. is therefore either the first month of the Year or the first voice of creation of which that month is a type. The “great waters” in v. 3 and the “Water-flood” in v. 10 are practically the same. It is true that the word *mabbul* occurs only in v. 10 and in Gen. vi.—xi. and that in Genesis it always signifies the Deluge, but to give it the sense of Deluge in the Psalm would be to introduce a thought quite alien to the context. As I understand it verse 10 sums up the lesson of the Seven Voices, God's Kingdom began with Creation (from the Waters) and His Kingdom continues for ever,

“YHVH sat enthroned at the Water-flood,
 And YHVH sitteth as King for ever.”

If, as I have suggested, this Psalm was the Psalm for *Hoshannah Rabba*, the great Water Festival, then there would be an additional reason for tracing the origin of all things to the Waters.

After v. 3^a the text inserts “The God of Glory thunders.” This line clearly destroys the structure and parallelism of the verse, while on the other hand a line is needed after v. 7^a. I have therefore restored it to what I believe to have been its original position.

- Voice IV. 5 The VOICE of YHVH breaketh the cedars,
 YHVH shattereth the cedars of Lebanon.
- 6 He maketh them^a skip like a calf,
 Lebanon and Sirion like a young antelope.
- Voice V. 7 The VOICE of YHVH cleaveth the^b flames of fire,
 [The God of Glory thunders]^c.
- Voice VI. 8 The VOICE of YHVH casteth the wilderness in birth-pangs,
 YHVH casteth in birth-pangs the wilderness of Kadesh.
- Voice VII. 9 The VOICE of YHVH maketh the oaks to cast their birth
 and strippeth the forests,
 And throughout His Palace-temple it all proclaimeth
 "GLORY."

^a i.e. the cedars^b or with^c Transposed from v. 3

v. 6. "*He maketh them skip...*" i.e. *the cedars*, not *the mountains*. The up-and-down motion of a wind-swept wood is here compared to the skipping of a calf. Though Lebanon and Sirion are mentioned in v. 6^b the thought is centred, not upon the mountains, but, upon the woods that clothe them. To make the mountains skip (as in Ps. cxiv. 4, 6) destroys the unity of thought which belongs to each 'Voice.'

The Septuagint mistook two words in this verse and thus obtained a translation which is of no interest except to those who would study the origin of mistakes.

v. 7. "*The Voice of YHVH cleaveth the flames of fire.*" The word here translated *cleaveth* is often used for *hewing* rock or stone or even for *digging* a well. Once in the E.V. it is translated *cut*, viz. Is. li. 9 "Art Thou not it that hath *cut* Rahab and wounded the Dragon?" Cf. Chap. xxvii. 1 with Cheyne's note. The expression in the Psalm is no doubt remarkable. Wellhausen would read "YHVH's voice splitteth [rocks, YHVH's voice sendeth forth] flames of fire." There is however no need for this. The word was probably chosen because of some association of semi-mythological thought similar to that in Is. li. 9. It should be observed that the oldest name of the *fifth* month signified "*fire making fire*," and that the Assyrians called it the month of *the descent of fire*: so in our Psalm it is the *fifth* 'Voice' that "*heweth out the flames of fire*." I agree however with Wellhausen when he says "As the verse reads at present, it is incomplete." There is no other verse in the Psalm consisting of one line. The line which I have inserted from v. 3 exactly meets the difficulty. In v. 3 it was redundant; but here it is required by the parallelism.

v. 9. "*The Voice of YHVH maketh the oaks to cast their birth.*" The usual translation, "maketh the hinds to bring forth young!" destroys the parallelism, drags in a thought which is alien to the whole passage and ends in an almost inconceivable bathos—"Parturiunt montes; nascetur ridiculus mus!"

The fact is that the Hebrew word not only for *ram* but also for *stag*, *hind*, is derived from a root signifying *strong*, from which also the words for *oak* and other *strong trees* is derived. This similarity has not unfrequently given rise to confusion. [See the Greek versions on Gen. xlix. 21; Ps. xlii. 2; Is. lxi. 3 &c.] Dr Schiller-Szinessy, in his Hebrew note on this passage, in his edition of Qimchi on the Psalms, says "I have no doubt" but that the sacred writer intends to imply, not hinds but "some kind of strong trees such as the oak, &c." Though this view was, long ago, propounded by Lowth it has, strange to say, met with little or no acceptance. My reasons for advocating it are as follows:—1st. The verb which I have translated "*cast their birth*" is another voice of the same verb which in verse 8 I have translated "*casteth in birth-pangs*." This being so the thought is clearly continuous in vv. 8, 9. The *Wilderness* (not the *desert*) is in *birth-pangs* at the touch of Autumn while the next 'Voice' makes the *strong trees* to *cast their birth* as it *strips the forests bare*.

- 10 YHVH sat enthroned at the Water-flood,
 And YHVH sitteth as King for ever.
 11 YHVH will give strength^a to His people,
 YHVH will bless His People with peace.

* v. 1

The thought of *birth-pangs* led the writer to make the words for *oaks* and *forests* feminine though in both cases the feminine was unusual. Rosenmuller states that the verb, which in Hebrew has the sense of "*strips bare*," has in Arabic the sense of *causing abortion*. If this be so we see how the poet so chose his language as to convey the double thought. In any case there is an allusion to the birth-pangs of a new Creation caused by the near approach of God and earth (cf. Pss. xcvi. 4; cxiv. 7; Hab. iii. 10; Rom. viii. 22).

"*And throughout His Palace-temple.*" God's Palace-temple is the Universe. All the seven 'Voices' of the Year are, in their ultimate meaning summed up in one word and that is "Glory." The Glory of God is the Manifestation of God. All God's Voices in Nature point to this. The Feast of Tabernacles, in the seventh month, with its seven circuits round the Altar was felt to be an acted Parable of the final goal of Creation. Compare Rev. x. 4 ff. (R.V.) "And when the seven thunders uttered (their voices) I was about to write: and I heard a Voice from heaven saying, Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. And the angel which I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven, and swore.....that there shall be time no longer; but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God...."

v. 11. "*YHVH will give strength to His People...peace.*" In verse 10 we see God's Kingdom come on earth; while verse 11 shews us the effect of this upon His People. To His People He gives that attribute of "*Strength*" which seemed most peculiarly His own (cf. v. 1^b with 11^a) and crowns it with that "*Peace*" which is the perfection of His own Unity—"That they may be One even as we are One." According to Old Testament thought *Peace* is the bond of perfectness which reconciles all things in heaven and in earth (see notes on Ps. cxxii.). Thus the *Yalkut* on this passage "R. Simeon ben H'lafta says, Great is Peace. When the Holy One, blessed be He, created His Universe He made Peace between the upper and the lower worlds. On the *First Day* He created from both *upper and lower worlds*, as it is said, 'In the beginning God created the *Heavens* and the *Earth*.' On the *Second Day* (He created) 'the Firmament,' i.e. from the *upper world*. On the *Third Day* 'Let the waters be gathered together,' i.e. from the *lower world*. On the *Fourth Day* 'Let there be lights &c.,' i.e. from the *upper world*. On the *Fifth Day* 'Let the waters bring forth &c.,' i.e. from the *lower world*. On the *Sixth (Day)* He created 'Man,' whose body is from the *lower world* and whose soul is from the *upper world*." The object of the writer is to shew that the promise of the First Day is fulfilled in the Sixth. Man is the Microcosm. Through Man God must at last reconcile all things whether in Heaven above or in the Earth beneath.

Delitzsch may well say "How expressive in such a Psalm as this is the concluding word '*with Peace!*' It overarches it like a rainbow. The beginning of the Psalm shews us the heavens open, and the throne of God in the midst of the angelic songs of praise, and the conclusion of it shews upon the earth..., His people victorious and blessed with peace. *Gloria in excelsis* is the beginning, and *pax in terris* the close."

PSALM XXX.

Here again the Title to the Psalm has preserved a tradition as to its use in the Temple. As the Title of Ps. xxix. showed its use for the last day of Tabernacles so the Hebrew title of Ps. xxx. shews that it was appointed for the next Festival, viz. the "*Dedication of the Temple.*" This is confirmed by *Sofrim*, c. 18, § 2 which refers the Psalm to *Hanucca* i.e. to the *Dedication of the Temple* (see Graetz). Now it is an historical blunder to suppose that *Hanucca* had its *origin* in the Dedication by Judas Maccabaeus B.C. 165. If the reader will turn to the Introduction to the *Songs of Degrees* he will see that the thought of *Dedication* has its origin in one of Nature's parables. What Judas did was to associate an historical fact, the cleansing of the Temple, with Nature's festival of the Winter Solstice, the season of Light's new birth; a festival which was certainly observed by all nations of antiquity. The new historical significance failed to displace the older associations of the growing light so that the Feast was still sometimes called the "*Feast of Lights*" (Josephus, *Ant.* XII. 7). To all intents and purposes it was a repetition of the Feast of Tabernacles. There was the same carrying of branches (2 Macc. x. 6 f.) the same singing of the *Hallel* each day for eight days; the same symbolism of lights and lamps. It was indeed a transference of the thought of New Year from the Autumnal Equinox (7th month) to the Winter Solstice (10th month). We learn from Maimonides that one observance of *Hanucca* (Dedication Feast) was the lighting of candles, one on the first day, two on the second, three on the third, &c. during the eight days of the Feast. Whatever meaning may have been given to this, its *origin* is obvious; from the Winter Solstice begins the *growing light* of the year; it is the 'Birth-day' of the Sun, who, according to Babylonian thought, comes forth then from beneath the waters of death. From this point the motion of the Sun is, for six months, in an ever-widening spiral. Surely this is one of God's parables which His children should interpret? I once saw a Hymn (it was, I think, for S. Thomas' Day, Dec. 21st), in which the thought of the widening spiral from the Winter Solstice was worked out. The writer was probably unconscious of the fact that he was developing an idea which underlay much of the religion of Babylonia.

I shall have occasion, in my Introduction to the Songs of Degrees, to shew the connexion between the Dedication of the Temple, with its 'encompassing' processions, and the Dedication of the Temple of the Universe as typified by the movement of the Sun: suffice it now to state that the latter is the origin of the former and is alluded to in Psalms which may have been written long before the Dedication by Judas Maccabaeus. It is a suggestive fact that Enoch (*Hanoc*) and *Hanucca* are merely varieties of the same word. Bearing these thoughts in mind we turn to the Psalm itself.

PS. XXX.

The new-born Sun (at *Hanucca*) is a type of Israel's resurrection.

- 1 I extol Thee, O YHVH, for Thou hast lifted me out^a,
 And not let my foes rejoice over me.
 2 O YHVH, my God, I cried unto Thee,
 And Thou hast healed me!
 3 O YHVH, from Sheól Thou hast brought up my soul;
 From being among those that descend to the Pit
 Thou hast made me to live^b!

^a i.e. of a pit

^b Ezek. xxvii.
11—14

Darkness does its work and leads to Light. So God's 'anger' leads to the joy of His Presence.

- 4 Hymn to YHVH, O ye Saints of His;
 Give thanks to His holy Memorial^c-Name;
 5 For His anger^d is over at once,
 While His favour is all life-long^e:
 At evening^f Weeping comes to lodge,
 But morning^f rings with Song.

^c Exod. iii. 15

^d Is. liv. 7 ff.;
lx. 10; cf.
2 Cor. iv. 17

^e or *life itself*

^f Is. xvii. 14

v. 1. "*Thou hast lifted me out.*" The verb is an unusual one and would be used for drawing up water in a bucket or drawing a prisoner out of a dungeon such as that in which Jeremiah was plunged (Jer. xxxviii. 7—13).

The speaker feels that he has been brought up from Sheól (v. 3); that God had given him new life when he had, as we say, one foot in the grave. The Title of the Psalm, which assigns it for the "Dedication of the Temple" (*Hanucca*) justifies us in regarding it, not as the experience of an individual but of Israel who having died under the stroke of God's anger (Hos. xiii. 1) has been raised by God to new life (Hos. vi. 2; Ezek. xxxvii. 1—10, quoted by Baethgen).

Thus, at *Hanucca*, Israel like another Enoch (*Hanoc*) is saved out of death and walks with God. In the Latin use this Psalm is appointed for Easter Eve.

v. 4^b. "*His holy Memorial-Name.*" It is now a recognised fact that this word, which the E.V. translates "*remembrance*" or "*memorial*," really signifies "*Name*." Wherever it is said of God there is, I believe, a reference to the *Eternity of His Mercy*. See Exod. iii. 15; Hos. xii. 5 (6); Ps. xcvi. 12; cii. 12 (13); cxi. 4 (note, p. 43); cxxxv. 13; cxlv. 7 (note, p. 65). It will be seen from these passages, that God's *Memorial-Name* is that Name of Gracious and Merciful, to which His works, in Nature and in History, all point. The word has a special significance here, since the object of the whole Stanza is to shew, from Nature, that God's Mercy exceeds His Anger as far as light exceeds darkness.

v. 5. "*But morning rings with Song.*" Sorrow is only a lodger in God's House. The Parable of the Seasons shews, when truly understood, that God's great end is not sorrow but joy. There is a story quoted from the Talmud (but without reference) in *Psalm Mosaics* as follows:—"When Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden of Eden they wandered over the face of the earth. And the sun began to set, and they looked with fear at the lessening of the light, and felt a horror like death steal over their hearts. And the light of heaven grew paler, and the wretched ones clasped each other in an agony of despair. Then all grew dark, and the luckless ones fell on the earth, silent, and thought that God had withdrawn from them the light for ever; and they spent the night in tears. But a beam of light began to rise over the Eastern hills after many hours of darkness, and the golden sun came back and dried the tears of Adam and Eve, and then they

Israel, like Jonah,
had needed the hiding
of God's Presence.

6 Methought, when all went well with me,
"I shall never never be moved."

cried out with joy and said, 'Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the Morning; this is a law that God hath laid upon nature.'

There is a lovely poem by C. Rossetti on this text which I cannot forbear to quote :

"Nothing is great on this side of the grave,
Nor anything of any stable worth :
Whatso is born from earth returns to earth :
Nothing we grasp proves half the thing we crave :
The tidal wave shrinks to the ebbing wave :
Laughter is folly, madness lurks in mirth :
Mankind sets off a dying from the birth :
Life is a losing game, with what to save ?
Thus I sat mourning like a mournful owl,
And like a doleful dragon made ado,
Companion of all monsters of the dark :
When lo ! the light cast off its nightly cowl,
And up to heaven flashed a carolling lark,
And all creation sang its hymn anew.

When all creation sang its hymn anew
What could I do but sing a stave in tune ?
Spectral on high hung pale the vanishing moon
Where a last gleam of stars hung paling too.
Lark's lay—a cockcrow—with a scattered few
Soft early chirpings—with a tender croon
Of doves—a hundred thousand calls, and soon
A hundred thousand answers sweet and true.
These set me singing too at unawares :
One note for all delights and charities,
One note for hope reviving with the light,
One note for every lovely thing that is ;
Till while I sang my heart shook off its cares
And revelled in the land of no more night."

But if light follows darkness it is also true that darkness succeeds to light : we might therefore be tempted to ask which of the two points to God's end ? Therefore the Psalmist says "His anger is over at once | While his favour is all life-long." The anger is swift and terrible but it so does its work that the sorrow is turned *into* joy (John xvi. 20). This transmuted sorrow lives on as the soul's brightest possession. It had come in the night as a lodger, but in the morning it is found to be an angel. These transmuted sorrows justify William Blake in saying, "Eternity is in love with the productions of time."

v. 5^b. "*While His favour is all life-long.*" Or "Life (itself) consists in His favour." Eternal life consists in knowing God. It is not measured by duration. There is no doubt an antithesis between "the anger" that "is over at once" and "the favour" that is "for life"; but the former is finite, the latter is infinite.

v. 6. "*Methought when all went well with me.*" Literally "*As for me I said (or thought) in my tranquillity.*" The word here used for *tranquillity* or *prosperity* does not of itself imply any sin on Israel's part ; but the glare of prosperity hides God (Jer. xxii. 21) just as the sun hides the beauty of the stars. In one sense Light is the only revealer ; but in another sense Darkness is a revealer as well. Darkness is but a comparative term ; it is but the reticence of Light. God teaches

7 Thou, YHVH, through Thy favour, hadst made my hill so strong.

Thou didst hide Thy Face^a, and I was in dismay^a!

^a Ps. civ. 29

8 Then unto Thee, YHVH, I cry;
Unto YHVH^b I make supplication.

^b or *Adonai*

But, like Jonah beneath the waters, he had cried to God.

9 "What gain (can there be) in my blood,
In my going to the Pit?
Can dust praise Thee^c,
Can it declare Thy truth?

^c Cf. Ps. vi.

10 Hear, YHVH, and be gracious unto me
YHVH, be Thou my Helper!"

God had answered him by a resurrection of which *Hanucca* is a type and pledge.

11 Thou didst turn for me my mourning into dancing,
Thou didst loose my sackcloth and girdle me with gladness,

12 So that my inner-being^d might hymn Thee without ceasing^d *My glory, see Sept.*
YHVH, O my God, for ever will I praise Thee.

us this lesson by a thousand voices in the world of Nature; the cold dark Winter nurses the buds of Spring. It seemed to Israel in the full spring-tide of God's favour that Winter could never come—*"I shall never never be moved."* But Winter came all the same.

v. 7. "*Thou didst hide Thy Face, and I was in dismay!*" This was Israel's Winter. God's "favour" was "life itself" to him (v. 5). His soul drooped and shut up like a flower when the Sun of God's Presence was gone. But that Winter was preparing a glorious Spring for Israel: "In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer" (Is. liv. 8).

v. 9. See note on Ps. vi. 5, which is closely parallel.

v. 11. "*Thou didst loose my sackcloth...*" Israel thus interprets the lesson of the Season. With growing Light all Nature casts off her sackcloth and is girdled with gladness. This points to a Divine purpose. This purpose must be fulfilled through Israel: if God so clothe the dumb world with resurrection-life how much more shall He clothe His own Son that serveth Him? We note again in this verse that the joy does not merely *succeed* the sorrow, but is woven out of its very substance; the "mourning is turned into dancing" just as in St John xvi. 20 the "sorrow" is "turned into joy." See also note on v. 5.

ADDITIONAL NOTE TO PS. XXX.

This Psalm is well fitted to answer a difficult question in the Spiritual life—*Why does God sometimes hide His Face from us?* To answer this I would suggest the following outline for meditation.

v. 4. God's holy Memorial-Name.... "Gracious and Merciful" (see note 4^b). All the voices of Nature which point to this are voices of God (read Stanza 11.)....

The return of morning-light brings us this message every day from God.... The return of increasing-light (at Winter Solstice) brings us this message in another form every year from God (see note on *v. 5*).

What the Light of the Sun is to Nature, that the Light of God's Countenance is to us. When God looks upon us we are filled with life and joy (*vv. 1—3* and *vv. 11, 12*). When God looks away from us we are "in dismay" (*v. 7*). Why then does not God always lift up the Light of His Countenance upon us?

Let Nature answer. What would perpetual day be without night?... What would perpetual Summer be without Winter?... Darkness is needed, not merely for rest; it is also a revealer (see note, *v. 6*).

So then the hiding of God's Face may sometimes be for our good—Israel found it so (Read *vv. 6—8*).... He learnt three lessons, (*a*) *his own weakness*, (*b*) *God's strength*, (*c*) *the power of prayer*.

But there must be some other good reason why God's Face should sometimes be hidden; for was it not once hidden from Christ?... Christ did not need to learn the lessons (*a*), (*b*), (*c*) mentioned above.

But Christ *did* need an opportunity for entire devotion to His Father's will—Did not the Darkness give this?... If then there be any servant of God who is in heaviness, because God's Face is not now shining upon him, let him recognise the uses of Darkness. Perhaps God is teaching him the lesson (*a*), or (*b*), or (*c*)? If he has learnt these God may be giving him a precious opportunity for devoted service.

In any case let him remember *v. 5*....

What the morning song of joy will be may be judged from *vv. 11, 12*.

PSALM XXXI.

If we omit a Preface (*vv.* 1—3^a see note) and a Conclusion (*vv.* 23, 24) the Psalm consists of four Stanzas of about equal length, the first three consisting of 5 verses each, and the fourth of 4 verses. At first sight there is a difficulty in passing from the calm trust of Stanza I. (*vv.* 4—8) to the deep depression of Stanza II. (*vv.* 9—13) and then rising again through the growing trust of Stanza III. (*vv.* 14—18) to the exultation of Stanza IV. (*vv.* 19—22). If, however, the reader will verify the references to Jeremiah and to the Lamentations which are given in the margin, he will see that the words are not the words of an individual but of *Israel*, who, being in some peril from enemies, trusts himself in God's hand (Stanza I.), remembering what God had done for him in bringing him back from the Captivity (*vv.* 7, 8): then indeed his case had seemed desperate (see Stanza II.); the Captivity was the death of the Nation (*v.* 22 with note); but even then Israel had trusted God (Stanza III.); and God had brought him up from his grave, and shewn him unlooked-for joy in the Return from Captivity (Stanza IV., see notes). This being so Israel may well trust himself to God in the lesser sorrows of the present. The Key note of the Psalm is struck in *vv.* 15 and 5 "*My times are in Thy hand,*" "*Into Thy hand I commend my spirit.*" Israel, as we have seen, learnt this lesson in the Return from the Captivity. It was not merely that the joys of the Return succeeded to the sorrows of the Captivity but that the joys were woven out of the very substance of the sorrows (see note on *v.* 19). Without that death the resurrection-life of Israel, so fruitful in Revelation, could never have been: 'Ought not the Christ-Nation to have suffered these things and to enter into his Glory?'

The application of the Psalm to Christ Himself needs no development; we may however point out that the Disciples of Christ learnt the lesson in the same way that Israel did. Calvary was to them the death of all their hopes (cf. Stanza II.), but when God had turned for them that sorrow *into* the joy of Easter and of Whitsunday they learned that trust which can say "*My times are in Thy hand,*" "*Into Thy hand I commend my spirit.*" Thus the Psalm has a lesson for all time for the Israel of God (see note *v.* 5).

PS. XXXI.

A moveable Preface
which occurs again at
the beginning of Ps.
lxxi.

- 1 In Thee, YHVH, I have taken refuge,
Never can I come to shame!
In Thy righteousness deliver me:
2 Incline Thine ear to me,
Make haste to help me:
Be Thou to me a refuge-rock,
A fortress-home, to save me
3 For my rock and my fortress Thou art:

Cf. *Te Deum*

Stanza I.

Israel, looking back
on what God had done
for him in the Cap-
tivity trusts Him for
the lesser troubles of
the present.

And, for Thine own Name's sake, Thou wilt lead^a and^a Ps. xxiii. 2, 3
guide^a me.

4 Thou wilt free me from this net they have hidden for me,
For Thou art my refuge.

5 Into^b Thy hand I commend my spirit^b;
Thou hast redeemed me,
YHVH, Thou God of Truth!

^b Luke xxiii.
46; Acts vii.
59

6 Thou^c hatest those that observe^d vain idols^d
But as for me I trust in YHVH.

^c So *Sept. Syr.*
Targ.

7 I am glad and rejoice in Thy lovingkindness,
Seeing Thou hast looked^e on mine affliction^e,
Hast known the sorrows of my soul.

^d Jonah ii. 8
(9)

^e Luke i. 48;
cf. Gen. xxix.
32

8 Thou hast not given me over to the enemy's hand,
But hast set my feet at large.

vv. 1—3^a. These verses occur again, with slight verbal changes, in Psalm lxxi., a Psalm which is so similar, in style and subject-matter, to our present Psalm, that I am inclined to think that both were composed for the same Temple-use. These verses, which I have called a moveable Preface, have no very direct connexion with the words which immediately follow; the transition from the 'Rock' and 'Fortress,' of *v. 3^a*, to the 'Guiding Shepherd,' of *v. 3^b*, being very abrupt. It should however be observed that the idea of God as a 'Refuge' is common to *v. 2^c* and *v. 4^b*, and that the words 'I shall never come to shame' (Vulg. "non confundar in aeternum" as in *Te Deum*) are based (*v. 1*) upon the fact that 'I have taken refuge in God' and again (*v. 17*) upon the fact that 'I have called upon Thee.' Again, in *v. 19^e* there seems to be an allusion to *v. 1^a*. Thus we conclude that the Preface is an integral part of Ps. xxxi. though the structure of the Psalm is complete without it.

v. 5. "Into Thy hand I commend my spirit," i.e. 'Into Thy mighty keeping I entrust, as a safe deposit, my very being.' Though, from Calvary onwards, these words have been consecrated to the hour of death, they have a meaning also for the fullest energy of life. When St Peter said, "Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator" (1 Pet. iv. 19), he did not speak of dying but of living. We need the

Stanza II.
Israel's sorrow in
the Captivity seemed
hopeless.

9 Be gracious to me, YHVH, for I am in distress^a ;
Mine^b eye is dim through grief^b ;—
My soul too and my body ;
10 For my life is consumed^c with sorrow,
And my years with sighing ;
My strength is enfeebled through mine iniquity^d,
And my bones are languishing :
11 To all my foes I am a scorn ;
To my neighbours a burden,
And a terror to my friends ;
Those that see me in the street flee away from me ;
12 I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind ;
I am become like a broken vessel^e.
13 For^f I have heard the slander of the many,
With fear on every side^f,
While they consult together against me,
Planning to take my life.

^a Lam. i. 20^b Ps. vi. 7^c Jer. xx. 18^d or, *my punishment*^e Jer. xxii. 28^f Jer. xx. 10

Stanza III.
Yet, even then, Is-
rael trusted in God.

14 But as for me, on Thee I repose O YHVH ;
I say, "Thou art my God."
15 My times are in Thy hand^g,
Rescue me from the hand of mine enemies,
And from my pursuers.

^g v. 5

prayer quite as much for life as for death. It is best to read this verse with v. 15 "*My times are in Thy hand.*" Because God is "the God of Truth," (v. 5), the "Faithful Creator," therefore St Paul can look through death to the end of God's great plan and can say, "I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (II Tim. i. 12). In this sense, too, Browning has said :

Grow old along with me !
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made :
Our times are in His hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half ; trust God : see all, nor be afraid !"

v. 7. "*Seeing Thou hast looked on my affliction.*" The words are almost identical with the play on the name of *Reuben* (Gen. xxix. 32), "She called his name *Reuben* for she said Surely YHVH hath looked on my affliction." The Septuagint, both here and in the Psalm, read τῆν ταπεινωσάν, which is the word used by the Virgin Mary in the Magnificat, "He hath looked upon the lowly estate of His handmaiden." This word for "*affliction*" is constantly used of the sorrows of Israel in Captivity, whether in Egypt (Exod. iii. 7, 17 ; iv. 31 ; Neh. ix. 9) or in Babylon (Lam. i. 3, 7, 9 ; iii. 1, 19 ; Is. xlvi. 10).

The allusion in our Psalm is to God's visiting and redeeming His People by freeing them out of Captivity. This redemption was a type of the great Redemption ; consequently the allusion in the Magnificat is not a mere accident.

- 16 Let the light of Thy countenance shine^a on Thy servant, ^a Numb. vi. 25
 Save me in Thy lovingkindness!
- 17 O YHVH, I cannot come to shame^b, ^b v. 1
 For I have called upon Thee,
 Let the wicked come to shame^c, ^c Jer. xvii. 18
 Let them be silent in Sheôl.
- 18 Let lying lips be stricken dumb,
 Which rail against the righteous,
 With pride and with contempt.

Stanza IV.

The Return from
 Captivity was to Israel
 a revelation of the
 hidden goodness of
 God.

- 19 Oh how great is Thy goodness,
 Which Thou hast hidden away for them that fear Thee;—
 Which Thou hast wrought for them that take refuge^d in ^d v. 1
 Thee;—
 In the very sight^e of the children of men! ^e Ps. xxiii. 5
- 20 Thou coverest them in the covert of Thy Presence,
 From the conspiracies of mighty-men!
 Thou hidest^f them, as in a Shrine, ^f Ps. xxvii. 5
 From the strife of tongues.

v. 16. "*Thy Servant*," i.e. Israel, see Jer. xxx. 10; xlvi. 27 f.; Ezek. xxxvii. 25 (quoted by Baethgen).

v. 19. "*Which Thou hast hidden away...*" God has two ways of hiding. In the time of trouble He hides His people in the Sanctuary of His Presence (see v. 20), and He also hides away blessings as a father lays up for his children. To His prodigal sons He may give at once the portion of His "hidden treasure" which falleth to them (see Ps. xvii. 14), but for His faithful children, who are ever with Him, He waits for a convenient time, lest a blessing coming too soon should become a curse. In the life of Israel such a convenient time was the Return from the Captivity. It was a season in which God's goodness was ever coming as a fresh surprise: the joy seemed too great to be true (see Ps. cxxvi. 1—3): Zion saw with wonder (Is. xlix. 21) her sons coming from far; all nations that had despised her now flock to bring to her their choicest tribute (Is. lx. 4 ff.): it was, moreover, a season of Revelation, a season to which we owe the writings of the Second Isaiah and a large number of the Psalms. Well might Israel say, "*Oh how great is Thy goodness which Thou hast hidden away for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that take refuge in Thee;—in the very sight of the children of men!*"

These last words denote not merely that God's goodness to Israel is shewn *openly* but that it is shewn in the presence, and in spite of, a hostile world. (See the parallel passage, Ps. xxiii. 5.)

v. 20. The word which we have translated "*conspiracies*" is of doubtful meaning. Aquila seems to identify it with the similar word which the E.V. translates "*the rough places*" (Is. xl. 4). Jerome too translates "*a duritie*." The primary signification of the root is *to bind*: hence the Targum reads "*from the bands (or troops) of men*." But though the one word is doubtful the general meaning of the passage is clear:—God's Presence is a Sanctuary (cf. Ps. xxvii. 4, 5) in which perfect rest may be found from all the troubles of earth and from that opposition which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls "the contradiction of sinners" (Heb. xii. 3). Christ only among men found this perfect rest upon earth. Browning, in his study of Lazarus, has given us a marvellous picture of a man hidden in God's Presence from the strife of tongues.

21 Blessed be YHVH for He hath distinguished me with His lovingkindness,

As it were in a fenced city.

22 But, as for me, I said^a in my alarm,

I am cut off^b from the sight of Thine eyes!

Whereas Thou heardest the voice of my supplication,

While I was (yet) crying^c to Thee.

^a Lam. iii. 18

^b Ps. lxxxviii. 5 (6); Jonah ii. 4; Lam. iii. 54

^c Ps. xxviii. 2; Lam. iii. 57

Chorus.

Let all Israel learn the lesson of the past (cf. *Stanza I.*).

23 Love YHVH, all ye His saints;

YHVH that keepeth faithfulness,

And plentifully repayeth the proud doer.

24 Be strong^d, and let your heart be firm,

All ye whose hope is in YHVH.

^d Josh. i. 6, 9, 18

v. 21. "He hath distinguished me...fenced city." The primary meaning of the verb here used is *to separate* (see Lev. xxvii. 2; Numb. vi. 2, and cf. the kindred word in Ps. xvii. 7), hence *to be wonderful* or *to act wonderfully* (Judg. xiii. 19). In the present passage the context decides for the primary sense: as a man is *separated* or *set apart* in the safety of a "fenced city," so Israel feels that God Himself had been to him a strong city (Is. xxvi. 1; xxxiii. 21; Zech. ii. 5). Other nations may have their strongholds but the 'distinguishing' mark of Israel is the Divine 'Presence,' "so shall we be *separated*...from all the people that are upon the face of the earth" (Exod. xxxiii. 16).

v. 22. "But, as for me, I said in my alarm..." The season of Israel's panic fear was the season of the Captivity depicted in *Stanza II.* (*vv.* 9—13). It was then that Israel said, "The waters flowed over my head, I said I am cut off" (Lam. iii. 54; cf. Jonah ii. 4); "I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord" (Lam. iii. 18); "Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me..." (Is. xlix. 14). Ezekiel expressed the same thought in the vision of dry bones, "Behold, they say, Our bones are dead, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts" (Ezek. xxxvii. 11). The Captivity was the death of the Nation, the Return was a resurrection from the dead.

PSALM XXXII.

This Psalm, which is the second of the penitential Psalms, was used in the Jewish Church for the close of the Day of Atonement. Let us interpret it with this thought only in view. On that one Day the Jewish Church received the most solemn assurance that God had forgiven the guilt of His People and covered all their sin (Ps. lxxxv. 2). God had said "On that Day he (the Priest) shall make Atonement for you to cleanse you; from all your transgressions before the Lord ye shall be clean" (Lev. xvi. 30). This assurance of the forgiveness of the sins of the past year was conveyed to the eyes of the assembled worshippers in three ways, (i) by the scape-goat (Lev. xvi. 21), (ii) by the sacrifices, (iii) by the High

Priest coming forth from the Holy of Holies (Ecclus. i. 20). If we picture Israel singing Psalm xxxii. at this supreme moment of realized forgiveness we shall best understand the meaning of the Psalm in the Old Testament and its relation to the Atonement of Christ.

In point of structure the Psalm consists of seven Stanzas; the law of formation being *a, b, c, d, c₁, b₁, a₁*; in other words, the first three Stanzas and the last three correspond with one another but in inverted order. Thus the *first* and *last* stanzas (*a* and *a₁*) depict the happiness of the sin-forgiven People. The *second* Stanza corresponds with the *sixth* (*b* with *b₁*) inasmuch as the Psalmist tells his own brutish silence in the *second* and dissuades from the like folly in the *sixth*. The *third* Stanza is continued and completed by the *fifth*; both tell of the joy of pardon; in the *third* we see the Father falling on the Prodigal's neck and kissing him, while in the *fifth* the Prodigal receives the pledges of restored sonship amid the music and the joy of the Home. The fourth Stanza, which we have marked *d*, is of course the middle Stanza, and, as such, gives the leading thought "*Now is the acceptable time, Now is the Day of Salvation.*" The Psalm must be studied with its companion, Ps. xxxiii.; it will then be evident that it depicts the experience, not of a private individual but, of Israel.

PS. XXXII.

(a) Oh the happiness of the Atonement!

- 1 Happy^a is he whose transgression is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered!
2 Happy is the man to whom YHVH imputes no guilt,
And in whose spirit there is no guile!

^a Ps. xxxiii. 12

1 *vv. 1, 2.* In these verses, sin, that it might appear exceeding sinful, is pictured under four names:—(a) *transgression*, (b) *sin*, (c) *guilt*, (d) *guile*. Of these, (a) *transgression* consists of acts of disobedience which therefore need pardon; (b) *sin* is a missing of the mark, a wrong aim of life, which needs Atonement; (c) *guilt* is that sense of sin which creates an obstacle between man and God and which therefore needs a reassurance of favour on God's part; while (d), *guile*, is an unwillingness on the sinner's part to face the facts of his own sinfulness; this last therefore needs on God's part a kind severity which shall unsparingly bring the truth home. Now, in the attributes of God (Exod. xxxiv. 7) we find that His Nature is to "*forgive guilt, and transgression, and sin, and by no means spare,*" i.e. we find that, in the very Nature of God, a fourfold provision for the fourfold need of man. Compare Pss. cxxx. 4; lxxxv. 2. In the Attributes of God one word is used for "*forgiveth*" (lit. *beareth*) but in our Psalm we have three: 1st the transgression is *forgiven*, i.e. borne and taken away (cf. Is. liii. 4; Joh. i. 29); 2ndly the sin is *covered*, i.e. it is so expiated that it ceases to exist even for God's eye (Ps. lxxxv. 3; Jer. l. 20; Mic. vii. 19); 3rdly the guilt is *not imputed*, as though God Himself had said "*Neither do I condemn thee.*" In the light of this infinite forgiveness the sinner for the first time sees himself, and then "*in his spirit there is no guile.*"

1 "When once pardon is realized the believer has courage to be truthful before God: he can afford to have done with "*guile*" in the spirit. Who would not declare all his debts when they are certain to be discharged by another? Who would not declare his malady when he was sure of

(b) Brutish silence
dries up the soul as
the rainless season
does the earth.

3 When I kept silent, my bones were worn away
Through my moaning all the day long.
4 For day and night Thy hand weighed heavy on me,
My moisture was changed into Summer drought.

(c) Manly confes-
sion opens the flood-
gates of pardon.

5 I acknowledged my sin unto Thee,
And my guilt I did not cover.
I said, I will confess my transgressions to YHVH,
And Thou—Thou didst pardon the guilt of my sin!

a cure? True faith knows not only that "guile" before God is impossible, but also that it is no longer necessary. The believer has nothing to conceal: he sees himself before God, stripped, laid open, and bare; and if he has learned to see himself as he is, so also he has learned to see God as He reveals Himself. There is no guile in the spirit of one who is justified by faith; because in the act of justification truth has been established in his inward parts. There is no guile in the spirit of him who sees the truth of himself in the light of the truth of God. For the truth of God shows him at once that in Christ he is perfectly righteous before God, and in himself he is the chief of sinners. Such a one knows that he is not his own, for he is bought with a price, and therefore he is to glorify God! There is no guile in the spirit of him whose real object is to glorify Christ and not himself. But when a man is not quite true to Christ, and has not quite ceased to magnify self, there may be guile, for he will be more occupied with thoughts about himself than with the honour of Christ. But if the truth, and honour, and glory of Christ be his supreme care, he may leave himself out of the question, and, like Christ, "commit himself to Him that judgeth righteously" [J. W. Reeve, quoted in *Treasury of David*, Vol. ii. p. 100].

v. 1. "*Happy is he*, etc." Literally "*Oh the happiness of*, etc." There are three Psalms, in the First Collection, which *begin* with this word, viz. Pss. i., xxxii., and xli. Thus it will be noted that the First Collection opens and closes with a Psalm of Beatitude. Of these Ps. i., which is really a Preface to the whole Psalter, dwells on the happiness which comes from feeding, as it were, in meditation, on the Law; Ps. xxxii. exults in the happiness of the Atonement; while Ps. xli. passes to the happiness which springs from 'taking thought for the poor and needy.' The happiness of Israel through the Law is characteristic of the time of Deuteronomy: "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord" (Deut. xxxiii. 29). This verse must be interpreted from the 12th verse of Psalm xxxiii.

v. 2. "*Happy is man*, etc." The Hebrew word for *man* here is *Adam*, not *Ish* as in Ps. i.; there an *individual* case was supposed, but here *Adam* fixes the thought upon *mankind*, for whom an Atonement has been provided if only they will accept its freely offered pardon. Compare St Paul's argument in Rom. iv. 6—8. This Psalm was used on the Day of Atonement, which was a yearly witness to the fact that mankind was forgiven in God: Verses 1, 2 must have been understood by the Jewish Church in the light of that forgiveness.

v. 3. "*When I kept silent*." Silence here is not opposed to speech, for he was "moaning all the day long." Kay well quotes Hos. vii. 14; "They *cried not to ME* with their heart, when they *howled* upon their beds." Speech is given to man that he may draw near to God with it. If he use it not to this end he is no better than the brutes. Verses 3, 4 should be compared with the corresponding Stanza, vv. 8, 9; in the one Stanza the Psalmist was brutish and ignorant as it were a beast before God, and God was compelled to curb him with a heavy hand (v. 4), while, in the other Stanza, the Psalmist, having found the joy of pardon, holds up his own past sorrow as a warning (v. 8); if God's children would but come to Him there would be no need for the bit and bridle! Many Commentators regard vv. 8, 9 as the words of God, but the parallelism of the Stanzas seems to require the interpretation which I have given.

v. 4. "*My moisture...Summer drought*." If this Psalm were originally written for the Day of Atonement there would be a special fitness in this image since, in Palestine, the six months of the

(d) Now is the acceptable time.

6 For this let every saint make his prayer to Thee
In the season of finding^a.
Only in the overflowing of the great waters,
They will not reach unto Him^b.

^a Is. lv. 6

^b or *unto him*

(c₁) More than pardon—sonship.

7 Thou art a Covert for me,
Thou dost preserve me from trouble,
With ringing songs of deliverance
Thou dost compass me round.

(b₁) Man being not a brute but a son must act as such.

8 I instruct thee, I shew thee the way thou should'st go,
I counsel thee, (keeping) mine eye upon thee.
9 Be not ye like horse and mule which have no understanding,
Whose pride must be curbed with bridle^c and bit,
Or they will not come near unto thee.

^c Prov. xxvi. 3

(a₁) Oh the happiness of the Atonement!

10 Many are the stripes for the wicked,
But he that trusteth in YHVH,
Lovingkindness will compass him round.
11 Rejoice in YHVH and be glad ye righteous,
Ring out with joy all ye that are upright in heart.

rainless season practically end at the Autumnal Equinox, the Day of Atonement being the 10th day after the Equinox.

v. 6. The words translated *great waters* or *many waters* occur twenty-six times in the Old Testament, of which eleven are in the Book of Ezekiel. They follow two very opposite lines of thought thus; (A) they denote the *sea* (Ezek. i. 24; xxvi. 19; xxvii. 26; xliii. 2 etc.). The sea being the home of mystery and terror, the "*great waters*" were used of any overflowing calamity (Ps. xviii. 16 (17); cxliv. 7; Cant. viii. 7 etc.). But (B) they denote also the waters as the *source of fruitfulness* (Ezek. xix. 10; xxxi. 5, 7, 14; xxxii. 13; 2 Chron. xxxii. 4 etc.). This thought seems to be characteristic of Ezekiel, and may possibly be traced to his abode in Babylonia. The question now arises in which of the two senses, (A) or (B), are the words to be interpreted in our Psalm? The context must decide. The word "*overflowing*" would seem at first sight to point to the meaning (A), but on the other hand in Job xxxviii. 25 the "*overflowing of waters*" is evidently used in a beneficent sense of the abundant rain (see context); and the reference to "*Summer drought*" in v. 4 inclines us, on the whole, to interpret v. 6 as of the season of blessing which man would certainly miss unless he had first made his prayer in the 'season of finding.'

The ten days inclusive between New Year's Day and the Day of Atonement were regarded by the Jews as a critical time of Judgement, during which mercy was extended to the sinner; and to these ten days the words of Is. lv. 6 were applied, viz. "Seek ye YHVH while He may be found ...while He is near." [See my translation of the *Yalkut* on Zechariah, pp. 55, 73.] These days were indeed the Rogation days of the Jewish Church. The seventh month was the time when the rains of Palestine should begin after the long months of "Summer droughts."

PSALM XXXIII.

Though Ps. xxxiii. is not alphabetical it has many of the characteristics of the Alphabetical Psalms. Not only do the 22 verses correspond with the number of the letters in the Hebrew Alphabet but the *ten* stanzas remind us of the way in which the number *ten* enters into the formation of the Alphabetical Psalms (see p. 26). Again, Ps. xxxiii. falls into two distinct Parts, which correspond the one to the other exactly in the way which we have traced in the Alphabetical Psalms (p. 26 etc.). Lastly, it is followed by Ps. xxxiv., which is strictly Alphabetical (see p. 30). It is therefore evident that our present Psalm is a connecting link with Alphabetical Psalms, and should be studied in close connexion with Pss. xxv. and xxxiv. (pp. 26, 30).

We now turn to the Psalm itself. Part I (*vv.* 1—11) refers to *God and the World*; Part II (*vv.* 12—22) refers to *God and Israel*. The five Stanzas of Part I answer, Stanza by Stanza, to the five Stanzas of Part II (see marginal notes). But though these Stanzas answer to one another we note that there is also a relation between the first and last Stanzas, and this is a peculiarity which we have had occasion to note in the Alphabetical Psalms (e.g. Ps. xxv., pp. 28 f.). In Part I God is praised as the Creator of the World; in Part II, as the Redeemer of Israel. Part I fixes our attention on the *Word* of God (*vv.* 4, 6, 9, 11); Part II, upon the *Eye* of God (*vv.* 13—15, 18).

In Part I we see that the *Word*, or purpose, of God in Creation, was (*a*) not arbitrary (*vv.* 4, 5); (*b*) that it was Creative without effort (*vv.* 6, 7); (*c*) that it necessarily demands the homage of all created things; (*d*) that any opposition to the Word or purpose of God must be futile.

In Part II we see that the *Eye*, or choice, of God is, in Israel's case, (*a*₁) not arbitrary (*vv.* 13—15); (*b*₁) that it implies all the power Israel can need (*vv.* 16, 17); (*c*₁) that God's Eye of Providential care responds to the eye of Israel's upward look; (*d*₁) that the great purpose of God for Israel cannot ultimately fail.

The reader will observe the relation of the Stanzas (*a*) (*b*) (*c*) (*d*) to (*a*₁) (*b*₁) (*c*₁) (*d*₁) respectively. For purposes of comparison these Stanzas have been printed on opposite pages as in the Alphabetical Psalms.

PS. XXXIII (*First half, God and the World*).

- Preface.*
Israel's joy in Redemption.
- (a) God's work of Creation is founded upon right, and therefore is stable.
- (b) The only power in Creation is the breath of God.
- (c) All created things must pay homage.
- (d) His purpose alone will last.
- 1 Ring out with joy, O ye righteous^a, in YHVH;
For to the upright psalms^b are well-seemly^b.
- 2 Give thanks to YHVH with the harp,
Hymn unto Him to the ten-stringed lute;
- 3 Sing unto Him a New Song,
Sweet melody with clashing-trumpet-sound^c.
- 4 For the Word^d of YHVH is right,
And all His work is faithful.
- 5 He loveth righteousness and justice,
The earth is full of the loving-kindness of YHVH.
- 6 By the Word of YHVH the heavens were made,
And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth;
- 7 Gathering as in a water-skin^e the waters of the sea,
Storing the deeps (as) in a treasure-house.
- 8 Let all the earth fear before YHVH,
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.
- 9 For He spake and it became!
He commanded and it stood fast!
- 10 YHVH bringeth to nought the counsel^f of the heathen,
He frustrateth the thoughts^g of the nations;
- 11 The counsel of YHVH ever endureth,
The thoughts of His heart are from age to age.

^a v. 12 and
Ps. xxxii. 1
^b Ps. cxlvii. 1

^c Ps. xxvii. 6,
note

^d Deut. xxxii.
4

^e Sept.

^f v. 11

^g v. 11
Sept. has a
double-reading
of this
line

vv. 1—3. The best comment on these verses is Ps. cl.:—Here, as there, we have every kind of music and every kind of song;—in short a Chorus of Creation.

It is perhaps not altogether fanciful to regard the ten Stanzas of the Psalm as the strings of the "ten-stringed lute."

v. 3. "Sing...a New Song." The other passages in which "the New Song" occurs are Is. xlii. 10; Pss. xl. 3 (4); xcvi. 1; xcvi. 1; cxlviii. 1; cxlv. 9; cxlix. 1; Rev. v. 9; xiv. 3. In all these passages we note two characteristics of the 'New Song,' (i) It is always for new mercies, (ii) It is a Chorus of Creation. The old Song was the Song of Moses at the Red Sea. The next great Redemption was the Redemption from Babylon. All the Old Testament passages in which the "New Song" occurs belong, I believe, to this joyous time. The next great Redemption came about 500 years later, not for one Nation only but for the whole world, through Christ; the New Song of this Redemption is given in Rev. v. 9, and is a Chorus in which the Church, Angels, and all created things unite. The final Redemption is yet to come, but St John had a vision of its New Song (Rev. xiv. 1—3; cf. xv. 2, 3).

PS. XXXIII (*Second half*, God and Israel).

Preface.

Blessed is the Nation of God's free choice (cf. Deut. xxxiii. 29).

12 Happy^a is the Nation whose God is YHVH!
The People He chose for Himself as His heritage^b!

^a Ps. xxxii. 1

^b Deut. xxxii. 9

(*a*₁) God's choice of Israel is founded upon right, and therefore is stable.

13 YHVH looked from heaven,
He saw all the children of men;
14 He looked forth from the place of His dwelling,
Upon all the inhabitants of the earth;
15 He it is that formeth all their hearts,
That taketh note of all their doings.

(*b*₁) Israel's power is not in horses but in the fact of God's choice (cf. Deut. xxxiii. 29).

16 A king is not saved by the greatness of his host^c,
Nor a warrior delivered by the greatness of his strength.
17 Vain is the horse^d for victory;
By mere greatness of power He^e doth not deliver.

^c or *power*

^d Prov. xxi. 31;
Ps. cxlvii. 10

^e or *he*

(*c*₁) Israel should pay the homage of an expectant eye.

18 Behold the eye of YHVH is towards them that fear Him,
Towards them that are expectant^f of His lovingkindness;
19 To deliver their soul from death,
And to preserve them in life from famine^g.

^f v. 22

^g Ps. xxxvii. 19

Conclusion.

(*d*₁) Israel's expectation of Redemption to come (cf. *vv.* 1—3 and *vv.* 10, 11).

20 Our soul waiteth for YHVH,
Our Help^h and our Shield^h is He!
21 For in Him our heart is glad;
For we trust in His holy Name.
22 Let Thy lovingkindness, O YHVH, be upon us,
Even as we wait expectantⁱ upon Thee.

^h Deut. xxxiii. 29

ⁱ v. 18

v. 6. "*By the Word...by the breath.*" There was no effort in Creation. The Yalkut quotes the legend of God creating all things with the letter *Heh*, i.e. with a mere *breathing*, and adds, "He fainteth not, neither is weary" (Is. xl. 28). Creation came into being and continues to exist simply by the will of God.

v. 7. *Gathering as in a water-skin.* So Sept., Sym., Targum; Jerome, "*quasi in utri.*" The usual rendering, "*in a heap,*" though it follows the vowel points, must be rejected because of the parallel passages, Job xxxviii. 8, "or (who) shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, (as if) it had issued out of the womb." Also *v.* 37, "Who can number the clouds by wisdom or who can stay (?) the bottles of heaven?" In our Psalm the thought is centred on the Work of the Third Day of Creation, when God restrained the waters:—"Let the waters be gathered together...and let the dry land appear" (cf. Job xxxviii. 8—11). This work was as easy for God as it would be for a man to fill a water-skin.

(Psalm xxxiv. This Alphabetical Psalm is given pp. 30—33.)

PSALM XXXV.

Before discussing the imprecations in this Psalm we should do well to consider the passages in Jeremiah which are strikingly parallel to Ps. xxxv., and indeed to the whole group of Psalms in which it occurs.

The question between Jeremiah and the false prophets (Jer. v. 31; xiv. 14; xxiii. 14 ff.; xxvii. 14; xxix. 8 f.) was one of life or death for Israel. The false prophets carried the People with them when they spoke smooth words of 'peace': but Jeremiah knew, to his own sorrow, that it was too late for peace. Thus to save his People he suffered as a traitor (ch. xxxvii. 14) and was hated by his own. At such a time indignation against false prophets must have been to Jeremiah loyalty to God and man.

The following passages should be carefully considered:

Jer. xviii. *vv.* 18—23, R.V. "Then said they, Come, let us devise devices against Jeremiah;...Come, and let us smite him with the tongue (cf. Ps. xxxv. 15), and let us not give heed unto any of his words. Give heed to me, O Lord, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me (cf. Ps. xxxv. 1, note rare word). Shall evil be recompensed for good? for they have digged a pit for my soul (Ps. xxxv. 7). Remember how I stood before Thee to speak good for them, to turn away Thy fury from them (cf. Ps. xxxv. *v.* 12 f.). Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, etc., etc.... Yet, Lord, Thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay me (cf. Ps. xxxv. 12); forgive not their iniquity (Ps. xxxv. 4), neither blot out their sin from Thy sight; but let them be overthrown (*marg. made to stumble*, cf. Ps. xxxv. 6) before Thee; deal Thou with them in the time of Thine anger."

Jer. xx. *vv.* 7—13, "O Lord, Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived;... I am become a laughing-stock all the day, everyone mocketh me (cf. Ps. xxxv. 16, 21, 25)...because the word of the Lord is made a reproach unto me, and a derision all the day. And if I say, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name (cf. Ps. xxxix. 1, 2), then there is in mine heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot *contain* (cf. Ps. xxxix. 3 with Ps. xxxviii. 13). For I have heard the defaming of many, terror on every side (cf. Ps. xxxi. 13). Denounce, and we will denounce him, say all my familiar friends (Ps. xli. 9), they that watch for my halting (Ps. xxxv. 15 and xxxviii. 17); peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him. But the Lord is with me as a mighty one *and* a terrible; therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail; they shall be greatly ashamed,...even with an everlasting dishonour

which shall never be forgotten. But, O Lord of hosts,...let me see Thy vengeance on them; for unto Thee have I revealed my cause. Sing unto the Lord, praise the Lord: for He hath delivered the soul of the needy from the hand of evil-doers" (compare the rapid transitions from imprecation to thanksgiving in Ps. xxxv. vv. 9 f., 18, 27 f.).

From Chapter xxiii. (vv. 9—end) we learn that the indignation of Jeremiah was directed especially against the Prophets who falsely prophesied peace in the name of God. Thus:

Jer. xxxiii. 11, 12, "For both prophet and priest are profane (cf. note on Ps. xxxv. 16);...wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery places (note rare word) in the darkness; and they shall be driven on and fall therein" (cf. Ps. xxxv. 6 note).

In this Chapter too there is a remarkable passage in which Jeremiah ridicules the use of the phrase, "*Thus saith* (the Lord)" on the lips of these speakers of smooth words. Thus:

v. 31, "Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues and say, 'He saith'." These are words of ridicule and translation is not easy—literally "who take their tongues and keep 'saith'-ing 'Thus saith'." The margin of the E.V. has "*that smooth their tongues,*" and I think it probable that Jeremiah chose the unusual expression "*take their tongues*" in order to hint at the meaning of the similar sounding word which signified "*to smooth.*" In any case he ridicules their use of the word "*Thus saith.*" This passage has an important bearing on Ps. xxxvi. 1 (see note). Other close parallels (see notes) of thought and language make it highly probable that our Psalm was written by Jeremiah.

When we read the imprecations of the tender-hearted Jeremiah we must "compare them with the bettering of the times," and do him the justice to remember that those who hated him were hating their own good. Still, for us, the fact remains that the One who alone could say "He that hateth me hateth my Father also" (Joh. xv. 22), was the One who "when he was reviled he reviled not again" (1 Pet. ii. 23). In the wise words of Jer. Taylor, "That zeal only is safe, only acceptable, which increases Charity directly; and because love to our Neighbour and obedience to God are the two great portions of Charity, we must never account our zeal to be good, but as it advances both these, if it be in a matter that relates to both; or, severally, if it relates severally. S. Paul's zeal was expressed in preaching without any offerings or stipend, in travelling, in spending and being spent for his flock, in suffering, in being willing to be accursed for the love of the People of God and his Countrymen. Let our zeal be as great as his was, so it be in affections to others, but not at all in angers against them: In the first there is no danger; in the second there is no safety. In brief, let your zeal (if it must be expressed in anger) be always more severe against thy self than against others." (*Holy Living*, Chap. iv. Sect. 3.)

In point of structure our Psalm falls naturally into three Parts, each of which ends in Thanksgiving.

PS. XXXV.

- 1 O YHVH strive with them that strive with me,
Fight with them that fight with me.
- 2 Grasp shield and buckler
And rise to my help!
- 3 Draw out javelin and dirk to oppose my pursuers,
Say unto my soul: "I am thy salvation."
- 4 Let them be shamed and disgraced that are seeking my life,
Let them be turned back and dishonoured that are planning
my hurt.
- 5 Let them be as the chaff before the wind, and the Angel
of YHVH driving^a; ^a Ps. xxxvi. 12
- 6 Let their way be dark and slippery^b, and the Angel of^b Jer. xxiii. 12
YHVH pursuing them.
- 7 For they have wantonly hidden a net for me,
Wantonly have they dug a pitfall^c for my life! ^c Jer. xviii. 20,
22
- 8 May a ruin unforeseen come upon him,
His own net that he hid catch himself,
In a ruin whereby he may fall.
- 9 So my soul shall exult in YHVH,
Shall be joyous in His salvation.
- 10 All my bones shall say;
"YHVH who is like unto Thee,
Delivering the sufferer from his too-strong foe,
Yea the sufferer and the poor from his spoiler?"
- 11 There rise up wrongful witnesses,
Who question me of what I know nothing^d. ^dcf. Jer. xxxvii.
13
- 12 They reward me evil^e for good^e,
To the very bereavement of life. ^e Jer. xviii. 20

Vow of Thanks-
giving.

v. 1. "*them that strive with me.*" A rare word, the only other passage (besides Is. xlix. 25) being the parallel passage in Jeremiah (xviii. 19), "Give heed to me, O YHVH, and hearken to the voice of *them that strive with me*" (see context).

v. 6. "*Let their way be dark and slippery.*" The rare reduplicated word which is here translated "*slippery*" occurs only in the parallel passage of Jeremiah (xxiii. 12), "Wherefore their way shall be unto them as *slippery* (ways) in the darkness." In Daniel xi. 21, 34 it is twice used of *flatteries*, i.e. smooth speeches. These passages are significant; like is punished by like; the false prophets who caused others to fall by their *smooth, slippery* tongues shall themselves be set on *slippery* places and driven into darkness. The verse requires a Dante to illustrate it.

- 13 As for me, were they ill?—then my clothing was sackcloth,
My soul I afflicted with fasting,
And what my prayer was—may it home^a in my bosom^a!
- 14 As he were my friend or my brother I walked,
I went bowed as though it were the mourning of^b a mother.
- 15 But, did I halt^c?—they were glad,
And gathered and gathered against me,
Smiting^d me at unawares
They rent me without ceasing;
- 16 As dissimulators with mocking scoffs,
They gnash^e their teeth upon me.

^a Matt. x. 13;
Lk. x. 6

^b or for

^c Jer. xx. 10

^d i.e. with the
tongue; Jer.
xviii. 18

^e Lam. ii. 16

v. 14. "As though...of a mother." The Hebrew may signify either "as one that mourns for a mother" or "as it were a mother that mourneth." The image in the latter case is far more forcible.

v. 15. "But did I halt?"—Literally, *on my halting*. Cf. Jer. xx. 10 "All my familiars watched for my halting." Also Ps. xxxviii. 17 (18). Micah had pictured Israel as a *lame sheep* wandering astray and brought back to the fold by God. This name of the lame one, *her that halteth*, left its mark. (See Mic. iv. 6, 7; Zeph. iii. 19 and cf. Gen. xxxii. 31 (32).)

"Smiting me..." This form of the word occurs nowhere else. Some give it a passive sense and translate "*abjects*" i.e. *smitten ones*. But the weight of authority goes the other way, Sym. and Targum agreeing with Jerome's translation *percutientes*, i.e. *smiters*. The parallel passage in Jeremiah xviii. 18 ("Come and let us *smite* him with the tongue") strongly confirms the translation we have given.

"At unawares." Lit. "*and I knew it not*." Three times in the Psalm this phrase occurs, viz. vv. 8, 11, 15. A man could scarcely be said to be smitten and not to know it, but he may be either slandered unawares or slandered about things of which he knows nothing (v. 11).

St Jerome, applying the words to Christ, says: "Quid non cognoverit, quaeritur. Quidam putant, dolorem vulnerum quae patiebatur in cruce. Sed melius ad peccata refertur: quod non habuerit conscientiam peccatorum quare crucifixus sit" (*Comment. in Psalmos*, Morin, p. 42).

v. 16. *As dissimulators with mocking scoffs*. The Heb. text reads "*with hypocrites of* (or rather *dissimulators of*) *the scoffers of a cake*"; but the Septuagint, instead of *mqog*, "cake," read *lqog*, "mockery," and translate, "they mocked me with mockery." The letters *l* and *m* are easily mistaken in Hebrew manuscript, and I greatly doubt whether the word *cake* had any place in the original Hebrew text. The English words *hypocrite*, *hypocrisy* do not at all represent the O.T. use of the corresponding words either in the Hebrew or in the Greek. A *hypocrite* in O.T. was one *who led others into apostasy*. Thus:

Prov. xi. 9 "The *hypocrite* (i.e. *the dissimulator*) with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour."

Is. xxxii. 6 "For the vile person...to practise *hypocrisy* (R.V. *profaneness*), to utter error against the Lord, to make empty the soul of the hungry..."

Jer. xxiii. 11, 15 "For both prophet and priest *are profane*," "For from the prophets of Jerusalem is *profaneness* (marg. E.V. *hypocrisy*) gone forth into all the land." (See context.)

Compare also Dan. xi. 32 "And such as do wickedly against the Covenant *shall he pervert* (marg. R.V. *make profane*) by flatteries."

The meaning is well seen in II Macc. vi. 25 where Eleazar says "and so they, by reason of my *dissimulation* (see Greek) and for the sake of this brief and momentary life, should be led astray because of me..."

I conclude that this verse in the Psalm is to be interpreted from the use of the word in the parallel passage of Jeremiah which refers to the false prophets. (See also p. 143.)

The Yalkut quotes a passage from T. B. *Sanhedrin* 52^a which is interesting from the light it throws on the denunciation of the 'false prophets' in II Peter and Jude. The passage is to the

- 17 O Lord, how long wilt Thou look on?
Bring back my soul from this ruin of theirs,
My dear-life^a from the lions. ^a Ps. xxii. 20
- Vow of Thanks-
giving. 18 I will thank Thee in full Congregation^b,
Will praise Thee among much people. ^b Ps. xxii. 22
- 19 Let not my causeless^c enemies be glad,
Nor my wanton foes wink with the eye : ^c John xv. 25
- 20 For it is no^d peace they devise,
But slanderous devices against the quiet in the land. ^d i.e. *anything*
but
- 21 They have made mouths at me,
They said "Aha! Aha! our eye hath seen^e!" ^e Lam. ii. 16
- 22 Seen hast Thou, O YHVH—keep not silence ;
O Lord, be not far from me!
- 23 Rouse Thee and wake for my right—
O my God and my Lord—for my cause!
- 24 Judge me in Thy righteousness, O YHVH, my God,
And let them not rejoice over me.
- 25 Let them not say in their heart "Aha! we have^f our wish!" ^f Lam. ii. 16
Let them not say, "We have devoured him."
- 26 Let them be shamed and dishonoured together
That rejoice in my misfortune,
Let them be clothed with shame and disgrace
That exalt themselves against me.
- Vow of Thanks-
giving. 27 Let them sing and be glad that delight in my right,
Let them ever say "YHVH be magnified,"
Who delights in His servant's well-being.
- 28 And my tongue too shall muse of Thy kindness,
Yea, all the day long of Thy praise.

following effect. Resh Laqish quotes this verse of our Psalm to explain the fate of Korah, the "hypocrisy" of Korah being shewn "in the matter of eating," and thus it was a fitting punishment that "the prince of Gehinnom should gnash (with a play upon the name *Korah*) upon them with his teeth." The rare word for "eating" occurs again T. B. *Sanhedrin* 103^b "Great is eating (?hospitality) since it removed two tribes from Israel" (see Buxtorf *s.v.* לנימה); the two tribes being Ammon and Moab, of whom it is said that they are not to enter the Congregation of the Lord, "Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way" (Deut. xxiii. 3 f.).

PSALM XXXVI.

This Psalm consists of two Parts linked together by the three concluding verses (10—12).

Part I (*vv.* 1—4) depicts the downward progress of the unbeliever by four steep steps; *action* (Stanza 1.) deepening in each case into its corresponding *character* (Stanza 11.). The relation of the four lines of Stanza 1. to the four lines of Stanza 11. may be indicated as follows (see also marginal notes):

- | | |
|---|--|
| (a) Secret pleasure in an act which he knows to be forbidden. | (a') Open pleasure in evil for its own sake. |
| (b) God's judgements have no terror for him. | (b') He deliberately sets himself to choose the wrong way. |
| (c) He comes to persuade himself that there is no such thing as retribution. | (c') He plans evil upon his bed. (Contrast Ps. lxxiii. 6 (7).) |
| (d) Transgression which began by being cherished in the heart comes out on the lips—the man has become a scoffer. | (d') He loses the spiritual insight whereby good is discerned. |

We have here inverted the order of Stanza 11. in order to shew the relation between (a) and (a'), (b) and (b') etc.; the order in the Psalm is, however, the true order by which acts become character—"Pharaoh hardened his heart—and the heart of Pharaoh was hardened."

Part II (*vv.* 5—9) also consists of two Stanzas, the first of which gives four Attributes of God in four consecutive lines, while the second Stanza answers to the first, line by line, shewing the bearing of these four Attributes upon the world of men. The relation of these two Stanzas has been fully treated in the notes.

The Psalm concludes with *vv.* 10—12 which serve to supply a connexion, not otherwise evident, between Parts I and II (see Notes). The juxtaposition of Parts I and II thus brings into sharp contrast the evil of the bad man and the goodness of God and reminds us of Ps. lii. 1, "Why boastest thou thyself in evil, O tyrant? The Lovingkindness of God is for all time." (See context and notes.)

PS. XXXVI (PART I).

The sinner's downward progress in action.	{	<i>a</i> 1 Transgression is pleasant to the wicked in his ^a inmost ^a heart,	Sept. Syr. Vulg.
		<i>b</i> 2 There is no dread of God before his eyes.	cf. Ps. x. 11 ; xiv. 1
		<i>c</i> 3 For he flatters himself (that there is none) to find ^b and ^b hate his iniquity,	Gen. xlv. 16 ; Hos. xii. 8 (9)
		<i>d</i> 4 The words of his mouth are mischief and fraud ^c .	Ps. x. 7
The sinner's downward progress in character.	{	<i>d</i> ¹ 1 He has ceased to be wise in well-doing ;	
		<i>c</i> ¹ 4 He devises mischief upon his bed ^d ,	Mic. ii. 1
		<i>b</i> ¹ 2 He takes his stand in a way the reverse of good,	
		<i>a</i> ¹ 3 Evil he anything but abhorreth !	

v. 1. The Hebrew text, as it stands, is extremely difficult; we should have to translate "*Thus saith Transgression in the midst of my (or, following the Versions, his) heart.*" This might be paraphrased, *There is an Oracle of Transgression*, etc., i.e. there is an inner voice which is not the 'Thus saith' of God but the 'Thus saith' of the Devil. We have already seen (p. 143) that, in Jeremiah's time, the cant use of the word "*Thus saith*" (neum) on the lips of the false prophets had moved his indignation: "Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that take their tongues and keep saying 'Thus saith'" (Jer. xxxiii. 31). We have also traced the influence of Jeremiah in this group of Psalms. If therefore the present text is to stand we must explain it as a direct allusion to Jeremiah's denunciation of the false prophets in Chapter xxxiii.

I have however ventured, with some hesitation, to adopt the reading suggested by Graetz, i.e. to change the letter *N* into *Y* and thus to get the word "*pleasant*" instead of "*Thus saith*."

This seems to me to be the best solution of the difficulty and it is borne out by the parallelism of the lines which I have marked *a* and *a*¹. If this view be adopted we may compare Prov. ix. 17, where the tempting voice persuades the sinner that secret indulgence is "pleasant."

"*There is no dread of God...*" The word here used for *fear* is quite distinct from that "*fear*" of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom. The sinner has so put God out of his life that he has lost even the *dread* of judgement.

The nearest parallel to this verse is Ps. x. 5 "Far above, out of sight are Thy judgements." The way in which this self-delusion may come about is depicted in Deut. xxix. 19 f. Tennyson saw that the danger was real for us all "This is a terrible age of unfaith...One can easily lose all belief, through giving up the continual thought and care for spiritual things" (*A Memoir*, Vol. 1. p. 309).

v. 3. "*He has ceased to be wise in well-doing.*" Kay translates "He has ceased to have discernment to do good," i.e. "His *discernment* is only on the side of evil. Cp. Rom. xvi. 19."

v. 4. "*He takes his stand, etc.*" i.e. he makes a deliberate choice of the way of death (cf. Ps. i.).

v. 4. "*Evil he anything but abhorreth,*" i.e. he dearly loves it. In the corresponding line of v. 1 we saw that the single *act* of transgression was pleasant to him; but now the *act*, by repetition, has become *character*: he not only does such things but finds his pleasure in evil (cf. Rom. i. 32). This is the lowest stage of the sinner's progress.

PS. XXXVI (PART II, possibly a separate Psalm).

<p>Four Attributes of God.</p>	<p>{ (α) 5 YHVH, up to Heaven is Thy LOVINGKINDNESS^a ;</p> <p>{ (β) Thy FAITHFULNESS^a to the skies ;</p> <p>{ (γ) 6 Thy RIGHTEOUSNESS as the Mountains of God^b,</p> <p>{ (δ) Thy JUDGEMENTS (are) like the great Deep^c.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Both man and beast Thou, YHVH, wilt save.</p>	<p>^a Ps. lxxxix. 2 (3)</p> <p>^b Ps. civ. 16</p> <p>^c Ps. lxxviii. 15</p>
<p>The relation of these four Attributes to men.</p>	<p>{ (α¹) 7 How precious^d is Thy Lovingkindness, O God !</p> <p>{ (β¹) So the sons of men may shelter^e neath the shadow of Thy wings^e ;</p> <p>{ (γ¹) 8 They are full-fed from the rich-provision^f of Thy House,</p> <p>{ (δ¹) And from Thine Eden-stream Thou givest them drink.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">9 For with Thee is the Fountain^g of Life, And in thy Light we see light.</p>	<p>^d Ps. cxxxix. 17 ; Is. xxviii. 16</p> <p>^e Ruth ii. 12</p> <p>^f <i>fatness</i>, Jer. xxxi. 14</p> <p>^g Jer. ii. 13 ; xvii. 13 ; xviii. 14</p>

v. 6. The Yalkut suggests the thought that as the *Mountains* restrain the *Deep* so God's *Righteousness* restrains His *Judgements*. R. Judah says "Except Thy Righteousness had been as the Mountains of God who could abide Thy Judgements, the Great Deep?"

"Both man and beast." Have we any right to place a limit to the power and goodness of God or to assert that in the future man only can share it? (Compare note on Ps. cxlv. 12, p. 66.)

v. 8. "From Thine Eden-stream Thou givest them drink." The reference to the River of Paradise is quite unmistakable. This River, with its four streams, was treated by Ezekiel as an allegory. He saw it (Chap. xvii.) coming forth from the Altar—for the Will of God involves Sacrifice—He saw it encompass the whole Land and carry life wherever it went, making it once more a Paradise—for only when the Will of God is done can man find the joy he was made for. This Will of God which begins in Sacrifice and ends in joy is God's "Eden-stream." There is One who drank of that Cup—"The Cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink of it?"—and found the joy,—the Paradise regained. Since then one of His servants saw that Eden-stream coming forth, not from an Altar, but "from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. xxii. 1). The Cup should remind us of the joy of Christ as well as of the blood of Christ.

vv. 5, 7; (α) with (α¹), "YHVH, up to Heaven is Thy Lovingkindness," "How precious is Thy Lovingkindness..." The Lovingkindness of God is that Attribute which expresses His eternal purpose for man, which no ingratitude on man's part can ultimately turn aside (see Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7; Ps. lxxxix. 28 (29), 33 (34), etc.). This *mercy* or *lovingkindness* therefore "endureth for ever." The Psalmist sees this quality of Divine Mercy reaching "up to Heaven" as a safe Refuge (cf. Ps. lxxxix. 2) for the littleness of man, therefore he cries "How precious, etc." The word "precious," in Hebrew, signifies that which is *weighty*, *reliable*; thus the "precious corner stone" (Is. xxviii. 16) is that which is a safe foundation (cf. I Pet. ii. 4, 6, 7). This last passage shews us the Psalmist's vision fulfilled in Christ; God's Attribute of *lovingkindness* was, in Old Testament times, seen as the Foundation-stone of the Universe, but to us it has been revealed as "a living Stone."

(β) with (β¹), "Thy Faithfulness to the skies," "So the sons of men may shelter neath the shadow of Thy wings." God's *Faithfulness*, which is often coupled with His *Lovingkindness*, represents the same thought from a somewhat sterner point of view; we might illustrate *lovingkindness* by the love of a mother, *faithfulness* by that of a father. The *faithfulness* of God is often used in connexion or with

Conclusion linking
Part I with Part II.

The Prayer of Ps.
xxxv. 5 is suddenly
answered.

- 10 Continue Thy Lovingkindness to them that know Thee,
And Thy Righteousness to the upright of heart.
11 Let not the foot of pride come upon me,
Nor the hand of the wicked make me an exile.
12 There are they fallen—those workers of wickedness!
They are driven^a—they cannot rise!

^a Ps. xxxv. 5

reference to God's great purpose either in Creation or in the Call of Israel (see Pss. xxxiii. 4; xxxvii. 3; lxxxix. 2, 5, 8, 24, 33; xcvi. 3; c. 5; and cf. I Cor. i. 9; I Thess. v. 24; etc.). Because of this sure purpose of God, "the sons of men may shelter neath the shadow of (His) wings." Taking shelter under God's wings means such a life-choice as Ruth made (Ruth ii. 12). The verb is used again in connexion with God's wings in Pss. lvii. 1 (2); lxi. 4 (5); xci. 4.

vv. 6, 8; (γ) with (γ¹), "Thy Righteousness as the mountains of God," "They are full-fed with the rich-provision of Thy House." The Mountains of God here signify not merely high mountains but also Nature's Sanctuaries; the mountains both protect and fertilize the valleys; thus in another Psalm (lxxii. 3) it is said, "The mountains shall bring peace to the people and the hills (shall flow down) with righteousness."

The verb we have translated "they are full-fed" is specially used of being full to saturation; thus, of rain abundantly watering the earth (Ps. lxxv. 10 (11); Is. lv. 10; lviii. 11, etc.). Hence it is applied to the soul three times in Jer. xxxi. (vv. 12, 14, 25), "And their soul shall be as a watered garden," "And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness," "For I have satiated the weary soul..." Thus a lovely image from Nature is transferred to the spiritual life; as the streams from the mountains fill the lowlands with plenty, so from God's Sanctuary—Home the hearts of men shall be abundantly satisfied with Righteousness. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled."

(δ) with (δ¹), "Thy Judgements (are) like the great Deep," "And from Thine Eden-stream Thou givest them drink." As, in v. 5, God's Faithfulness represented the sterner side of His Lovingkindness, so here, in v. 6, His Judgements represent that Justice which is the sterner side of His Righteousness. They are compared to the Great Deep, i.e. the infinite waters out of which all things had their being (Gen. vii. 11; Ps. lxxviii. 15; Is. li. 10; Amos vii. 4).

At first sight it may seem strange that the "Great Deep" of God's "Judgements" should be coupled with the "River of His pleasures," i.e. the stream that waters His own Paradise. But is it not most true that God's own Life and Joy is in giving forth life to every creature? "Both man and beast Thou YHVH wilt save," "For with Thee is the Fountain of Life..." If this be so, then this giving forth must be 'the River of His Own Paradise.' Of this River He must, if He love men, 'give them to drink.' To us this giving forth means sacrifice, but some, like James Hinton, have seen that the infinite capacity for sacrifice (the Great Deep) is the pledge of the unending ever-springing Joy (the Eden-stream) in the Life to come.

Thus (δ) and (δ¹) will ultimately be reconciled, for, as Tennyson once said, (see *Memoir*, Vol. 1. p. 466):

"...the great deeps of Eternity
Roar only round the wasting cliffs of Time."

It is a favourite thought with Jeremiah (see marginal references) that God is the "Fountain of the water of Life": those therefore who forsake God forsake their own life. The ritual of the Water-drawing Festival was intended to perpetuate this thought (see on St John vii. 37 ff.).

vv. 10—12. These verses may very possibly have been added by a later Psalmist. They link together Parts I and II, compare Lovingkindness and Righteousness v. 10 with Part II, vv. 5, 6, 7; also the reference to the wicked, vv. 11, 12 with Part I, vv. 1—4. The unusual word 'driven' (i.e. as outcasts) certainly has reference to the 5th verse of the preceding Psalm and is the fulfilment of the imprecation there denounced (see note and compare Jer. xxiii. 12). The words "they cannot rise" (v. 12) carry our thoughts to Ps. i. 5, which Psalm is also recalled by v. 4.

(Ps. xxxvii. is among the Alphabetical Psalms. See pp. 34—39.)

PSALM XXXVIII.

The title "*for the Memorial*" or "*to make remembrance*" which occurs here and in Ps. lxx. gives the key to the interpretation. This word was used especially of *calling sin to remembrance*. There was a deep sense of conviction among the Hebrews that sin might slumber only to wake up to more terrible retribution, e.g. 1 Kings xvii. 18 "art thou come unto me to *call my sin to remembrance*, and to slay my son": cf. Gen. xli. 9, Ezek. xxi. 24 (29). So the trial of jealousy (Numb. v. 15) was intended to bring home the guilt "it is...an offering of *memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance*."

For this same end the Day of Atonement was instituted whereby there was "a *remembrance* of sins made every year" (Heb. x. 3); not merely to *remind* man or to *remind* God but to offer to God such recognition as might prevent the accumulated weight of unacknowledged sin from crushing out the life of Israel. Christ's word has changed this "*remembrance of sins*" into the "*remembrance of Me*" (Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 25).

There was another, still more technical, sense of the word *memorial* (*azkara*) in which it was applied to that particular handful of the *meal-offering* which was burnt with frankincense on the altar, i.e. the sample which by its acceptance shewed that the whole offering was accepted by God: this sample was called the "*memorial*" or "*remembrance*" (Lev. ii. 2, 9, 16; v. 12; vi. 15; xxiv. 7; Numb. v. 26).

The Targum actually translates the heading of our Psalm in this sense "*The handful of frankincense, the good memorial for Israel*." By mentioning frankincense the Targum limits the thought of the *memorial* (*azkara*) by excluding the sin-offering, in which case no frankincense was offered (Lev. v. 12; cf. Numb. v. 26). The Targum would thus imply that Israel was 'a sweet savour, acceptable unto God.'

The Septuagint (*εἰς ἀνάμνησιν περὶ σαββάτου*) still further limits the thought of the *azkara* or *memorial* by the strange addition relating to the Sabbath. These words must refer to the *memorial of the Shew-bread* which was offered every Sabbath. Thus (Lev. xxiv. 5—8, R. V.) "And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth parts of an ephah shall be in one cake. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the Lord. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row that it may be to the bread for a *memorial* (*azkara, ἀνάμνησιν*) even an offering made by fire unto the Lord. *Every sabbath day* he shall set it in order before the Lord continually; it is on the behalf of the children of Israel, an everlasting covenant."

There is no need to limit the meaning of the *Askara* either by following the Septuagint or the Targum; the wider meaning of the Hebrew Title is far better.

It will be noticed that the word *askara* never represents an animal sacrifice but always refers to the *meal-offering*, i.e. the oblation of the fruits of the earth. Was the crushed corn felt to be a type of those sufferings through which alone the true Israel was to become the Bread of the Presence for God and the Bread of Life for the World? If so we not only see the meaning of this Psalm but we also obtain fresh light on the institution of the Holy Communion (Luke xxii. 19) "And He took bread...saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in *remembrance* of Me (*εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν*)."

Though two Psalms only bear this title of *Remembrance-Psalms* there are clearly many others belonging to the same class, and indeed the Chronicler in dividing the Psalms under three heads places these *Remembrance-Psalms* first:—"And he appointed, of the Levites,...to *make remembrance*, and to thank and to praise..." (1 Chron. xvi. 4). [See further on the structure of the *Hodu* and *Hallelujah* Psalms.]

From the above remarks it will follow that the characteristics we should expect to find in the *Remembrance-Psalms* would be (a) a deep sense of the utter unworthiness of the best that man can give; coupled with (b) an assurance that somehow God has, by *sample*, accepted of man's gift.

This Psalm may be divided into *five* Stanzas of *four* verses each followed by a half Stanza of prayer in two verses, the total number of verses being equal to the number of letters in the Alphabet (compare the first 22 verses of Ps. xxii.).

In the first Stanza the Sufferer complains of the deep *inward* sense of guilt.

The second Stanza shews us the *outward* result in "wounds and bruises and festering sores" (Is. i. 6).

In the third Stanza a still lower depth of sorrow is reached; a deep darkness, but a darkness which heralds sunrise; for in it we see that the inward sense of guilt (Stanza 1) and the temporal consequences (Stanza 11) have taken from the Sufferer all self-trust (*v.* 9 and 10), all friends (*v.* 11), and left him naked to his enemies (*v.* 12). This is the middle Stanza of the five, and from this point onwards the light, though faint, begins to break.

In the fourth Stanza the Sufferer gives the reason for his silence: he feels that "Merit lives from man to man but not from man, O God, to Thee"—thus he is "silent" even to the injustice of his foes, because he feels that, inasmuch as God permits it, it may, to him, be regarded as "God's doing" (Ps. xxxix. 9). He thus commits himself to Him that judgeth righteously in the full assurance that God would "*answer for him*."

The fifth Stanza reminds us of the *cruelty* of the foe, as in Ps. xxii., and the Psalm closes with the actual refrain of Ps. xxii. "*Be not far*."

PS. XXXVIII.

Israel, as a son,
accepts chastisement
from his Father's
hand.

- 1 "Oh YHVH convict me not in Thine anger,
Chastise me not in Thy fury"^a;
2 For Thine arrows press into me,
Thy hand presseth upon me.
3 No soundness is there in my flesh because of Thy wrath;
No health is there in my bones because of my sin:
4 For mine iniquities are gone over my head^b;
As a heavy burden they are too heavy for me to bear.

^a Ps. vi. 1

^b Lam. iii. 54:
Ezra ix. 6

The sufferings of
Israel depicted as
bodily sickness.

- 5 My stripes^c are loathsome, are festered, because of my folly:^e
6 I am bent^d, am bowed^e very low,
I go mourning^e all the day long.
7 For my loins are full of burning,
And there is no soundness^f in my flesh:
8 I am enfeebled and crushed very sore;
I have roared through my heart's unrest.

^c Is. i. 6

^d Lam. iii. 9
(Heb.)

^e Ps. xxxv. 14

^f Is. i. 6

v. 1. This Psalm is the third of the 'Penitential' Psalms and is one of the Proper Psalms for Ash-Wednesday. In the Latin Use it is appointed for Good Friday.

The first verse is practically identical with the first verse of Ps. vi. and the Introduction to that Psalm should be read before studying the present Psalm. The standpoint of the Psalm is clearly that of Jeremiah xxx. 11—17. God there promises that the judgement on Israel, though severe, shall be different altogether in kind from that of the Nations of the World "for I will make a full end of all the nations...but I will not make a full end of thee; but I will *chastise* thee with judgement and will in no wise leave thee unpunished (Marg. R.V. *hold thee guiltless*). For thus saith YHVH, Thy hurt is incurable (cf. Mic. i. 9) and thy wound grievous. There is none to plead thy cause: for (thy) wound thou hast no medicines (nor) plaister (cf. Is. i. 6 and *vv.* 3—8 of our Psalm). All thy lovers have forgotten thee (cf. Psalm v. 11), they seek thee not for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy &c." This passage, which should be studied as a whole, ends as it began, with words of promise. Jeremiah's view of God's *chastisements* may also be gathered from Chaps. x. 24; xxxi. 18; xlvi. 28. This view agrees with Deut. viii. 5 "As a man *chastiseth* his son, so the Lord thy God *chastiseth* thee."

The constant allusions in this Psalm to bodily sufferings, wounds, and even leprosy (*v.* 11) must not lead us to think of an individual sufferer. The references given in the margin will abundantly prove that such language was constantly used of the sufferings of Israel. Lamentations, Chap. III. should especially be studied from this point of view as it is throughout closely parallel with our Psalm and must have been written under similar circumstances if not by the same Author.

v. 8. "*I have roared through my heart's unrest.*" Literally "*I have roared with the roaring of my heart.*" The two words for roaring are from different roots but both are commonly used of the roaring of a lion (see however Ps. xxii. 1 (2); xxxii. 3); this being so, many commentators (Hitzig, Wellhausen, Graetz, Baethgen &c.) change *lbi* "my heart" into *lbia* "*a lion.*" As the next word in the Hebrew begins with the letter *a* no change of the text would be needed. If this be adopted we should have to translate "*I have roared with the roaring of a lion.*"

- Forsaken like a leper!
- 9 O Lord, before Thee lies my whole desire,
My sighing is no secret from Thee.
- 10 My heart fluttereth, my strength hath left me,
The light of mine eyes—they are mine no more!
- 11 My lovers and friends stand aloof from my plague^a,
And my kinsmen stand afar off.
- 12 They that seek after my life lay their snares;
[They that seek my hurt plan destructions]^b
And meditate their guile all the day long.
- Dumb before his accusers, but not dumb to God (see next Psalm).
- 13 While I—like the deaf—must hear nothing,
Like the dumb that cannot open his mouth^c;
- 14 I am become as a man without hearing,
In whose mouth there is no reply,
- 15 Because to Thee, YHVH, my hope is directed;
'Tis Thou^d shalt give the answer O Lord my God.
- 16 I said, "Let them not rejoice over me";
When my foot slipped they would magnify themselves
against me.
- How deeply he feels their cruel ingratitude.
- 17 For I am ready to fall^e,
And my grief is ever before me.
- 18 For my guilt I proclaim,
And am troubled because of my sin.

^a i.e. *leprosy*^b Possibly a gloss^c Is. xlii. 19;
liii. 7; Ps.
xxxix. 2, 9^d *Thyself*^e Jer. xx. 9 f.;
Ps. xxxv. 15;
xxxix. 2 f.;
xli. 9

vv. 17—20. "For I am ready to fall." Literally "I am established for halting." The paradox is, I think, intentional, and is characteristic of the Book of Job. The word *established* signifies that which is *stable*; fixed as it were on a firm basis (Judg. xvi. 26, 29; 11 Sam. vii. 16, 26; Deut. xiii. 14 (15) &c.). It is as though he said 'the only thing stable in my life is its instability, the only certainty is the certainty of falling.' The parallel passages in Job are the following:—xv. 23 "He knoweth that the day of darkness is *ready* (i.e. an appointed certainty) at his hand"; xviii. 12 "And calamity shall be *ready for his halting*." Compare also the difficult passage Job xii. 5.

The last word "*to fall*" or "*for halting*" is also strange and only occurs in this sense in the following passages: Job xviii. 12 (quoted above); Ps. xxxv. 15 and Jer. xx. 10 "all my familiar friends, they that watch for my *halting*." Thus again we are reminded that the present group of Psalms (xxx. —xli.) has many points of contact, both in thought and language, with the writings of Jeremiah. The problem Jeremiah had to solve was to reconcile the sufferings of Israel with the goodness of God. To us the thought of 'medicinal chastisement' has become a commonplace, at least in theory, but it was not so in the days of Jeremiah and Job.

There is nothing inconsistent between the consciousness of guilt (*vv. 17, 18*) and the assertion of innocence (*vv. 19, 20*). Israel was guilty before God but innocent before the nations of the world. We have already seen how deeply Jeremiah felt the ingratitude of those whom he had striven to help (see p. 142). This went beyond any mere personal feeling: he spoke for God and was hated *because of his following what was good* (*v. 20*). Thus he became the conscious type of the Suffering Servant.

19 But my enemies live and are mighty,
 And my causeless* foes are many.
 20 Yea, rendering me evil for good,
 They play the adversary because of my following good.

* Ps. xxxv. 19

Prayer as in Ps. 21 Forsake me not O YHVH ;
 xxii. "Be not far." My God, BE NOT FAR from me.
 22 Haste Thee to help me
 O Lord, my Salvation.

v. 20 f. After our 20th verse a whole line is added in one important MS of the Psalter (Psalterium Graeco-Latinum Veronense) and other ancient authorities, to the following effect "And they cast out me(?), the Beloved, as an abominable corpse." It is difficult to see how this line could have originated unless there had been at one time a corresponding line in the Hebrew. The nearest parallel is Is. xiv. 19 "And thou art cast out from thy sepulchre like an abominable branch (?)" (Sept. "an abominable corpse"). The Hebrew scholar will do well to read the notes in Field's Hexapla on this verse and also on our Psalm. The original Hebrew for the *Beloved* may have been *Dod* (see Is. v. 1, Heb. and Sept.). I would suggest השליכו אתי דוד כנצר נתעב.

If such a text as this ever existed it would of course lend itself to an obvious Christian interpretation since *Nazareth* is derived from *Nezer* "a branch (?)" and Christians were known by this name of contempt among the Jews. Certainly such a text is in entire harmony with the context, since v. 20 (see note) had fixed our thoughts on the cruel ingratitude of these enemies of goodness. Compare also Ps. xxxi. 12.

PSALM XXXIX.

The Title of this Psalm ascribes it both to 'Jeduthun' and to 'David,' the other Psalms bearing Jeduthun's name being Pss. lxii. and lxxvii. which are very similar in tone (see marginal references) treating as they do of the shortness of man's life in the presence of God's Eternity. The meaning of 'Jeduthun' was obscure in quite early times, indeed in the Titles of Pss. lxii., lxxvii. he would seem to have become either a musical instrument or the name of a tune. An earlier tradition however identifies 'Jeduthun' with the sons of 'Asaph' (1 Chron. xvi. 42; xxv. 3; II Chron. xxxv. 15; Neh. xi. 17). Now I have already shewn¹ that the 'Asaph' guild of singers was closely associated with the 'Asiph' i.e. with the "Ingathering" which is called by this name (Exod. xxiii. 16; xxxiv. 22). This Feast was, in later times, identified with *Tabernacles*, but originally it referred to the death of the old year at the Autumnal Equinox and to the "Ingathering" of the fruits of the earth. Thus: Exod. xxiii. 16 "And the

¹ See Hulsean Lectures on the 'Asaph' Psalms.

Feast of *Asiph* at the going out of the year when thou *ingatherest* all thy labours from the field." The other passage fixes the *Asiph* still more precisely at the Equinox, Exod. xxxiv. 22, "And the Feast of *Asiph* at the turning-point of the year" (see Hebrew).

The Present Psalm is fitly used in our Burial Service, but it is even more suitable for a meditation on the death of the old year and on that final *Ingathering* when we shall "ingather all our labours."

"Time is fled that fled so fast :
All the unended remains unended,
The perfect, perfect : all lots are cast.

Waiting till earth and ocean be rended,
Waiting for call of the trumpet blast,
Each soul at goal of the way it wended,—
Man's harvest is past."

(C. ROSSETTI.)

Nothing can be more pathetic than the way in which the Psalmist lays the span-long life of man at the feet, as it were, of God's Eternity. The immediate cause of his trouble is the method of God's judgements (see note, *v.* 1 f. and compare the parallel Jeduthun-Psalm, Ps. lxxvii.). He *knows* that God does all things well but the present is terribly hard to bear (cf. *In Memoriam*). He would fain be silent (*vv.* 2, 9), for he fears 'to put in words the grief he feels': but, alas, he is forced to speak (*v.* 3): his plea is the shortness of life, he cannot afford to wait (*vv.* 4—6). "*Mere vanity and nothing more is all man's lot.*" The second part of the Psalm begins with *v.* 7; the Psalmist reminds himself that God is the expectation of Israel; but, even so, he fears lest failing faith should leave him as a byword to the godless (*v.* 8): he prays therefore, in the spirit of Pss. vi. 1; xxxviii. 1, that God would moderate his chastisement (*vv.* 10, 11) and concludes with the same sad refrain with which he had closed the first part of the Psalm, "*Mere vanity and nothing more is all man's lot.*" The third part consists only of two verses (*vv.* 12, 13) of fervent prayer, in which the Psalmist throws the whole burden of his sorrow upon the heart of God and appeals as Time's pilgrim to the hospitality of the Eternal. It is a significant fact that the sad refrain is not repeated after this prayer. The whole Psalm is full of allusions to the Book of Job and I could wish that the reader, before entering upon it, would study the noble Chapter in Dr Fairbairn's "*City of God*" in which he discusses the "*Problem of Job.*"

The Book of Deuteronomy had seemed to promise temporal prosperity as the reward of obedience; but the death of Josiah at Megiddo (B.C. 609), and the Captivity that shortly followed, had created a terrible reaction in the minds of men. The old traditional theology, so well represented by Job's friends, was no longer adequate to meet all the facts of life. A new truth must be reached. The man who shall reach it must, like Job, dare to be true to *all* the facts, even though he should seem to be a blasphemer. This lot, with all its sorrows, fell to Jeremiah and marked him out in a special way as *the* Prophet of Israel. Is there not a lesson here for our own times?

PS. XXXIX.

I was sore troubled
to understand God's
judgements and would
fain be silent before
them,

but silence was im-
possible.

1 I said I will keep guard on my ways
So as not to sin with my tongue;
I will keep guard on my mouth with a bridle
While the wicked remains before me.
2 I was utterly dumb^a,
Was silent from good
Though my pain moved me greatly:
3 My heart grew hot within me.
As I mused the fire^b kindled,
So I spake with my tongue.

^a Pss. lxii. 1;
xxxviii. 13

^b Jer. xx. 9

v. 1 f. The sorrow of the Psalmist arose from beholding the prosperity of the wicked coupled with the afflictions of Israel. This sorrow may best be explained from the words of Jer. xii. 1, "Righteous art thou, O YHVH, when I plead with Thee: yet would I reason the cause with Thee: wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they at ease that deal very treacherously?" (Compare the sorrow of 'Asaph' in Ps. lxxiii. 1—16.) Jeremiah felt this most acutely. How should he vindicate the ways of God to men? The triumph of evil seemed to make his whole message a mockery, "The word of YHVH is made a reproach unto me, and a derision, all the day. And if I say, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His Name, then He became in mine heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing and I cannot refrain" (Jer. xx. 8, 9). This sorrow even led him, like Job, to curse the day of his birth (*vv.* 15—18). The Psalmist does not go so far as this, but his words, which are full of allusions to the Book of Job (see note on v. 13), shew that the thought of Job is ever present to his mind.

v. 2. "*Was silent from good.*" The words are possibly an abbreviation of the phrase "*from good to ill*" as in Gen. xxxi. 24, "Take heed to thyself that thou speak not with Jacob *good or bad* (lit. 'from good to bad')." It must however be observed that, in the parallel passage which we have just quoted from Jeremiah, the Prophet had declared his resolve "*not to make mention*" of God or "*to speak any more in His name*"; i.e. he had resolved to give up his work for God because of the difficulties of life! This was indeed to be "silent from good"!

v. 3. "*As I mused*" lit. "*in my meditation.*" The word only occurs here and in Ps. v. 1 (2). Graetz suggests an alteration of the text, which he defends from the Peschito, reading "*in my body.*" If this were accepted we should obtain a still more striking parallel to the words of Jer. xx. 9, "then He became in *mine heart* as it were a burning fire shut up in *my bones*," for we should then translate, "*My heart grew hot within me, The fire kindled in my body.*" There is, however, no need to make any change in the text, the parallelism is complete without it; "*my heart grew hot*" hints at the conception of a thought and thus corresponds with "*as I mused*" in the second line.

"*So I spake with my tongue.*" Are we to limit this utterance by placing in inverted commas the few words that follow? Shall we not rather say that, as before the Prophet had refused to speak for God, so now, the very discipline of pain had created and compelled new revelation. From one point of view the words which follow are indeed wrung from him by sheer stress of anguish, but from a higher point of view the sorrow is not fruitless. Like Job he suffers and like Job he "beats his music out." When the long-cherished hopes of earthly prosperity were shattered Israel began to understand more of the Life beyond. We catch just a glimpse of this in v. 13 and in the fact that the refrain is not repeated at the close of the Psalm. The burning questions of one age become truisms in the next.

Oh God, life is too
short to wait!

- 4 O YHVH, make me know mine end
The measure of my days, what it may be!
Fain would I know how frail I am!
5 Lo! spans-long hast Thou made my days,
And my life-time, in Thy sight^a, is nothing!
6 Merely in a semblance doth man go about,
Merely for a breath are they in turmoil.
He heapeth^b up but knoweth not who shall ingather^c!
5 MERE^d VANITY AND NOTHING MORE IS ALL MAN'S LOT.

^a cf. Ps. lxxvii.
10

^b Job xxvii. 16

^c Jer. ix. 22
(21); Job
xxxix. 12

^d Ps. lxii. 9

God Himself is my
expectation but alas!
I am well nigh crushed
with His chastise-
ments.

- 7 And now what is it that I wait^e for, Lord^f?
My hope, it turns to Thee.
8 Deliver me from all my transgressions,
Make me not as a byword to the fool^g.
9 (I am dumb^h and open not my mouth
Because it was Thou that didstⁱ it.)
10 Take Thy plague from off me,
I am consumed by the weight^j of Thy hand^k.
11 With chastisements of sin Thou punishest man,
Thou makest, like the moth, his delights to melt away.
MERE^l VANITY AND NOTHING MORE IS ALL MAN'S LOT.

^e Pss. lxii. 5;
xxxviii. 15

^f Adonai

^g i.e. the god-
less; cf. Ps.
lxxiv. 22

^h cf. v. 2

ⁱ Lam. iii. 28

^j doubtful
word, only
found here

^k Ps. xxxviii. 2

^l Ps. lxii. 9

v. 6. "Merely in a semblance..." The best comment is from another 'Asaph' Psalm (Ps. lxxiii. 20) which has many points in common with the present, where the word answers to "a dream" in the corresponding member of the verse.

"He heapeth up but knoweth not who shall ingather." If this Psalm were used, as I have suggested, at the *Asiph* or Feast of *Ingathering* there would be a special significance in this allusion. The verb we have translated "heapeth up" is used of "laying up" corn or "gathering" corn (Gen. xli. 35, 49) and the other word, "ingather," is the word from which *Asiph* takes its name and which is constantly used of "gathering in" the fruits of the earth.

"Mere vanity and nothing more is all man's lot." I have ventured to transpose this refrain from the end of the 5th verse to the end of the 6th. The words *Kol Adam* are not to be translated "every man" but "the whole (estate or lot) of man" just as in Eccles. xii. 13, "for this is the whole (duty) of man."

v. 7. "And now what is it that I wait for, Lord?" The verb denotes patient *expectation*, e.g. Gen. xlix. 18, "I have waited for Thy salvation." Compare also Ps. xl. 1 (2). It is a favourite thought with Jeremiah that God Himself is the "expectation" of Israel. Thus Jer. xiv. 8, "O Thou expectation of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble," Jer. xvii. 13, "O YHVH, the expectation of Israel, all that forsake Thee shall be ashamed," Jer. l. 7, "Even YHVH, the expectation of their fathers."

"My hope, &c." This word occurs only here and in Job, Proverbs and Lamentations.

v. 11. "With chastisements of sin..." The same word is used in the parallel Psalm lxxiii. 14. "And my chastisement every morning." It denotes that *conviction* which brings the sin home.

Let my span-long
life claim the hospi-
tality of God's Eternal
Home.

- 12 Hear my prayer, O YHVH,
Give ear unto my cry,
Be not silent to my tears!
For I am a stranger-guest with Thee,
A sojourner as all my fathers were.
- 13 Leave^a me a space that I may recover^b my strength
Before I go hence and be no more seen.

^a Heb. *look
away from
me*

^b or *brighten
up*

v. 12. "Hear my prayer...my cry...my tears." As in Ps. v. 1, 2 there is a rising order "my words," "my meditation," "the voice of my cry" so here the appeal to God rises in its pathos unto the heart of Him "cui omnis voluntas loquitur." Jerome has well said, "Clamor in scripturis, non vocis, sed cordis est. Denique ad Moysen dicitur 'Quid clamas ad me?' cum Moyses ante non clamasset.....Et apostolus: 'Clamantes in cordibus nostris, abba pater.'.....Quando igitur gemitus noster et conscientia deprecatur, istum clamorem intellegit Deus. Unde dicit et Hieremias: 'Non sileat pupilla oculi mei.' Videte quid dicat, Non taceat pupilla oculi mei. Et aliquando pupilla oculi clamat ad Deum. Utique si clamat, lingua clamat, non pupilla oculi. Sed quomodo clamamus in cordibus nostris, quando gemitu Dominum deprecamur; sic quando lacrimas ad Deum fundimus, eo tempore pupilla oculi nostri clamat ad Dominum." (*Tract. de Psalmo v*).

"For I am a stranger-guest...a sojourner..." A *stranger* is one without legal rights; a *sojourner* is one who seeks but a temporary rest on his onward journey. But when the weak appeal to the strong the highest claim may lie in having no claim. Thus Abraham appealed to the Hittites, "And Abraham rose up from before his dead, and spake unto the children of Heth, saying, I am a *stranger* and a *sojourner* with you; give me a possession of a burying-place with you..." (Gen. xxiii. 3 f.). We may also compare the remarkable passage (Lev. xxv. 23 f.) in which the words are used to forbid freehold property in Israel, "And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is Mine: for ye are *strangers* and *sojourners* with Me" (see context). If God refuse His children a permanent home on earth it must be because "He hath prepared for them a city." The Writer to the Hebrews reminds us that the holy men of old time "all died in faith, not having received (the full meaning—or, as it were, the freehold of) the promises, but that they saw them and greeted them from afar (i.e. they had a Pisgah-view of them) and confessed themselves to be *strangers* and *pilgrims* upon the earth," Heb. xi. 13. No doubt, in our Psalm, the leading thought in the Psalmist's mind is the plea, so often used by Job, that God would remember the shortness of his time on earth. But when God brought home to Israel (or to Job) the fact that one loved by Him might still be a sufferer upon earth the Pisgah-view of the Home beyond began to open before him.

The words of this verse are placed by the Chronicler upon the lips of David (2 Chron. xxix. 15).

v. 13. The whole of this verse is made of quotations from the Book of Job (Kay, Baethgen). Thus Job vii. 19, "How long wilt Thou not *look away from me*, nor let me alone...?" Job xiv. 6, "*Look away from him* that he may rest...." Job x. 20, "Are not my days few? Cease thou, and let me alone, that I may *take comfort* a little (Heb. *recover my strength* or *brighten up*)." The rare word which we translate "*recover my strength*" is only found in Job ix. 27; x. 20; Amos v. 9 and in our Psalm.

Job x. 21. "Before I go whence I shall not return
Even to the land of darkness and shadow of death."

Job vii. 8. "Thine eyes shall be upon me, but I shall be no more."

Compare also Job vii. 21.

The above passages, if studied with their context, will go far to prove that the writer of our Psalm is actually quoting from the Book of Job. We have also seen that the whole argument of the Psalm finds its best illustration from that Book.

The reader is asked to compare also the following references or allusions.

Job ii. 10, "sin with his lips"	with Psalm xxxix.	v. 1.
„ iv. 19, "the moth" (see context)	„ „ „	v. 11.
„ vii. 1, (the general sense)	„ „ „	v. 4.
„ vii. 11, "I will not refrain my mouth &c."	„ „ „	vv. 1, 9.
„ viii. 9, "our days on earth are a shadow"	„ „ „	v. 5.
„ ix. 34, "Let Him take His rod away from me &c."	„ „ „	v. 10.
„ xiii. 21, "Withdraw Thine hand far from me"	„ „ „	v. 10.
„ xl. 4 f., "I will lay mine hand upon my mouth..."	„ „ „	v. 9.

PSALM XL.

The composite nature of this Psalm has been recognized by many scholars (Cheyne, Graetz etc.). Indeed it could hardly have been otherwise, since the last five verses (13—17) occur again as a separate Psalm (Ps. lxx.) at the close of the Second Book. The whole tone and character of these verses, which we will call Part II, differs entirely from the joyous tone of the first ten verses (Part I) of the Psalm. If we further examine Parts I and II we see that Part I is full of the thoughts and language of Deutero-Isaiah (see notes) and must therefore be assigned to the early years of the Return from Babylon, while Part II belongs distinctly to the group of Jeremiah-Psalms, being closely parallel with Ps. xxxv. (see notes) in which the influence of Jeremiah is most clearly traced.

We have already seen that Part II occurs again as Ps. lxx., where, like Ps. xxxviii., it has the Title "*For the memorial*" or "*To make remembrance.*" These words signified (see p. 152) that though Israel was deeply conscious of unworthiness before God, yet he knew that God accepted his offering just as He accepted the *askara* or '*memorial*' of frankincense. Now since Part II is identical with Ps. lxx. we are justified in regarding it as a Psalm of the '*memorial*' or '*remembrance.*'

The chief difficulty is in vv. 11, 12 which come between Parts I and II, and which undoubtedly contain allusions to Part I (see notes) while their sorrowful tone agrees rather with Part II.

I would suggest that these verses were added by a later Psalm-writer, who, living in troublous times, wished to hold up the Thanksgiving for deliverance (Part I) as an appeal to God, while, by uniting it with the Psalm of sorrow (Part II), he seems to suggest that the times of Jeremiah have come back. In other words, he appeals to God by holding up, as it were, two pictures, Israel's *ideal* and Israel's *actual*! Israel's *ideal* (Part I) being the loving devotion of a Son in whose heart his Father's pleasure is his own (v. 6 f.): while, alas, Israel's *actual* is a struggle with enemies within and without, lightened only by the thought that though he is "poor and needy" the Lord is "taking thought" for him (v. 17). There have been

many periods in Jewish history when such an appeal of hope deferred might have found expression.

We are now in a position to consider the Christian use of the Psalm, which is, in the Western Church, a Proper Psalm for Good Friday.

We may regard Part I, *i.e.* vv. 1—10, as our ideal, or (which amounts to the same) as the words of Christ, offering with joy man's 'reasonable service' of love (Heb. x. 5—9). Then (vv. 11, 12) we stand for one moment face to face with our actual selves; so unlike to the Ideal!

This brings us to Part II, the *azkara*, 'memorial' or 'remembrance' (*ἀνάμνησις*). This is our *sursum corda*; God in accepting Christ has accepted Man; the frankincense burnt on God's Altar is the pledge that the whole of the offering has been accepted by him (Heb. x. 10).

"As for me—poor and needy though I be—
The Lord is taking thought for me" (v. 17).

The Writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews shews us how the Divinely appointed "*remembrance*" or recognition of sins led up to, and found its completion in, the perfect obedience of Christ (Chap. x. 3—10).

PS. XL.

PART I. (*Probably belonging to the early days of the Return
from Captivity.*)

Israel, like Jonah, has been rescued from the Deep (Babylon) and, like Jonah, will now fulfil his mission to the World.

1 I waited and^a waited for YHVH,
And He hath inclined unto me
And heard my cry.

2 For He hath brought me up from the pit of tumult^b,
From the miry clay;

^a *waiting I waited*

^b *Sept. of misery*

v. 1. "*I waited and waited...*" The rendering of the E.V. "*I waited patiently,*" suggests a virtue of patience which is not implied. The words signify the *intent longing* with which Israel had endured the Captivity (cf. Ps. cxxx. 5). This longing for God had now been rewarded (cf. Is. xxv. 9). There is a fine passage in the Yalkut (and Midrash) on this verse, expressing Israel's one duty of hoping against hope, even for ever (cf. Ps. cxxxii. 3).

"*And heard my cry.*" The word here translated *cry* is always used of a *cry of distress* (Exod. ii. 23, of the cry of Israel in Egypt; 1 Sam. v. 12, of a plague-stricken city; Ps. xviii. 6 (7) see notes; Ps. xxxiv. 15 (16); Ps. xxxix. 12 (13) see notes; Ps. cii. 1 (2); Ps. cxlv. 19; Jer. viii. 19, a cry of captivity; Lam. iii. 56).

v. 2. "*For He hath brought me forth from the pit of tumult.*" 'The pit,' 'the mire,' 'the deep waters,' 'the waterflood,' &c. were often used in Hebrew poetry to picture Babylon, that land of waters, which like a great sea-monster had swallowed up Israel. Compare the parallel Psalm, lxi. 1, 14 f., to which this is indeed the answer. Thus the Yalkut on Zech. i. 8 interprets '*the deep*'

And hath set my feet upon upon a rock,
Giving me firm treading.

3 And hath put a New Song in my mouth,
A Praise-song to our God ;

The Nations will
be drawn to God as
the only true refuge.

Many shall see and shall fear,
And shall put their trust in YHVH.

4 Oh happy is the man^a that made YHVH his trust^a,
And did not turn to the proud-ones^b,
Or to apostates^c with their lies.

^a Jer. xvii. 7

^b Sept. *vani-
ties*

^c doubtful
word

God's mercies in
the past are number-
less, and point to an
infinity of Love yet
to be revealed.

5 Great things hast Thou done—

Thou art YHVH, my God !

Thy marvels and Thy purposes to usward—

There is none that compareth with Thee !—

Would I tell them and speak of them ;

They outnumber all recounting.

as Babylon, and quotes Is. xlv. 27. See also Pss. xxx. and xxxi. (pp. 126 ff.), which should be read in connexion with Part I. of the present Psalm, containing as they do the same allusions to the deliverance of Israel from Babylon as of a Jonah from the waters (cf. note on v. 4).

"Giving me firm treading." Just as in the parallel Psalm (xxx. 8), where he says, Thou "*hast set my feet at large.*"

v. 3. "*And He hath put a New Song...*" The "New Song" refers to the late deliverance from Babylon. See note on Ps. xxxiii. 3, p. 140.

"*Many shall see and shall fear...*" It is a frequent thought in Deutero-Isaiah that the Gentiles would be drawn to God by witnessing His great work in the redemption of Israel from Babylon (see Isaiah xli. 5 ; xlv. 22 ; xlix. 7 ; lii. 11 ; lv. 5 ; lx. 5, &c.).

v. 4. "*Oh happy is the man that made YHVH his trust.*" These words must be explained from the famous passage Jer. xvii. 5—7, which, as we have seen, also underlies Psalm i.

The words of Jeremiah are, "Cursed is the man who trusteth in man.....and turneth away his heart from YHVH.....Blessed is the man (*geber*, same word as in Psalm) who trusteth in YHVH (cf. v. 4 of Psalm) and YHVH becomes his trust (*mitbah*, same word as in Psalm)."

If this passage of Jeremiah was in the writer's mind we can understand why he should have added "*And did not turn to the proud-ones, Or to apostates with their lies.*" Commentators differ as to the exact meaning of these latter words, but the general sense is clear: they indicate a trust in the arm of flesh instead of a trust in God. Such trust is a refuge of lies (Is. xxviii. 15, 17).

The Hebrew is different, but the meaning is identical with Ps. xxxi. 6, "Thou hatest *those that observe vain idols; But as for me...*" It must be noted that these words occur in Jonah ii. 8 f. "*those that observe vain idols forsake their own mercy (compare Jer. xvii. 5—7 quoted above) But as for me, &c.*" Thus we obtain another link in the chain which binds Pss. xxx., xxxi. and xl. to the Book of Jonah.

The connexion of thought between verses 3 and 4 would seem to be as follows:—'The deliverance from Babylon has not only put a new song in our mouth but it is a vindication of our God before the world: many will see it and be converted to trust in Him, for now they see that the Prophets were right when they said that the only strength and happiness for man is to make God, and not flesh, his trust.'

v. 5. "*Great things, &c.*" The word signifies both *great* and *manifold*. In the present passage it directs thought to the *manifold* mercies which God had shewn to Israel in the past (see Neh. ix. 19, 27, 28, 30, 31, 35).

The thought of these manifold deliverances in the past leads naturally to the Covenant Name of

This Love demands,
not sacrifice, but, love
in return: I offer my-
self to do His Will,

6 Sacrifice and oblation Thou didst not delight^a in;—
Mine ears hast Thou opened—
Burnt-offering and sin-offering Thou didst not ask;
7 Then said I, "Lo I come,"
With the roll of the Book that is written about me,

^a v. 7

God. "Thou art YHVH (the Eternal) my God!" (cf. Mal. iii. 6). All the mercies that have been shewn in the history of the Nation are but a few utterances of the infinite mercy of the Eternal—*Oh thy marvels and Thy purposes to usward!* Thy "marvels" have been shewn, and they seem infinite, "Would I tell them and speak of them They outnumber all recounting." What, then, must Thy "purposes" be which still remain to usward? We may compare St Paul's use of the word 'mystery' (Eph. i. 9; iii. 9; Col. i. 26, 27, &c.) as the unfolding of a loving purpose of God.

v. 6. "Sacrifice and oblation," &c. The idea that prompted sacrifice was in itself right and good, representing as it did man's tribute of gratitude to God, man's desire to give his best. But what is man's best? The Prophets recognized that sacrifice, as a mere ritual act, was useless, and that, even at the best, it was only a stage in the education of man (see 1 Sam. xv. 22; Amos v. 21—24; Hos. vi. 6; Is. i. 11—13; Mic. vi. 6—8; Jer. vii. 22 f.; Ps. li. 16).

The fact that sacrifice was impossible all through the long years of the Captivity tended, under God's Providence, to create a nobler idea of sacrifice as the gift of self. No doubt there was a reaction in later times, but the thought of the Suffering Servant was never afterwards lost to Israel.

"Mine ears hast Thou opened." Literally, "Ears Thou hast dug for me." Two interpretations are given of these strange words and both seem to me to be unsatisfactory.

(i) They have been explained from Exod. xxi. 1—6, where a slave who loved his master might decline to accept his freedom, in which case "his master shall bore his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever." But the language here is entirely different; the word for "bore" is from a different root, and surely if the Psalmist had intended an allusion to such a custom he would have said "mine ear" not "mine ears."

(ii) The other interpretation is somewhat better, and has the authority of Cheyne and Delitzsch, viz. 'Thou hast given me the faculty of hearing and obeying Thy Will.' But against this we may argue that the Hebrew idiom for an 'open ear' requires a different verb, *galah* (see Job xxxiii. 16; xxxvi. 10, 15; 1 Sam. xx. 12; xxii. 8; 11 Sam. vii. 27; Ruth iv. 4, &c.); or *pathah* (Is. xxxv. 5; xlvi. 8); or *paqah* (Is. xlii. 20); or, better still, the word used in Is. l. 4, when the Suffering Servant says, "morning by morning He wakeneth for me the ear so as to hear," &c. Thus both interpretations are attended with difficulty; if however the present text be correct I have no better solution to give; we must however note that the Septuagint had most certainly a different text before them when they translated *σωμα δὲ κατηρτισω μοι*, i.e. "a body Thou hast prepared (or made firm) for me." Speaking of these words (on Heb. x. 4) Dr Westcott says, "There can be no question that this is the true reading of the Greek. The conjecture that *σωμα* is an early blunder for *ωτια* (the reading of the other Greek versions) cannot be maintained in the face of the evidence." I cannot however believe that the Septuagint used these words as a free paraphrase to express the general meaning of our present Hebrew text: indeed the verb, *κατηρτισω μοι*, shews that they read *לִי כוֹנְנַת* instead of *לִי כְרִית* (see Heb. and Sept. on Ps. lxxviii. 10). If then the Septuagint, which is the oldest translation, had a different Hebrew text before them may it not be that that text represented the true reading? The Septuagint would require some such text as the following *לִי כוֹנְנַת* *לִי*, i.e. "Then a body Thou didst prepare (or make strong) for me." The Hebrew word that I have suggested for *body* is twice used of Israel as the Suffering Servant, Is. l. 6, "I gave my body to the smiters." Is. li. 23, "Thou hast laid thy body to the ground." This part of the Psalm is, as we have seen, full of the thoughts and language of Deutero-Isaiah, such a conception therefore of Israel as offering his body to suffer and fulfil God's will would be quite in accordance with the spirit of the Psalm (compare also Heb. x. 5—10, and especially the argument founded on the word *body* in v. 10).

v. 7 f. "With the roll of the Book," &c. If we are right in ascribing this Psalm to the early days of the Return from Babylon then the "roll of the Book" would be the Book of Deuteronomy,

- * v. 6
- 8 To do Thy will, my God, I do delight*,
 And Thy Law is in my inmost heart.
- and thus to fulfil
 Israel's mission to the
 World.
- 9 I tell the good-news of Righteousness
 In the full assembly;
 Lo I withhold not my lips;
 Thou, YHVH, Thou knowest it.
- 10 Thy Righteousness I hide not within my heart;
 Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation I tell;
 I keep not back Thy mercy and truth
 From the full assembly.

which, from the reforms of Josiah, had become essentially the "King's Book" (see Deut. xvii. 14—20; cf. 11 Kings xxii. 11). This Book was to be the King's *Vade Mecum*, "And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this Law in a book, out of that which is before the priests the Levites: and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life..."

Thus when the Psalmist pictures the happy future he sees Israel, represented by the ideal King, with God's Law in his hand as the guide of his life and written also in his heart (v. 8 of Jer. xxxi. 33) as his heart's chief joy. May we not say that the Book of Deuteronomy was in a special way Christ's Book? The way in which He used it to meet His temptations (Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10) and to sum up the whole duty of man (Matt. xxii. 37; Luke x. 27; Mark xii. 29) would seem to shew that He had literally made it a constant study, and though He does not hesitate to go beyond its precepts (Matt. v. 31; xix. 7 f.; cf. Deut. xxiv. 1; Matt. v. 43; cf. Deut. xxiii. 6), yet even so He is only obeying the spirit of Deuteronomy by insisting on a deeper interpretation of the love of God and man.

The rendering of the Sept. and Vulgate, which may be translated "*At the head of the Book*" directed Patristic thought to the protevangelium, some writers (e.g. St Jerome, St Ambrose) referring it to the opening words of the Bible, "In the beginning God created," &c. (Gen. i. 1); others (e.g. Theophylact) to the words, "Let us make man in our Image..." (Gen. i. 26); others again (e.g. St Isidore) find the first promise of the Incarnation in Gen. i. 23, "This is now bone of my bone," &c. (see Neale's Commentary and Suicer *s.v.* κεφαλῆς). St Jerome also finds an allusion to the first verse of St John's Gospel, for, in his comment on this Psalm he writes, "propterea laetus in mundum venio. Et de me scribitur: 'In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum'" (*Comment. in Psalmos*, Morin, p. 45).

May it not be that this interpretation influenced the words with which the writer to the Hebrews introduces the quotation of the text in Heb. x. 5 ff.? "Therefore *when He entereth into the world*, He saith, 'Sacrifice and offering.....' Then said I, Lo, I come, in the roll of the Book (or *at the (very) head of the Book*) it is written of Me, to do Thy will, O God."

v. 9. "*I tell the Good-News of Righteousness.*" Even if this verse stood alone it would abundantly prove the influence of Deutero-Isaiah. This argument will appeal chiefly to the Hebrew scholar, but the English reader should compare Is. xli. 27; xlii. 6; lxi. 1.

Two verses added by a later Editor who wished to adapt the above Psalm to the needs of his own time and to unite it with an earlier Psalm of the time of Jeremiah.

But alas the actual is still far from the ideal!

- 11 O YHVH do not THOU^a "withhold"^b Thy mercy from me,
 Let "Thy mercy and truth"^c ever preserve me:
 12 For evils have compassed me "beyond number"^d,
 Mine iniquities^e overtake me,
 So that I cannot see,
 They "outnumber"^f the hairs of my head,
 And mine heart hath failed me.

^a emphatic
^b v. 9
^c v. 10
^d v. 5
^e or *punishments*
^f v. 5

PART II. (*An independent Psalm which occurs again as Ps. lxx. and which probably belongs to the times of Jeremiah.*)

- 13 "Be pleased, O YHVH, to deliver me;
 O YHVH speed to my help.

vv. 11, 12. Just as Isaiah once took an old prophecy of Israel's glory in the latter days (Is. ii. 1—4) and then, in the verses that follow, sharply contrasted this ideal with Israel's sad present, so, I suggest, a later Psalmist, possibly during the troubles of the Persian period, to have taken this Psalm of Israel's ideal, and to have held it up before God as a plea for mercy. I have placed in inverted commas the words in which he alludes to that earlier Psalm. Thus, in that earlier Psalm, Israel had so overflowed with God's "mercy and truth" that he could not "withhold his lips" from utterance (*vv. 9, 10*), but now, alas, instead of giving to the heathen he must pray to receive for himself (*v. 11*). In that earlier Psalm God's mercies had been "beyond number" (*v. 5*); but now Israel can see nothing but "evils" and sorrows which are "beyond number," nay which "outnumber" the hairs of his head (*v. 12*).

Another point of connexion, not obvious to the English reader, lies in the emphatic use of *Thou* in *v. 11*; and also in the rare word which we translate "compassed" in *v. 12*. The *locus classicus* for the use of this word is Jonah ii. 5 (6), "The waters compassed me," &c.: but we have already seen that Part I. is full of the thought of Jonah (see notes on *vv. 2, 4*).

vv. 13—17. These verses occur again in the Elohist Psalm lxx. with slight various readings, all of which might be accounted for as mistakes of spelling. If the reader will verify the references to Ps. xxxv. he will see that the standpoint of these verses is exactly that of the former Psalm, which, as we have seen, is so strongly influenced by Jeremiah.

The reader is also asked to notice the close correspondence between the Psalms which form the closing group of Book I. and those which close Book II. We shall return to this point when we come to consider those Psalms in their proper place in the Second Collection.

v. 13. This verse, which is practically identical with the 1st verse of Ps. lxx., is there translated by the Vulgate

"Deus, in adiutorium meum intende:
 Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina."

These words were adopted in the Sarum use as the Versicles after the Lord's Prayer at Matins: indeed, as Blunt shews (*Annotated Book of Common Prayer*), "These versicles and responses have been used time immemorial as the opening of the daily service of praise which the Church

- 14 Let them be shamed^a and confounded together
That are seeking my soul [to destroy it]^b;
Let them be turned backward and disgraced
That find pleasure in my misfortune^c.
- 15 Let them be dumbfounded^d to their shame
That say [unto me] "Aha, Aha!"
- 16 Let all that seek Thee be joyful and glad in Thee;
Let them that love Thy salvation ever say,
"YHVH be magnified!"
- 17 As for me^e—poor and needy—
The Lord^h taketh thoughtⁱ for me.
My Helper, my Deliverer Thou art:
My God, do not delay!"
- ^a Ps. xxxv. 26
^b omitted in parallel text
^c Ps. xxxv. 26
^d turned backward in parallel text
^e Ps. xxxv. 21, 25
^f Ps. xxxv. 27
^g Ps. xxxv. 13
^h Adonai
ⁱ another reading in parallel text

continually offers to God." Blunt quotes an old exposition of these versicles as follows: "And take heed that all this verse, both that part which is said of one alone, and that which is answered of all together, are said in the singular number: as when ye say 'mine' or 'me' and not 'our' or 'us,' in token that ye begin your praising and prayer in the person of holy Church, which is one, and not many." So in the old English Prymer the singular number was retained,

"God, take heede to myn help:
Lord hie thee to help me";

but in the revision of 1552 the pronouns were changed to the plural,

V. "O God, make speed to save us
R. O Lord, make haste to help us."

Would it not be well for our Public Worship if, having learnt the lesson of individualism, we could once more take up the older thought of the solidarity of the Church?

In passing I may remark that the juxtaposition of these Versicles is most suggestive. First we have a verse whose context points to the unsatisfactory nature of any sacrifice man can offer (Ps. li. 15, see context), and this is followed by the verse we have already quoted from Ps. lxx., the Psalm of the 'Memorial' or 'Remembrance.' Blunt well says that these Versicles "are the *Sursum Corda* of the Daily Service."

PSALM XLI.

Psalm xli., like Ps. xl., is a theodicy. As in Ps. xl. we saw Israel fulfilling his *Duty to God*, yet not finding at once the reward he might have looked for, so in Ps. xli. we find him fulfilling his *Duty to man*, yet without the promised reward of earthly happiness. It consists of three Parts, which are closely related to one another. Part I has 3 verses (*a, b, c*). Part II has 6 verses, which so correspond with Part I that they may be represented by $a_1, b_1, c_1, a_2, b_2, c_2$ (see notes). Part III has 3 verses which answer both to Parts I and II, and which may therefore be represented by a_3, b_3, c_3 . Part I gives, in a bold sketch, the promise of Deuteronomy, with special reference to the Second¹ Table of the Covenant, the Duty to man. Israel has fulfilled this duty, he has been merciful. How then stands the promise? Surely he should obtain mercy, and should inherit the Land (*vv. 1—3*).

Part II (*vv. 4—9*) contrasts this promise with the sad reality. Israel, the merciful, has found on earth anything but mercy (see notes): Job's experience is repeated in his case.

In Part III (*vv. 10—12*) Israel appeals, like Job, from the cruelty of man to the faithfulness of God.

Such I believe to be, historically, the origin of the Psalm, which, like others of this group, should be studied with constant reference to the Book of Job.

Compared with the Nations of the World Israel represented the virtue of humanity, *man* as contrasted with the *beasts* (Dan. vii., *v. 3 ff. : v. 13*), this Psalm therefore, while giving the experience of Israel, is well fitted to depict the reception that the Christ would meet, not from Judas only, but from an ungrateful world.

When once we have realized that the problems which were fought out in the experience of Israel as a Nation were solved in the personal experience of Christ we shall obtain that light on social and national duties which our own age is feeling after.

¹ The reader will observe that Ps. xl., on the contrary, deals rather with the Duty to God, i.e. with the First Table of the Covenant.

PS. XLI.

The merciful man
(Israel) should find
mercy and happiness
on earth.

- (a) ¹ Happy is he who is considerate for the afflicted ;
YHVH will deliver him in the evil day :
(b) ² YHVH will guard him and give him life,
That he may be happy in the Land ;
Nor wilt Thou give him up to his foes' desire :
(c) ³ YHVH will support him on the couch of languishing ;
Thou turnest all his bed for him in sickness.

But I (Israel) have
found just the re-
verse !

- (a₁) ⁴ But I say, YHVH be gracious unto me !
Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.

v. 1. "*Happy is...*" It is unfortunate for the English reader that this word which occurs twenty-five times in the Psalter should have been translated in the E.V. by the word "*blessed*" nineteen times, and six times by the word "*happy*," which is the true meaning. The Hebrew has two distinct words for "*happy*" and "*blessed*," and though in the Jewish mind the two thoughts were more nearly related than they were with us, still the distinction should always be observed; indeed if in the present passage we were to translate "*Blessed is...*" we should lose the whole point of the passage, which is to indicate that *earthly prosperity* and *happiness* is the natural result which Israel had been led to expect in return for acts of kindness to the afflicted.

If we omit the Preface (Pss. i., ii.) which begins and ends with this word (Ps. i. 1; ii. 12), we note that it occurs six times in the First Collection, and that these six instances are in, what we may call, the present group of Psalms (xxxii. 1, 2; xxxiii. 12; xxxiv. 8 (9); xl. 4 (5); xli. 1 (2)). The key-note to all these passages is Deut. xxxiii. 29, "Happy art thou, O Israel... O people saved by YHVH." Thus in Ps. xxxii. 1, 2 we have the happiness of the Nation for whom God has found Atonement: in Ps. xxxiii. 12 the happiness of the People He has chosen for His own heritage: in Ps. xxxiv. 8 (see p. 32) the whole experience of life is used to point the moral that the Covenant-keeping People will "never lack one good thing": in Ps. xl. 4 (see note) we come to the happiness of Israel, rewarded because he "made YHVH his trust." We note that this passage, like Ps. i., is founded upon Jer. xvii. 5-7 (where, however, Jeremiah does not say "*Happy is the man...*" but "*Blessed is the man...*" Perhaps his own experience had taught him the distinction?) We also saw that in Ps. xl. (Part 1.) Israel was filled with the spirit of philanthropy, the spirit indeed of Deutero-Isaiah. If, before the Captivity, he had been a Jonah in his exclusiveness, now, after his deliverance, he is a Jonah in his missionary zeal. He has then been "*considerate for the afflicted*," and now at length may expect in return the favour of God and the gratitude of man. This is the subject of Ps. xli. 1-3. The best comment is Job xxix. 12 ff., where the same problem is discussed, "I delivered the poor that cried, The fatherless also, that had none to help him..... Then I said I shall die in my nest, And I shall multiply my days as the sand: My root is spread out to the waters (cf. Jer. xvii. 5-7) &c.... but now" &c. (see Chap. xxx.).

v. 2. "*That he may be happy in the Land.*"—The Second Table of the Covenant relates to the Duty to man. The reward of this Second Table is to inherit the Land. Israel has fulfilled this Duty and has reason to expect the promise of Deuteronomy.

v. 4. "*But I say...*" The thought is exactly similar to that of Job xxx. 1, quoted above (note v. 1). There is a relation between the verses 1-3 and 4-9 which may be indicated thus:—

- (b₁) 5 My foes bespeak evil for me;
 "When will he die and his name perish?"
- (c₁) 6 If he visit me he speaketh falsehood,
 His heart gathereth to itself slander;
 When he goeth forth he utters it.
- (a₂) 7 They all whisper together—these haters of mine;
 Against me, they think that the evil is mine^a:
- (b₂) 8 "Some heavy crime is cleaving to him,
 And now he is down he will never again rise."
- (c₂) 9 Even my familiar friend whom I trusted—
 He that eateth my bread—hath lifted the heel against
 me.

^a Job xi. 6;
 xxii. 5 ff.;
 Is. liii. 4

But, in spite of all, (a₃) 10 But Thou, YHVH, be gracious and raise me up
 my hope is in God. So that I may reward^b them.

^b Contrast Ps.
 xxxv. 12;
 xxxviii. 20
 (21)

vv. 1—3. I had reasonably expected.

(a) *v. 1. Forgiveness of sins (cf. the evil day).*

(b) *v. 2. Protection from foes and long, happy life
 in the Land of Promise.*

(c) *v. 3. Comfort and support on the bed of
 sickness.*

vv. 6—9. I have found, on the contrary.

(a₁, a₂) *v. 4 with v. 7. The sense of sin oppresses me, and is burdened by the unkind judgments of men.*

(b₁, b₂) *v. 5 with v. 8. Foes count on my speedy death and think it the fit reward of some great crime!*

(c₁, c₂) *v. 6 with v. 9. Sick-bed visitors indeed!
 Job's comforters!
 Even my own trusted friend!*

v. 9. "Even my familiar friend..." Literally "*the man of my peace*," a phrase found in Jeremiah (xx. 10; xxxviii. 22). The reader will again notice the famous passage Jer. xx. to which we have had occasion to refer so frequently in this group of Psalms. The only other passage in which this phrase is found is in the Prophecy of Obadiah against Edom, a prophecy which occurs also in Jer. xlix. 7—22. The words (Obad. v. 7) are as follows:—"All the men of thy covenant have deceived thee; thy familiar friends (*men of thy peace*) have prevailed against thee; thy very bread(eaters) have put a wound on thee." Edom has been faithless to his 'brother' Israel and will himself experience the ingratitude that he has shewn. We are not to think of an individual traitor like Ahithophel, but rather of an Edom who in the hour of Israel's humiliation was false to the ties of blood (cf. Ps. cxxxvii. 7; Lam. iv. 22). This desertion, which was so keenly felt by Israel, was experienced in all its fulness by our Lord, who quotes this verse (St John xiii. 18).

v. 10. The Midrash on this verse is worth translating. It is as follows:—"And Thou YHVEH be gracious unto me and raise me up again, that I may requite them.' He said to him, 'David, what wouldst thou requite them? evil?' He answered, 'God forbid! for as for me, when they were sick my clothing was sackcloth (Ps. xxxv. 13), but when I am sick they pray for me that I may die; yet when they are sick I pray for them and cover myself with sackcloth, I afflict my soul with fasting.' They said to him, 'David, who knows what that sackcloth meant, and what it was that thou didst pray for them?' He answered, 'If so let it come upon myself, and let my prayer return into mine own bosom (Ps. xxxv. 13), therefore (I say), Thou, YHVEH, be gracious unto me.' Then the Holy One, blessed be He, said, 'Seeing that thou hast done this I know indeed that thou hast pleasure in Me.'"

- (*b*₂) 11 Hereby shall I know that Thou hast pleasure in me,
In that my foe does not triumph over me.
- (*c*₂) 12 As for me, in mine integrity Thou upholdest me,
And settest me before Thy Face for ever.

Ascription of praise,
to close Book I.

13 Blessed be YHVH, the God of Israel,
From Aeon to Aeon!
Amen and Amen!

vv. 10—12. The general relation of these verses, which we have called Part III., to the expectation of Israel (Part I.) as contrasted with the actual experience of Israel (Part II.), may be shewn in a paraphrase as follows:—

v. 10 with *vv.* 1, 4 and 7. 'I, the merciful, looked indeed for mercy (*a*). But, on earth, men did their utmost to shut out the mercy of heaven (*a*₁ with *a*₂). But, in spite of this I can still say, "*be gracious unto me*" (cf. *v.* 10 with *v.* 4). I know that Thou wilt raise me up, even though it be from the gates of death, and I, the merciful, shall reward them.' [N.B. It is quite possible that on the lips of the Psalmist these last words denoted vengeance: but if so he fell short of his own ideal of the merciful man. The Christian will best interpret the spirit of the words by reading them in the spirit of Christ.]

v. 11 with *vv.* 2, 5 and 8. 'I, the merciful, looked for long and happy days in the Land, shielded from enemies (*b*). But, on earth, enemies were all round me, not only gloating over my troubles, but, hardest of all, claiming them to spring from the anger of my God against some horrible sin of mine (*b*₁ with *b*₂). But, in spite of this, I commit my cause to God: He will shew openly before the world that *He does take pleasure in me*' (*v.* 11).

v. 12 with *vv.* 3, 6 and 9. 'I, having shewn mercy to others, looked for comfort and support in my own sickness (*c*). But, on earth, my sick-bed visitors merely watched me for evil (*c*₁), and those that should have been bound to me by every sacred tie were ready to spurn me with the heel (*c*₂). But, in spite of all this, God *is* my support (cf. *v.* 12 with *v.* 3). He upholds me, so that I am not alone; He sets me before His Face for ever, so that the old promise finds in my case a deeper meaning, "Thou turnest all his bed for him in sickness."

THE PSALMS

IN THREE COLLECTIONS

TRANSLATED WITH NOTES

BY

E. G. KING D.D.

PART II SECOND COLLECTION

(Books II & III, Pss. XLII—LXXXIX)

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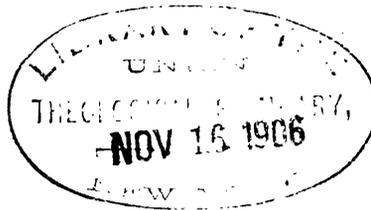
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TO THE MEMORY
OF
B. F. WESTCOTT D.D.,
LATE BISHOP OF DURHAM,
THIS WORK,
UNDERTAKEN AT HIS REQUEST,
IS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE KORAH AND ASAPH PSALMS.

THE Psalms of the Second Collection include those of Book II. (Pss. xlii.—lxxii.) and of Book III. (Pss. lxxiii.—lxxxix.). They are all Elohistie with the exception of the last six (lxxxiv.—lxxxix.) which form a Jehovistic Appendix.

The most characteristic Psalms in the Second Collection are the Asaph and Korah Psalms.

The Asaph Psalms are twelve in number (Pss. l., lxxiii.—lxxxiii.) and are all Elohistie.

The Korah Psalms are, also, twelve in number, Pss. xlii., xliii. being properly one Psalm. But the Korah Psalms are divided into two groups, seven Elohistie Psalms (xlii.—xlix.) in Book II., and five Jehovistic Psalms (lxxxiv., lxxxv., lxxxvii., lxxxviii., lxxxix.) in Book III.

Thus, according to the arrangement of the Psalter, the first group of Korah Psalms is followed by an Asaph Psalm, and the group of Asaph Psalms is followed by the five Jehovistic Korah Psalms.

But there is a closer connexion between the Korah and Asaph Psalms than that of juxtaposition. This will best be seen by studying the characteristics of each group, and, since the Asaph Psalms are more homogeneous, we shall do well to take them first.

Characteristics of the Asaph Psalms.

(a) The Asaph Psalms are the only Psalms that make mention of Joseph (lxxvii. 15; lxxviii. 67; lxxx. 1; lxxxii. 5, see notes). The only apparent exception to this is the mention of Joseph in Ps. cv. 17, but, in 1 Chr. xvi. 8—22, this Psalm is actually ascribed to Asaph. Clearly then there is a relation between the Asaph Psalms and the House of Joseph. Now the House of Joseph, *i.e.* Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, is associated

in the Priest-code with the *West* side of the encampment (Numb. ii. 18 ff.), the banner being the *Ox* (cp. Ps. lxxx. 2, note).

The House of Joseph was essentially *Elohistic*. The Asaph Psalms also are *Elohistic*.

The connexion between *Joseph*, the *Asaph* Psalms, and the *Elohist*, is further borne out by the fact that (Gen. xxx. 23^b) the Elohist derives the name of *Joseph* from the root *Asaph*.

“Elohim *hath taken away* (Asaph) my reproach.” Thus, according to the Elohist, *Joseph and Asaph are the same name*.

It is true that the Jehovist gives another derivation of the name (*isiph* instead of *Asaph*), but Joseph belongs more properly to the Elohist than to the Jehovist, and it is significant that whenever Joseph mentions the name of God it is always as *Elohim*.

(*b*) Another characteristic of the Asaph Psalms is the thought of *God (Elohim) as the Redeeming Judge*. See Pss. l.—“the Psalm of the Great Assize”; lxxv.; lxxvi.; lxxvii. 16 ff., notes, p. 325; lxxx.; lxxxii. If these passages be studied it will be seen that the Advent of the redeeming Judge is associated with the Festival of ‘New Year,’ which the Jews celebrated on the first day of the Seventh Month.

(*c*) Another, closely related, characteristic is the ‘Promise of the Trumpet,’ *i.e.* the assurance that God will hear the voice of the Trumpet (Numb. x. 9 ff.), and will come, as King, to the help of His People. See Ps. lxxx. 1—7, p. 340, and especially Ps. lxxx. 1, p. 344 f. and Ps. lxxxix. 15. This we shall also find as a feature of the Korah Psalms. Now the first day of the Seventh Month, *Rosh Ha-shanah*, or ‘New Year’s Day,’ was also the Feast of Trumpets. The connexion between the ‘Promise of the Trumpet’ and the Redemption of Israel will be best considered under the characteristics of the Korah Psalms: suffice it now to note that it forms another link in the connexion between the Asaph Psalms and the Seventh Month.

(*d*) The next characteristic of the Asaph Psalms is a reference to what we may call the Sabbath-purpose of God in Creation. See notes on Ps. lxxxiii. 17, p. 305, where the thought naturally passes to Enoch (*v.* 24) exactly as it does in the Korah Psalm xlix. 15 (see notes p. 213 f.).

The Sabbath-purpose of God in Creation sometimes takes the form of Jeremiah’s Covenant of Creation (Jer. xxxi. 35 f.: xxxiii. 20 ff.); see notes on Ps. lxxxiv. 12—20, p. 312 f., and compare a similar passage in the Korah Psalm lxxxix. 10 ff. If we should be able to prove that the Asaph Psalms were connected with the Seventh Month this reference to Enoch and to God’s Sabbath-purpose would fall naturally into place.

(e) The thought of God as the Shepherd of Israel is also characteristic of the Asaph Psalms. See Pss. lxxiv. 1; lxxvii. 20; lxxviii. 52; 70 f.; lxxix. 13; lxxx. 1. I suggest that here, too, there is an allusion to the House of Joseph, though I am unable to trace its origin. When Jacob blesses the sons of Joseph (Gen. xlviii. 16) he says, "*God (Elohim) who was my Shepherd [E.V., badly, "fed me"], ever since I was, unto this day, the Angel who redeemeth me from all evil....*" Also in the Blessing of Joseph (Gen. xlix. 24) the difficult words occur, "*From thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel.*" (See notes on Ps. lxxx. 1, 15, p. 341 f.)

(f) One other characteristic of the Asaph Psalms is, what we may call *historical retrospect* with a view to shew, from Israel's past history, that all the promises of God are 'yea,' and that no faithlessness on Israel's part can finally hinder the faithfulness of God. The following examples may suffice: Pss. lxxvii. 10—20; lxxviii., whole Psalm, pp. 329—337. The same thought also underlies Ps. lxxxii., God, who led Israel out of Egypt, is waiting to be gracious. The only other Psalms in the Second Collection which have this character of historical retrospect are the Korah Psalms xlv. and lxxxix. It will, however, be seen that, in the Third Collection, the Hodu-Psalms (cv., cvi., cvii., cxxxv., cxxxvi.) have a similar character. Now Neh. ix. 6—37 contains a Psalm of historical retrospect, exactly after the pattern of Ps. lxxviii.; this Psalm according to a later tradition (Neh. ix. 4, 5) was sung by the Levites "*upon the stairs of the Levites.*" Clearly it was sung in the Seventh Month (vii. 73) and formed part of that Reading of Torah which was commanded at that season (Neh. viii. 1 ff.; cf. Deut. xxxi. 10 ff. and Ps. lxxviii. 1, note, p. 329). Thus we have again found that a characteristic of the Asaph Psalms is explained by the ritual of the Seventh Month.

Now the *Asiph* was the ancient name of the Festival in the Seventh Month. Thus:—

Exod. xxiii. 16. "*...and the Feast of Asiph (E.V. "ingathering") at the outgoing of the year....*" (J.E.)

Exod. xxxiv. 22. "*...and the Feast of Asiph (E.V. "ingathering") at the turn of the year.*" (J.)

On these passages it should be noted,

1st. That *Asiph* and *Asaph* are identical except for vowel-points.

2nd. That the *Asiph* is stated to be "*at the outgoing of the year,*" or "*at the turn of the year.*" This could only mean the beginning of the Seventh Month, whereas the Feast of Ingathering or Tabernacles was, in later times, observed in the middle of that month (15th—21st). From this I conclude that

the more ancient Feast under the name of *Asiph* was a New Year Festival, but that in course of time it was transferred from the new moon of the Seventh Month to the full moon of that month (lxxxix. 3.), leaving only the new moon to be observed as the Feast of Trumpets.

All the characteristics of the Asaph Psalms which we have examined under *a, b, c, d, e, f*, are exactly those which we should expect if those Psalms had been connected with this Feast of Asiph in the Seventh Month.

We must now consider certain passages in which Asaph occurs as a proper name.

For this purpose we shall begin with the latest record, that of the Chronicle-writer (B.C. 300), as contained in the Books of Chronicles and in the later portions of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The Chronicle-writer cannot, of course, be trusted as an authority in matters of history. Without any intention to mislead he pictured the past in the light of his own time. He assumed that the Temple worship with which he was familiar had, from the very first, been organized by David. In the time of the Chronicle-writer none ministered in the Temple except Priests and Levites, but at an earlier date there were at least three other classes of ministrants, *e.g.* Singers, Porters, and Nethenim. Thus to quote Dr Driver's note, *Introd.* p. 502, "The Singers, who in the register of B.C. 536, and even by Neh., are *distinguished* from the Levites, and named after them (Ezr. ii. 40 f. 70: Neh. vii. 1, x. 28) are, in Chr., classed as *belonging to them* (1 Chr. ix. 33: xv. 16 ff. &c.). It seems as though in the interval, the Singers had come to be reckoned as Levites; and the new point of view is represented by the Chronicler."

In the age of the Chronicle-writer the 'Sons of Asaph' were reckoned as belonging to the Levites; indeed, Asaph is traced to the Gershom branch of that family (1 Chr. vi. 39—43) just as Korah is traced to the Kohath branch (*v.* 37 f.)

In 1 Chr. xv. 17, 19, David is supposed to have appointed 'Heman, Asaph, and Ethan' as 'singers' "to sound with cymbals of brass" (*cf.* xvi. 5). But even the Chronicle-writer gives them a position much above that of the ordinary Levites. Thus, we read (1 Chr. xvi. 7, 37) of David committing a Psalm "to Asaph and his brethren" who "minister before the Ark continually" (*cf.* 2 Chr. v. 12).

There are even passages in which Asaph is put on a level with David; *e.g.* 2 Chr. xxix. 30, "*the words of David and of Asaph the seer,*" and, Neh. xii. 46, "*the days of David and of Asaph of old.*" From these, and other passages, we may safely infer that the Asaph guild had (B.C. 300) been incorporated with the Levites, but that (B.C. 430), in the age of Ezra

and Nehemiah, it had held a much higher and more honourable place; also that it was connected, specially, with processions of Dedication, and with all the ritual of the Seventh Month; and that it was, in that age, unconnected with the Tribe of Levi.

Can we trace the Asaph guild still further back? A very early record, viz. that of the Elohist (Josh. vi.) may possibly contain an allusion to the special function of the Asaph guild. We read that "the armed men went before the Priests who were blowing with the trumpets, and the *M'Aséph* (E.V. "rearward") went after the Ark, going on, blowing with the trumpets." (See Hebrew text.)

Here the word *M'Aséph* is a participle of the verb *asaph*, "to gather in." That which "gathers in" (Is. lii. 12, E.V. text and marg.) may be translated "the rearward." But, whatever the "rearward" was, it is clear (i) that it was distinguished from the "armed men," and (ii) that it "blew with the trumpets," and marched in the rear of the Ark. (See Hebrew.)

At a later period (P) *Judah* represented the *East* or *front*, while the Joseph Tribes represented the *West*, or *rear* (Numb. ii. 3, 18) of the Camp; during the march these Joseph Tribes formed the *rearward* of the Ark (cf. *vv.* 17, 24).

If the reader will represent the four Camps of Numbers ii. on the circumference of a circle, placing the three Joseph Tribes in their proper position on the West, and will then divide the circle into the months of the year, counting from the East as the Vernal Equinox, he will observe that the Seventh Month begins at the Autumnal Equinox, *i.e.* at the position in which he has placed the Joseph Tribes.

In the time of Isaiah there was a "Son of Asaph" who bore the title of *Mazkár*, E.V. "the Recorder" (Is. xxxvi. 3, 22). Now this office of "Recorder" was evidently a very high office (2 Sam. viii. 16; xx. 24; 1 Kings iv. 3). It is generally assumed that the "Recorder" was a writer of history, but this was the office of the *Scribe*, and it will be noticed that, in all the lists mentioned above, the offices of Scribe and Recorder were held by different persons.

Again, the translation "Recorder" is not quite accurate. It is better rendered in the margin (2 Sam. viii. 16; xx. 24; 1 Chr. xviii. 15) "*the Remembrancer*." The word is used in a remarkable passage (Is. lxii. 6 f.) of those whose office it was to be God's *remembrancers*. "Upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchers; all day and all night they are never silent; ye that are YHVH'S *remembrancers* take no rest yourselves, and give no rest to Him, until He establish and until He make Jerusalem a renown in the earth."

These words remind us of the cry "*Awake! why sleepest Thou, O Lord*" (Ps. xlv. 23), upon which the Talmud notes, "*The awakens, these are the Levites, who say from the dais, Why sleepest Thou O YHVH* (see note p. 188).

Thus we see that the office of *Remembrancer* would exactly agree with the functions of the Asaph and Korah guilds.

But we can go further than this. The Chronicle-writer uses the word to describe the work of the Levites. "And he appointed (certain) of the Levites to minister before the Ark of YHVH, and *to make remembrance*, and to thank, and to praise YHVH the God of Israel: Asaph the chief.." (1 Chr. xvi. 4 f.).

See also the Title of Ps. xxxviii. "*To make remembrance.*"

The sound of the Trumpet is coupled with this thought of *bringing* God to *remembrance* of Israel (see Numb. x. 9 f.). Indeed the Feast of Trumpets, *i.e.* the first day of the Seventh Month, is called "*a remembrance of the Trumpet-sound.*" E.V. "*a memorial of blowing of trumpets.*"

The conclusion, then, to which I arrive is that the "Sons of Asaph" were a guild of Prophets of uncertain Tribe, but probably belonging to the House of Joseph: that the functions of this guild were those connected with the *Asiph* Feast in the Seventh Month; and I claim to have shewn that all the characteristics of the Asaph Psalms are accounted for in the thoughts which gather round the Sabbath Month.

The Asaph Psalms were written, I believe, before the publication of the Priest-code but at a time when the thoughts of the Priest-code were in the air; *i.e.* not earlier than the Dedication of the Second Temple (B.C. 516), nor later than the age of Nehemiah. See Introd. to Pss. lxxiv., lxxv., lxxviii., lxxix., lxxxiii., also note on Ps. lxxxiii. 9.

Characteristics of the Korah Psalms.

The Korah Psalms contain some of the most beautiful Psalms in the whole Psalter. They echo the thoughts and language of the Second Isaiah (Pss. xlv. 9, note, p. 193; lxxxv., lxxxvii.). They go beyond all other Psalms in their large-hearted sympathy with the Gentiles (see notes on Pss. xlvii., lxxxii.). Like the Asaph Psalms, with which they have much in common, they seem to be somewhat earlier than the Priest-code, but they contain thoughts which took shape in that Code, *e.g.* the Kingship of God connected with the Promise of the Trumpet (Ps. xlv. 9; xlvii.; lxxxix. 15). See also note on Ps. xlvi. 7 and Introduction to Ps. lxxxv.

Many reasons combine to fix the date of our Psalms, c. 515—458 B.C.; see pp. 180 f., 185 f., 193, 196, 199 f., 200, 203, 204.

The Korah Psalms are essentially Psalms of the Dedicated Way (see notes on Pss. xlii., xliii., xlvi., lxxxiv.). Three of them (xlii.—xliii., xlvi., xlix., *i.e.* the first, fourth, and seventh) are marked by refrains.

We must now consider some passages in which the name Korah occurs, and here, as in the case of Asaph, we shall begin with the belief about Korah in the days of the Chronicle-writer, and then try to work back to earlier sources of tradition.

Now, according to the Chronicle-writer, the Sons of Korah were "Keepers of the gates" (or "*thresholds*") of the Temple (1 Chr. ix. 19, &c.).

The Chronicle-writer naturally supposed that they had always belonged to the Tribe of Levi (1 Chr. vi. 22, 37). He confuses their genealogy with that of Asaph (1 Chr. xxvi. 1, but? text), though he maintains elsewhere that Korah belonged to the Kohath branch and Asaph to the Gershom branch of the Levites (1 Chr. vi. 22 with 39—43).

In re-writing the story of Jehoshaphat's victory over the Moabites and Ammonites (2 Chr. xx.) he makes allusion to the Promise of the Trumpet (*vv.* 9 f.) and introduces a "Son of Asaph" to prophesy of victory (*v.* 14 ff.), after which Sons of Korah sing praise (*v.* 19).

This cannot be taken as history, but it is very interesting as shewing the functions ascribed to the Asaph and Korah guilds even in the time of the Chronicle-writer.

The analogy of the "*Sons of Asaph*" might lead us to suspect that the "*Sons of Korah*" did not originally belong to the Tribe of Levi. This suspicion is confirmed by the following considerations.

The rebellion of Korah against Aaron (Numb. xvi.) was unknown to J. E. and is not mentioned in Deut. It is a significant fact that the story should first appear in P. at a time when the Levites were degraded from their priesthood. Yet even in the Priest-code the best critics have recognized two versions of the Korah story; the first (P¹ possibly derived from J) told of a Korah, who was not a Levite, who put himself at the head of a lay-rebellion against the privileged Tribe of Levi, claiming that all the Congregation were holy. That this rebellion was not one of Levites against Priests but of laymen against Levites is borne out by the fact that (Numb. xxvii. 3) the daughters of Zelophehad, of the Tribe of Manasseh, think it is necessary to explain that their father "*had no place...in the Company of Korah*" (see Addis, Vol. II. 408 f.). Wellhausen suggests that Korah probably belonged to the Tribe of Judah.

A later writer (P²) made Korah a Levite by adding the words "*the son of Ishar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi,*" and modified the story so as to make it a rebellion of Levites against Priests (see Critical Commentaries).

Thus the critical analysis confirms the opinion, at which we had independently arrived, that the Korah clan held some high sacred office which might render them jealous of the special sanctity of the Tribe of Levi.

Again, the name Korah occurs, Gen. xxxvi. 5, 14, 16, 18, as that of an Edomite clan, related to Kenaz, *i.e.* to the Kenizzite clan, who, under the name Caleb, were afterwards incorporated with Judah. Cf. 1 Chr. iv. 13—15.

In 1 Chr. ii. 43 Korah is mentioned among the 'Sons' of Caleb. Now Caleb (see *Hastings' Dict.*) was originally a Kenizzite clan (Nu. xxxii. 12; Jos. xiv. 6, 14) distinct from Judah (1 Sam. xxv. 3; xxx. 14), but afterwards incorporated with that tribe, and even traced (1 Chr. ii. 4, 5, 9, 18 ff., 42 ff.) to the patriarch Judah.

The genealogy of the "Sons of Caleb" in 1 Chr. ii. 50—55 ends with a very remarkable verse, thus:

"And the families of the Scribes which dwelt at Fabez, the T'ruqthim, the Sh'maqthim, the Suchathim. These are the Kenites that came from Hammath, the father of the House of Rechab."

On this important verse I follow to some extent the suggestions of Wellhausen¹, *De Gentibus et Familiis Judaeis*, p. 31, and explain the *T'ruqthim* from *t'ruqh*, the *Trumpet-sound*, *Sh'maqthim* from *Sh'maqh*, the *Reading of the Law*, and *Suchathim* from *succah* (see Lev. xxiii. 34 ff.) as pertaining to the feast of "booths" or "tabernacles." If this interpretation be correct (cf. Vulgate) we should have a Rechabite (Kenite) clan of "Scribes" whose offices, connected with the *blowing of Trumpets*, the *Reading of the Law*, and the *Feast of Tabernacles*, would exactly agree with the ritual of the Seventh Month and with the characteristics of the Korah and Asaph Psalms.

Now Jethro, the Kenite, was called a "*Priest*," and Jonadab the son of Rechab is promised an everlasting priesthood, for the words Jer. xxxv. 19 can imply nothing less. Hegesippus (Eus. *H. E.* 2. 23) relates that at the martyrdom of St James, "*One of the Priests of the sons of Rechab, who are mentioned by Jeremiah the Prophet*," cried out in protest against the crime. If this proves nothing else it proves that the tradition of a Kenite or Rechabite 'priesthood' existed in the times of Hegesippus.

I suggest that the "Sons of Korah" belonged to this 'priesthood.' Such an hypothesis would throw light upon the rebellion of Korah, and would explain how a Kenite family, attached to the Tribe of Judah, held some high office in the Temple, and afterwards was reckoned as of Levite origin. It would also explain the Title of Ps. lxxi. in the Sept. (Heb. Ps. lxx.) "*A Psalm of the Sons of Jonadab and of the first captives.*"

¹ See Additional Note, p. xiv.

The Korah Psalms lxxxviii. and lxxxix. are ascribed in their Hebrew Titles to *Heman the Ezrahite* and to *Ethan the Ezrahite* respectively. *Ezrah* and *Zerah* are the same name; while, in 1 Chr. ii. 6, we find "*Ethan and Heman*" mentioned as sons of *Zerah*, who was a "son" of Judah by Tamar; *i.e.* Ethan and Heman were sub-clans of the Judah-tribe, which had come out of the direct line. Ethan the Ezrahite and Heman are mentioned among the wise men of foreign nations (1 Kings iv. 31), while the Chronicle-writer connects them with Asaph (1 Chr. vi. 42, 44; xv. 17, 19). It is, of course, quite impossible to suppose that Pss. lxxxviii., lxxxix. were written by 'grandsons' of the patriarch Judah, but that they belong to a subdivision of the Korah Psalms, nearly allied to the Asaph Psalms, is borne out by their contents.

If I am right in the date which I have assigned to the Korah Psalms they would have been written long after the union of the Korah clan with Judah, and possibly at the time when Korah was already regarded as belonging to Levi (compare P¹ and P², mentioned above). But when we consider the high spirituality of those beautiful Psalms, and their large-hearted sympathy with the Gentile world, it is interesting to trace the clan to the Kenite father-in-law of Moses (Jud. i. 16; iv. 11) and to the ascetic family of the Rechabites.

It is impossible to study the Asaph and Korah Psalms without feeling that, at all events in their original form, they followed a definite order. Thus, the first three of the Elohistie Korah Psalms correspond exactly with the first three of the Jehovistic Korah Psalms, while the seventh Korah Psalm (Ps. xlix.) which ends the Elohistie group is suggestive of Enoch, the seventh from Adam (p. 210), and forms a pair with Ps. lxxiii., which is the first of the Asaph group. Probably, both in the Asaph and Korah Psalms, the number twelve is formed from two groups of six; but we prefer to leave the discussion of this question to Part III., where we shall be obliged to consider the relation of the "Songs of Degrees."

It remains, now, only to record my thanks to the late Bishop Westcott for his kindness in reading the proof of some of the earlier Psalms, and also to Rev. R. Coad Pryor, Rector of Bengoe, Herts., for a similar service in the case of some other Psalms.

The book has been written in the isolation of a country parish: I cannot hope that it is free from mistakes; but I can honestly say that it represents many years of thought and study, and, as such, I offer it to the kindly acceptance of the reader.

GAYTON RECTORY, BLISWORTH,
February 18th, 1902.

Additional Note on 1 Chr. ii. 55 from Wellhausen, De Gentibus, &c.

“Versum 55, quem cum superioribus cohaerere cur negetur ideoneae non inveniuntur causae, luce clarius est respicere tempora seriora. Omnino enim animadverti potest, quod attinet ad מְשֻׁחָחוֹת quales v. 55 enarrantur, talia collegia *post* exilium maxime familiarum instar recenseri. Peculiariter autem quod attinet ad סִפְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה, hae prius non existebant quam סִפְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה. Deinde quae sequuntur nomina שְׂמֵעֵי שׁוֹכְתִים תְּרַעֲתִים appositio sine dubio sunt antecedentium מְשֻׁחָחוֹת, adjectiva scilicet relativa (sg. שׁוֹכְתִי) ad unum omnia a femininis derivata שׁוֹכְתֵי תְּרַעָה. Miror autem omnia haec feminina non solum esse appellativa sed tales etiam appellare notiones quae perinde ac סִפְרֵי pertinent ad instituta religionis. Nam תְּרַעָה—sic legit traditio Hebraeorum vetustissima neque sane aliter potest legi—terminus technicus est musices sacrae; תְּרַעָה (Aram. תְּרַעָה) idem valet atque Halacha, traditionem nimirum significat legis (vid. exemplorum copiam vocis hujus in Talmud. usitatissimae congestam a Levi in lexico Chald.): de שׁוֹכְתֵי = קָבָה conf. Levit. 23, 34 sqq. Mihi collato imprimis antecedenti סִפְרֵי dubium non est, quin tanquam appellativa explicari debeant תְּרַעֲתִים שׁוֹכְתִים תְּרַעָה. Quamquam appellationes illas in Rekabaeos non quadrare objiciet aliquis. Dummodo quadret סִפְרֵי, aequae bene etiam תְּרַעֲתִים cett. Sed re vera optime conveniunt cum eis, quae aliunde de Rekabaeis habemus tradita. Ac primum quidem שׁוֹכְתִים facile explicatur consuetudine, quae religionis instar erat illis, non habitandi fixas domos. De תְּרַעָה et תְּרַעָה quae ad Levitarum magis quam Rekabaeorum pertinere videntur officia haec monere juvabit. Antiqua quaedam cum Levitis conjunctio Qenaeorum innuitur conjunctione Mosis cum Jetrone Qenaeo, qui sacerdos fuit Madianae prope Sinai montem: Qenaei ea re Levitarum fuisse videntur similes, quod si non singuli omnes fungebantur munere sacerdotali, ipso tamen genere erant “populus sacerdotum,” sensu potiore et magis proprio quam Israelaei plerique. Sane pol concedendum est, Qenaeos qui secundum Num. 24, 21 sqq. ab Assyriis in exilium abducti sunt, hic solum et Jud. i. 19 coll. v. 17 LXX. cum Rekabaeis confundi; verum hi ea certe re illos aequabant quod ordo quidam religiosus et sacerdotalis erant et ipsi. Tum enim primum occurrimus eis, quum Jchu in regno Israelaeo restituit veri Dei cultum 2 Reg. 10, 15; neque temere Jonadab a rege illo tantopere honoratus esse credendus est eo ipso tempore quum totus esset in extirpanda idololatria. Diserte autem verba illa Jer. 35, 19; “nunquam deficiet Jonadabum, qui stet coram me,” sacerdotium fuisse insigne et peculium Rekabaeorum declarant, cujus possessione maxime gloriabantur, jactura maxime doloissent. Non nego ea quae ante exilium de ritu illorum narrantur, in eas formas non posse torqueri quales 1 Chr. 2. 55 describuntur. Sed sicuti Levitae mutabantur mutatis temporibus, ita et pari modo Rekabaei. Quos revertisse ex captivitate, in quam sine dubio abducti erant et ipsi (Jerem. 35), sequitur e Neh. 3. 14. Inde quidem accuratiora non possunt cognosci; verum hic succurrunt traditiones quaedam a LXX interpretibus servatae. Nam quum summum quo illi Rekabaeos amplectebantur studium inde cognoscatur quod eos ubique inveniebant in textu sacro ubi non debebant quaerere (vid. LXX. Jud. 1. 19, 1 Chr. 4. 8, 12, 21, alios fortasse plures locos nescio quos), tanti studii causam non fuisse antiquarii curiositatem, et per se credendum est et cognoscitur ex inscriptione psalmi 70, quam fert apud LXX.: Τῷ Δαυὶδ, υἱῶν Ἰωνάδὰβ καὶ τῶν πρώτων αἰχμαλωτισθέντων. Etenim composuisse quum dicatur psalmum David, quid restabit filiis Jonadab? Si semel cecinissent tum quum a Nebuchadnezare abducebantur, neque ab iis esset appellatus neque ejus rei notitia usque ad auctores inscriptionis pertigisset. Neque enim hi a mera profecti sunt fictione sed aliqua certe re sunt nisi. Quae res si quid video alia nulla fuit quam quod aetate fere LXXvirorum psalmus septuagesimus ita erat privum quasi filiorum Jonadab—de primis captivis qui sint nihil definio—peculium, sicut alii psalmi proprii dicuntur esse collegiorum Leviticorum, Asaph Heman Qorach. Juxta illas ergo cantorum classes aetate illa, qua natus est titulus psalmi 70, ponebantur Rekabaei—id quod optime convenit cum 1 Chr. 2. 55.”

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SECOND COLLECTION.

'LEVITICAL' PSALMS.

(KORAH, ASAPH &c.)

PSALM XLII—XLIII.

Psalms xlii., xliii. originally formed one Psalm. This is proved by the Refrain which occurs xlii. 5, 11 and xliii. 5. The subdivision of this Psalm must have been made subsequent to the grouping of the Korah Psalms, for the portion which is now called Ps. xliii. is the only one in the group without a title. If we restore Pss. xlii., xliii. to their original unity we have before us one magnificent Psalm which falls naturally into three Parts each ending in the words of the Refrain, in which hope shines through tears, "*Why so exceeding sorrowful, O my soul?... Wait thou for God,*" &c.

Israel is God's Pilgrim, and this Psalm is a Pilgrim's Progress. The end of that Pilgrimage is to see God and not merely to visit the Temple. We must not limit the thought to the three yearly pilgrimages of Israel "to see God's Face." These were but a type, but the end is the Beatific Vision.

Psalm xlii—iii. is the first of the Elohist Korah Psalms and is so closely parallel with Ps. lxxxiv., which is the first of the Jehovistic Korah Psalms, that it suggests the important question, Was there any relation between the two series? To this we shall return.

PSALM XLII—XLIII.

- Stanza I. 1 As the hart^a maketh her moan over the (dry) watercourse, ^a or *hind*
 So my soul maketh her moan unto Thee, O God.
 2 My soul is athirst^b for God, for the Living God^c: ^b Ps. lxiii. 1
 When shall I come and see the Face of God? ^c *El Chai*

v. 1. "As the hart..." In the Hebrew text the noun is *masculine* while the verb which agrees with it is *feminine*: the reader may therefore make his choice between the 'hart' and the 'hind.'

"*Maketh moan.*" The word is onomatopoeic and is applied to the 'braying' or 'bleating' of a stag in pain, the only other passage being Joel i. 20, "The beasts of the field *bleat* unto Thee; for the watercourses are dried up." By a bold figure of speech the word is, in the second member of the verse, transferred to the soul, "As the hind bleateth...so my soul bleateth..." It is the piteous appeal of the dumb beast as it comes to the watercourse and finds it empty (compare Job vi. 15-20). We must dismiss from our minds the image suggested by the familiar Hymn "As pants the hart, etc." It is not thirst with water there, but thirst with water gone, that caused that cry (cf. Job vi. 5): nay more; instinct has failed!

"*The (dry) watercourse.*" Literally "*the channels of water.*" The words fix thought upon the river bed, not upon the water which it may or may not contain. Thus, Ps. xviii. 15 (16), "Then the bed of the waters was seen," i.e. the storm had laid bare the channel (see context). So also in Joel i. 20 (quoted above), Job vi. 15 and Ps. cxxvi. 4 (see notes), the channel in each case is dry.

"*Maketh moan over...maketh moan unto...*" The change of the prepositions may be noted. The hind maketh moan over the watercourse because it is empty and has disappointed her hope: so too the soul, but *her* cry is not the undirected instinct of the beast;—at the very brink of despair it becomes a prayer—"unto Thee, O God." Compare the parallel Korah Psalm, lxxiv. 2 (3).

v. 2. "My soul is athirst..." The only other passage in which the verb is used in this sense is Ps. lxiii. 1, an important passage which forms a connecting link also between the two Korah Psalms xlii and lxxiv. There is no physical suffering harder to bear than *thirst*. There is no spiritual suffering harder to bear than *the hiding of God's Countenance*. When the two were combined on the Cross Jesus could say "It is finished." Compare St John xix. 28 and 30 in R.V. "After this Jesus, knowing that all things are now *finished*, that the Scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst.....he said, *It is finished*...." On which Bengel well says, "Sitis fuerat in corpore Jesu, quod derelictio in anima."

The fact that our Lord quotes this Psalm (see on *vv.* 5, 6) in His Agony justifies us in applying it to Him.

"*My soul is athirst for...the Living God.*" We must compare the parallel passage in the parallel Korah Psalm (lxxiv. 2 (3)), "*My heart and my flesh cry out for the Living God.*" The form of the Divine Name here is full of significance. As in the Greek of the New Testament so in the Hebrew of the Old Testament there are two ways of expressing "the Living God."

In the Greek there is (A) the form $\theta\epsilon\delta\varsigma \zeta\omega\nu$ (Acts xiv. 15; Rom. ix. 26; 2 Cor. iii. 3; vi. 16; 1 Thess. i. 9; 1 Tim. iii. 15; iv. 10; Heb. iii. 12; ix. 14; x. 31; xii. 22; Rev. vii. 2); and (B) the form $\delta \theta\epsilon\delta\varsigma \delta \zeta\omega\nu$ (Matt. xvi. 16; xxvi. 63; and (?) Rev. xv. 7). Bishop Westcott distinguishes between these two forms (see note on Heb. iii. 12 and cf. "*Some Lessons of the Revised Version*," p. 57, note).

In the Hebrew also there is (A) the form *El Chai* (Josh. iii. 10; Hos. i. 10 (ii. 1); Ps. xlii. 2 (cf. *v.* 6); Ps. lxxiv. 2 (3)); and (B) the form *Elohim Chaiyim* (Deut. v. 23 (26); 1 Sam. xvii. 26, 36; 2 Kings xix. 4, 16, cf. Is. xxxvii. 4, 17; Jer. x. 10; xxiii. 36. Compare also Dan. vi. 20 (21), 26 (27)). I am not prepared to maintain that the forms (A) and (B) in the Hebrew correspond exactly to the forms (A) and (B) in the New Testament: certainly the Septuagint observed no such distinction;—but I think it is clear that, both in the Old and New Testaments, "*the Living God*" is used of God as the Fountain of all Life. To forsake Him is to forsake Life

3 My tears have been my food, by day and night,
While they say unto me continually, 'Where^a is thy God?'^{v. 10}

(Jer. ii. 13; x. 10; xvii. 13; cf. note on Ps. xxxvi. 9). In the Old Testament the temptation to forsake the Fountain of Life generally took the form of idol-worship, consequently "the Living God" is often contrasted with idols (see references). In the New Testament, on the other hand, the temptation was to fall back upon Judaism; for the Christian to do this was as bad as for the Jew to fall back upon idolatry. If God be "Living," revelation must be progressive. (See references, especially Heb. iii. 12; ix. 14; x. 31; xii. 22; 2 Cor. iii. 3). The Pillar of Cloud and Fire moves on, if we refuse to move with it we are left alone in the "horrible wilderness." God must be to us either *Melek* or *Molok* (see on Ps. xxi.), either a Pillar of Fire to give us light or a "jealousy of fire" (Heb. x. 27) to burn us. It is "a terrible thing to fall into the hands" of such a Fire, but it would be far more terrible if there were no such Fire (cf. Heb. xii. 29 with Bp Westcott's note). The following passage from James Hinton's *Philosophy and Religion*, p. 67, is worthy of thought:—

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." The "hands of the living God" are what we call the "laws" of Nature. When God is spoken of as "living," it is ever with special reference to Nature..... This universe, these "laws," these facts, are God, and there is none other. I mean that this avenging of sin by Nature is the falling into the hands of the living God; that this one fact is stated truly, as it actually is, in the Bible; and falsely, unperceivingly, by men of science and moralists. We have to lift up our conceptions from the dust and raise them even to heaven, and to see that it is the hands of the living God that lay hold upon us in these natural circumstances. Think of this which we have so overlooked: the power of Nature to *make* us sin, i.e. to act wickedly, if we are selfish. Is it not a fearful thing to be unloving, dead, inert, in a world of action, which operating so on us makes us the willing instruments of crime?"

"*When shall I...see the Face of God?*"—So *Syr.* and *Targum* (Baethgen). Both here and elsewhere the Jewish Scribes have changed the vowel points so that the verb "to see" God becomes "to be seen" (by) God, i.e. "to appear" before Him. The following passages should be studied with a critical text: Is. i. 12; Exod. xxiii. 15, 17; xxxiv. 20, 23, 24; Deut. xvi. 16 (with Driver's note); xxxi. 11; 1 Sam. i. 22; and especially the Korah Psalm lxxxiv. 7 (8). Three times in the year every layman in Israel was "to see the Face of God." What did this imply? Certainly it was no bodily vision: he did not see the Shechinah. The expression must be interpreted from Esth. i. 14; Jer. lii. 25 (margin), where we learn that to "see the face" of an Eastern king implied a very high honour and the closest relation to his person. Thus the three yearly Feasts were to the Jewish layman an outward and visible sign to assure him of God's "favour and goodness towards him, and that he was a very member incorporate in the mystical body" of Israel. Just as a Christian might bring his difficulties to the Table of the Lord, so a pious Israelite would bring his difficulties to the Presence of God in the Feasts. The difficulty of our Psalmist is the old difficulty, Why must righteous Israel suffer while the unrighteous heathen scoff and prosper? (cf. *vv.* 3, 9 f., xliii. 2). This difficulty was almost too much for Israel's faith; it hid from him the Face of his Father in Heaven (*vv.* 1, 6 f., xliii. 2). Such is the sorrow that he brings before God; the thrice repeated Refrain (*vv.* 5, 11, xliii. 5) assures him of the "*Saving-help of the Face of (his) God.*" There is a sense in which "no man has ever yet seen God" (John i. 18), but it is also true that even here and now men can "behold His Face" (Ps. xi. 7; xvii. 16; lxiii. 2, note) in the ordinances which He appoints, and that such 'beholding' is the pledge of the Beatific Vision when "His servants shall do Him service; and they shall see His Face; and His Name shall be upon their foreheads" (Rev. xxii. 3 f., cf. 1 John iii. 2).

v. 3. "*My tears have been my food...*" While man is, as it were, in the Outer Court, an exile seeking God, "tears" are his "*food by day and night,*" but when he can say, "my meat is to do the will of Him that sent me" he has already come to the Altar-Court and finds God his "*joy of joys*" (xliii. 4).

"*Where is thy God?*" The heathen regarded the defeat of a nation as the defeat of its god; therefore Rab-shakeh could say, "Where are the gods of Hamath &c.?" (2 Kings xviii. 34). Thus when Israel was in subjection it was felt that God Himself was dishonoured. Besides our

Joy in the past a
pledge of a larger joy
in the future.

4 These things I must remember and pour out my very soul,
For I shall pass into the Sanctuary^a
Shall lead-them-in-procession to the House of God
With the voice of music and thanksgiving,
a jubilant multitude!

^a or with the
throng

5 WHY SO EXCEEDING SORROWFUL, O MY SOUL,
THAT THOU SHOULDST BE THUS MOVED WITHIN ME?
WAIT THOU FOR GOD, I SHALL YET AGAIN THANK HIM,—
THE SAVING-HELP OF THE FACE OF MY GOD.

present Psalm there are, I believe, only three other passages, *all post-exilic*, in which this taunt occurs, viz. (a) Joel¹ ii. 17 "...Give not Thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should use a byword against them; wherefore should they say among the peoples, Where is their God?" (b) Ps. lxxix. 10 (an 'Asaph' Psalm) "Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God?" (c) Ps. cxv. 2 where the same words occur. From these passages I infer that, in our Psalm also, the phrase refers not merely to the 'lonely incommunicable grief' of an individual but to the sorrow of Israel. No doubt an individual Israelite might often have to bear this taunt, but, if so, it was not because God's Face was hidden from him but because the God of Israel was held up to scorn as unable to save His People.

The phrase "*Where is...God?*" is also used, in an entirely different sense, as an invocation or appeal to God's help. Thus:—2 Kings ii. 14 "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"; Jer. ii. 6, 8, "Neither said they, Where is the Lord that brought us up out of the land of Egypt &c.?" "The priests said not, Where is the Lord?"; Is. lxiii. "Where is He that put His Holy Spirit within him?"; Job xxxv. 10 "But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night?"

v. 4. "*These things I must remember...*" There is an exact parallel in the Asaph Psalm lxxvii. 3 "God I must remember and make my moan &c." (see context). If in our present Psalm we might read *El* or *Eloah*, "God," instead of *Eleh*, "these things," we should have a still closer parallel. The reader should notice that in the Asaph Psalm lxxvii. the word "*I must remember*" occurs three times, viz. v. 3 "*I must remember God*"; v. 6 "*I must remember my song in the night*"; v. 11 "*For I must remember Thy wonder-work of old time*." Thus by a three-fold 'remembrance' the Asaph Psalmist finds rest, the three thoughts being closely parallel with the three divisions of our present Psalm (xlii.—xliii.).

If we enquire the meaning of *remembering God* the best answer is from the Prayer of Jonah ii. 7 "When my soul was overwhelmed within me I remembered YHVH." See also v. 7 (note) which contains another allusion to Jonah.

"...and pour out my very soul." The outpouring of the soul generally signifies *sorrow* (1 Sam. i. 15; Lam. ii. 19; Ps. cii. title), but it may also signify *trust* (Ps. lxii. 8 (9) "Trust in Him at all times... pour out your heart before Him").

"For I shall pass...shall lead-them-in-procession..." The verbs are *futures* (or *imperfects*). Undoubtedly this tense is used sometimes to denote habitual action (e.g. Job i. 5 &c.) so that the usual interpretation "*I used to pass...used to lead &c.*" is quite admissible. If we take this view we should paraphrase thus: 'Though I am now in heaviness yet I would fain remember God. I used to go up to the Feast of Tabernacles; I used to see His Face with joy; that relation to God must mean a growing insight, a growing joy; therefore I say to myself, Wait thou for God, I shall yet again thank Him &c.'

I prefer however to give the verbs their full force as *futures*, in which case the meaning might be expressed thus: 'Now, in the bitterness of my soul I am cheered by remembering the prophecies (Is. lx. 5), for I shall pass with triumph into the Sanctuary (?) leading a procession (of nations?)

¹ On the date of Joel see Driver's *Introduction*, p. 288.

Stanza II.

9 I would say unto God^a, my Rock, Why hast Thou for-^a *EI*
gotten me?

Why must I go mourning through the oppression of the foe?

10 Like a crushing of my very bones my adversaries revile me,
While they say unto me continually, Where^b is thy God? ^b *v. 3*

6 My soul within me is exceeding sorrowful,
Therefore do I remember Thee
From a Land of Jordan and Hermons, a Zoar-like mountain.

7 Deep calleth unto Deep, to the sound of Thy cataracts!
All Thy breakers and billows have gone over me!

God's guidance in
the past a pledge of a
continuous guidance.

8 By day YHVH will give a charge^c to His Lovingkindness,^c *Ps. xci. 11*
And by night He will give Guidance^d. ^d *See Sept.*
My prayer within^e me is to my Living^f God. ^e *cf. v. 6*
^f *cf. v. 2*

11 WHY SO EXCEEDING SORROWFUL, O MY SOUL,
THAT THOU SHOULDST BE THUS MOVED WITHIN ME?
WAIT THOU FOR GOD, I SHALL YET AGAIN THANK HIM,—
THE SAVING-HELP OF THE FACE OF MY GOD.

into the House of God, a multitude no man can number, of which the *paneguris* of Tabernacles is a type and pledge.'

"*I shall pass*"—not merely "*I shall go*." The word is often used of the stately march of an army.

"*I shall lead-them-in-procession*." The only other passage in which this verb occurs is Is. xxxviii. 16 "I shall go in triumph all my years on account of (this) soul-grief." Thus in our Psalm the verb would seem to denote a joyous or triumphant movement. It must however be admitted that the text is doubtful (see Versions); certainly the Septuagint had a very different text.

"*The Sanctuary*." The particular form of this word is only found here. The root signifies "*thick*"; hence we get two interpretations, (a) "*multitude*" (E.V. and P.B.V.) or "*throng*" (R.V.) and (b) "*thicket*," "*covert*," "*tabernacle*," "*Sanctuary*" (Sept. Theod. Sym. Targ. Syriac). The Feast of Tabernacles, *Succa*, is derived from the same root, and I cannot but think that the Psalmist intended an allusion to that Feast the exact force of which we are not able to explain. The parallel passages Ps. xliii. 4 and Ps. lxxxiv. 7 (see note) should be carefully compared.

v. 5. "*Why so exceeding sorrowful, O my soul?*" The *Sept.* have *περὶλυπος... ἡ ψυχῆ*, words which our Lord also uses in Gethsemane, "*My soul is exceeding sorrowful...*" (Matt. xxvi. 38; Mark xiv. 34). May it not be that the three-fold refrain of this Psalm was in our Lord's mind in His thrice repeated prayer? If the Psalm represent, as I believe it does, man's pilgrimage through sorrow to God, it would have been a fitting subject for meditation at such an hour. In the Hebrew the same verb is used again in *v. 6* "*My soul is exceeding sorrowful*" but the *Sept.* there use *ἐραπάχθη*, which carries our thoughts rather to St John's version of the Passion (John xi. 33; xii. 27; xiii. 21) where in every case the 'sorrow' arises from contact with a sinful world. The Refrain occurs in a slightly different form in *v. 11* and xliii. 5, the mistake being obviously a copyist's error.

v. 6. We may paraphrase thus—'Though I encourage myself, saying, Why so exceeding sorrowful? still the sorrow remains, *My soul within me is exceeding sorrowful*. But this sorrow does not drive me from God, it drives me to God—*Therefore do I remember Thee*—not as I would, but as I can—*From a Land of Jordan and Hermons...*'

The expression "*Land of Jordan*" is unique. If the actual country of Jordan had been intended another word would have been used (*viz. kīkar* Gen. xiii. 10 f.; 1 Kings vii. 47; 2 Chr. iv. 17 or *qver* Gen. i. 10 f.; Deut. i. 5; iii. 8, 20 &c.). Add to this, the Hebrew name for Jordan is never written

Stanza III.

Ps. XLIII.

1 Judge me, O God, plead my cause against a nation unholy
indeed!

Deliver me from men of^a fraud and violence:

^a lit. *man of*

without the *def. article* except only in this passage and in Job xl. 23 where it does not refer to the actual Jordan but is a poetical expression for a *torrent*.

The plural, also, *Hermions*, is unique. If the actual mountain had been intended the singular, Hermon, would have been used.

Again the difficult expression *Har Mitzar*, i.e. *Mount Mitzar* or *Mount of littleness*, seems to hint at the words of Lot "Is it not a little-one?" (Gen. xix. 20) with respect to Zoar; I would therefore suggest that our Psalmist uses all three terms allegorically, not without reference in each case to the meaning of the root: *A Jordan Land*, to denote Land of torrents (cf. v. 7); *Hermions*, to indicate the land that is under the *ban* or *curse* (*harem*); and *Mitzar* either to imply that the Hermons were *small* after all or, more probably, that he himself, like Lot, was fleeing from the City of Destruction, an exile pleading for God's protection. Cf. Ps. lxi. 2 "From the end of the earth will I call unto Thee when my heart is overwhelmed." There are other points of contact between our Psalm and Ps. lxi.

The Midrash, which regards the whole Psalm as the utterance of Israel, suggests another interpretation of these words which is not, I think, inconsistent with the view I have expressed, "Therefore do I remember Thee from the land of Jordan," i.e. 'I bethink me, when I went over the Jordan, of what Thou didst for me (of old), even when we provoked Thee to anger at Shittim (see Numb. xxv. 1). Thou didst work a miracle for us in that Thou broughtest us then over the river Jordan (see Josh. iii. 1).' I should prefer to combine these thoughts and to paraphrase as follows:—I am indeed in a Land of Exile, but it is stored with memories of past mercies, and mercies too that were wholly undeserved.

v. 7. "All Thy breakers and billows have gone over me."—A quotation, word for word, from Jonah ii. 4. This reference to Jonah is most important for the interpretation of the Psalm, which should be carefully compared with the Psalm of Jonah 'beneath the waters' (Jonah ii.). Compare also notes on Ps. xl. This verse bears out the allegorical meaning which we have ascribed to 'Jordan &c.' in v. 6.

vv. 7, 8. "All Thy breakers and billows have gone over me."—Of old time when Israel crossed the Sea and the Jordan, God "made the waters to stand as an heap" (Ps. lxxviii. 13, see context), but now "All Thy breakers and billows have gone over me!" Why should not God who helped then help now? (see following Psalm).

"By day...and by night..." Of old time it was said, "In the daytime He led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire" (Ps. lxxviii. 14): but now?—would these suffice my need? No. I need "His Lovingkindness," not the Pillar of Cloud, "by day," and His "Guidance," not the Pillar of Fire, "by night."

v. 8. "By day YHVH will give a charge to His Lovingkindness,
And by night He will give Guidance."

These words are very difficult, both from their position, where they interrupt the sense, and also from the doubtfulness of the text: accordingly they are omitted by Wellhausen. As to their position the difficulty would be removed if we might read vv. 6–8 after vv. 9, 10; verse 8 would then give the ground for the encouragement of v. 11 (just as v. 4 does to v. 5). As to the text the difficulty is in 8^b where the Hebrew reads, "And by night His song is with me"; the *Septuagint* however had a different text (*καὶ νυκτὸς δηλώσει*). Perhaps they read *וְשִׁירִי* (cf. Prov. iv. 25, Is. xlv. 2). The fact however that the substantive *δήλωσις* is used to translate the *Urim and Thummim* (Exod. xxviii. 26 (30); Lev. viii. 8; 1 Esd. v. 40; cf. Deut. xxxiii. 8) suggests that the *Septuagint* saw in the present passage an allusion to that Light and Truth which was to be the Inspiration of God's People. If this be so we should obtain a parallel in Ps. xliii. 3, "Send forth Thy Light and Thy Truth; they shall lead me on, &c." There is undoubtedly a connexion between these two passages, but the context seems to shew that, in v. 8 the thought is centred on the Pillar of Cloud and Fire, whereas in xliii. 3 it is centred on the Urim and Thummim.

xliii. 1. "Against a nation unholy indeed." The words *lo chasid*, lit. "not holy," imply the very

2 For Thou art my fortress-God; why shouldst Thou cast me off?

Why must I go mourning through the oppression of the foe?

God's revelation in the past a pledge of a continuous revelation.

3 Send forth Thy Light and Thy Truth^a; they^b shall lead me on, ^a cf. Ps. lxi. 7
^b Emphatic

Shall bring me to Thy holy Mount and to Thy Sanctuaries,

4 So that I may come to the Altar of God,

Unto God^c my joy of joys,

^c *El*

And may thank Thee upon the harp, O God my God.

5 WHY SO EXCEEDING SORROWFUL, O MY SOUL,

THAT THOU SHOULDST BE THUS MOVED WITHIN ME?

WAIT THOU FOR GOD, I SHALL YET AGAIN THANK HIM,—

THE SAVING-HELP OF THE FACE OF MY GOD.

reverse of holy. But *chasid* does not exactly correspond to what we now mean by *holy*. The *Chasidim* of a somewhat later time were those who were devoted to the Law: thus we must understand by "a nation unholy indeed" a nation which actively opposes and persecutes the observers of God's Law. Such words would have been meaningless on the lips of David, and can only be explained as the language of Israel in a time of persecution.

v. 2. "why shouldst Thou cast me off?" The peculiar use of this verb (see note on Ps. xlv. 9) bears out our contention that the speaker is not really an individual but Israel.

v. 3. "Send forth Thy Light and Thy Truth; they shall lead me on." The Jewish commentators have rightly seen in these words a reference to the *Urim* and *Thummim* which symbolized for Israel the gift of Revelation. We do not now know what these were, but they represented the Living Voice by which God met each need of Israel as it arose; in other words, they represented the operations of the Holy Spirit. (See Neh. ix. 20 with context.) Grünwald quotes a Latin Hymn founded upon this verse (Mone i. p. 224):

"Veni, sancte Spiritus,
Et emitte caelitus
Lucis tuae radium."

"they shall lead me on." The emphatic pronoun implies that *they* and they only can lead me: God's two angels of Light and Truth must take me by the hand and lead me on to new light and to new truth, even against my will that would fain linger (Gen. xix. 16), loath to break with the past.

v. 4. "And may thank Thee upon the harp." It is possible that the Korah Psalmist mentions the *harp* here as being his own instrument, but we must remember that the harp is essentially the music of the tenderest joy (Ps. xxxiii. 2; xcvi. 5; Rev. xiv. 2).

ADDITIONAL NOTE TO PS. XLII—XLIII.

It may be useful to give here in brief outline the leading lesson of this Psalm regarded as a unity.

The thrice repeated Refrain (*vv.* 5, 11, xliii. 5) proves the two Psalms to have been originally one....The speaker is not an individual but Israel (See notes on *vv.* 3^b, 6 f., xliii. 1, 2). Israel is under oppression and reproach (*vv.* 3, 9^b, 10, xliii. 1, 2). This combination of oppression and reproach suggests the Persian period when the great expectations raised by the advent of Cyrus had given place to cruel disappointment and to the mockery of the Samaritans.

Israel finds this all the harder to bear because he had been taught to regard prosperity as the mark of God's favour and adversity as the mark of His displeasure (see Deuteronomy). It seems to him as though God Himself had forsaken him (*vv.* 1—3; 7, 9 f.; xliii. 2). This sorrow was for Israel a necessity. He could not learn the larger trust without it. He seeks and finds, in the three parts of the Psalm, three remedies for the depression under which he labours.

First. He sees that *joy in the past is a pledge of a larger joy in the future* (*v.* 4). What has been shall be, when God's new lesson is learnt. Those gatherings at Tabernacles were a pledge of the 'multitude no man can number.' Spiritual joy may have to leave us in order that we may learn some new lesson that is waiting for us; but every such joy says to us, as Christ did to His own, "ye now *therefore* have sorrow, but I will see you again..."

Secondly. Israel sees that *God's guidance in the past is a pledge of a continuous guidance* (*v.* 8, see note). What has been shall be, only under new conditions suited to a new age. The Pillar of Cloud and Fire will have its counterpart. God guided Israel of old time not only without any merit on Israel's part but even in spite of Israel's rebellion (Ps. lxxviii. notes). Because this Guidance depends not upon man's goodness but upon God's goodness, therefore it cannot fail.

"So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on."

Thirdly. Israel sees that *God's Revelation in the past is a pledge of continuous Revelation* (xliii. 3). What has been shall be, only larger and fuller; for man needs more than "Lovingkindness" and "Guidance"; he needs *Light* and *Truth* in their perfection, "*Thy Light and Thy Truth*"! (α) This must take time—"I have yet many things to say unto you." (β) This must mean pain. The larger truth can only come by displacing the lesser truth that we had learned to love. But the end must be joy (xliii. 4).

"There shall never be one lost good! what was shall live as before;
The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound;
What was good shall be good with, for evil, so much good more;
On the earth the broken arcs: in the heaven a perfect round.

* * * * *

The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that He heard it once; we shall hear it by-and-by."

PSALM XLIV.

Many commentators assign this Psalm to the age of the Maccabees but their arguments are not convincing. It is far easier to determine the circumstances than the age in which the Psalm was written: we shall therefore do well to argue from what is clear to that which is less clear. The circumstances are as follows:—A national calamity, possibly a defeat (*v.* 9 ff.), has fallen upon Israel like a bolt from the blue. The time was one of Reformation (*v.* 17 ff.). Israel to the best of his belief was keeping that Covenant to which the promises of every earthly good had been assigned. That God should forsake him in such an hour makes faith and reason stagger. Deuteronomy had promised every blessing upon the observance of the Covenant, every curse upon the non-observance. If curse and blessing fall at random, where is the God of Israel?

Now it is evident from the references both to the language and thought of Deuteronomy (see note *vv.* 2, 3, 5), that the Psalm cannot have been written before the Reformation of Josiah (B.C. 622).

The first occasion then which would seem to suit the circumstances of the Psalm would be the defeat and death of Josiah at Megiddo (B.C. 609). The effect of his death was profound. "All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations, unto this day" (2 Chr. xxxv. 24 f.).

But history repeats itself and, on closer examination of the Psalm, we find an allusion to the Priest Code and to the promise of the Trumpet (see note on *v.* 9). This brings us down to the age of Nehemiah in which I am inclined to place our Psalm. The Reformation under Zerubbabel had been complete. The temple had been rebuilt. It seemed as though the Kingdom of David was to be restored. Then suddenly again there fell a calamity of which no details have been preserved. Zerubbabel passes away perhaps by martyrdom; news is brought to Nehemiah in Babylon that the Jewish colony is "in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down and the gates thereof are burned with fire." Such a time of "affliction and reproach" falling as it did in an age of expectation would account for every word in our Psalm.

History again repeated itself in the days of the Maccabees and the Psalm very naturally came into use (see note *v.* 23), but those who maintain that it was then first written must explain how it came to be included in a group of Korah Psalms which belong to the Persian period and with which it has many points of contact besides the Title, and that too in an age far later than that of the Chronicle-writer when already the meaning of the Titles were becoming vague if not entirely lost.

Again, if accidental, it is a remarkable coincidence that just as Ps. xlii—xliii. which is the *first* of the *Elohistic* Korah Psalms corresponds with Ps. lxxiv. which is the *first* of the *Jehovistic* Korah Psalms (see p. 173) so Ps. xliv. the *second* of the *Elohistic* Korah

Psalm corresponds with Ps. lxxxv. which is the *second* of the *Jehovistic* Korah Psalms. So much so indeed that Delitzsch calls Ps. lxxxv. "the pendent" to Ps. xlv. Such a relation suggests a motive (see *Introduction to Korah and Asaph Psalms*). That a Psalm-writer in the days of Antiochus (B.C. 175—164) should have so completely merged his identity with the Korah Psalmists who wrote more than 300 years before, is to me simply inconceivable.

PSALM XLIV.

Deuteronomy had
taught us that God
Himself fought for
His People.

1 O God we have heard with our ears,
Our fathers have told us,
The deeds that Thou didst in their days,
In the days of yore :

2 THOU^a didst dispossess the nations
And Thy hand did plant them^b in :
Thou didst break off peoples and didst make them^b spread^c.

Litany quotes
from *Vulgate*

^a Emphatic as
in Deut. ix. 3

^b i.e. our
fathers

^c i.e. like
boughs

v. 1. "O God we have heard with our ears..." "Say not, How is it that the former days were better than these? for thou hast not enquired wisely concerning this" (Eccles. vii. 10). History could scarcely become Revelation without idealizing the past. Looking back over the centuries the strain and struggle has vanished; God's work alone remains, "Thou leddest Thy People like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron" (Ps. lxxvii. 20). But had we stood by when the work was being done, we should often have seen Moses well nigh in despair, upon his knees, "Lord, wherefore hast Thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that Thou hast sent me?" (Exod. v. 22).

"Our fathers have told us..." Compare the Asaph Psalm (lxxviii. 3, 55) where God's faithfulness in the past, in spite of Israel's disobedience, becomes a sure pledge of His purposes of mercy in the future (see p. 180). In our Psalm this first verse might read almost like a complaint against God but its true meaning comes out in the expectation of that great Redemption which is prayed for in the last verse, "Arise! as our Salvation, And redeem us for Thy lovingkindness' sake." A true instinct combined these two verses in our Litany,

"O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works that thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them.

O Lord, arise, help us and deliver us for...." (Compare the Vulgate.)

v. 2. The text has "Thou, Thy hand, didst &c....and plant them in." I remove the word "Thy hand" from the first line where it interrupts the sense, and replace it in the second, where it is needed.

The verb translated "dispossess" is distinctly characteristic of the Deuteronomic writer. In the *Kal* it signifies *to possess* (used 60 times, of *possessing* the land in Deut.): in the *Hiphil* it signifies "to cause others to possess" i.e. "to dispossess," often translated "to drive out" in the E.V. The promises to which the Psalmist alludes are as follows:

Deut. iv. 37 f. "And because He loved thy fathers...*dispossessing* nations from before thee...to bring thee in, &c."

Deut. ix. 3—5 "YHVH thy God HE it is which goeth over before thee, as a devouring fire, HE (emphatic) shall destroy them, and HE (emphatic) shall subdue them before thee, so that thou shalt *dispossess* them..." "...for the wickedness of these nations YHVH thy God is *dispossessing* them from before thee," cf. Deut. xviii. 12.

The passage in Deut. ix. 3—5 should especially be studied and compared with vv. 1—8 of our Psalm.

3 For not by their sword did they win the Land,
 Nor was it their own arm that helped them :
 But Thy right hand and Thine arm and the light of Thy
 Countenance,
 Because Thou didst favour^a them.
 4 Thou art He, my King^b, O God,
 That givest^c a charge of salvation for Jacob.

^a Ps. lxxxv.
 1 (2)
^b Deut. xxxiii.
 5
^c See *Sept.* cf.
 Ps. xlii. 9

Deut. xi. 23 "Then will YHWH *dispossess* all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess nations greater and mightier than yourselves."

It is true that we find traces of this thought in the earlier book JE (Exod. xxxiv. 24), still the thought is distinctly characteristic of Deuteronomy. The Psalmist's difficulty arose from the fact that he could not reconcile the promises of Deuteronomy with the realities of Israel's oppression. The eudaemonism of Deuteronomy (B.C. 622) must have tried the very elect in the trouble upon trouble which followed, from Megiddo (B.C. 609) to the Captivity (B.C. 586). Certainly the faith of many failed. "Although Deuteronomy was not formally abolished under Jehoiakim, who as the vassal of Egypt ascended the throne of his father Josiah, nevertheless it ceased to have practical weight, the battle of Megiddo having shewn that in spite of the Covenant with Jehovah, the possibilities of non-success in war remained the same as before. Jehoiakim tended to return to the ways of Manasseh, not only as regarded idolatry, but also in his contempt for law and the private rights of his subjects;—the two things seem to stand in connexion" [Wellhausen *Israel*, p. 489, Eng. translation]. Thus Revelation to one age became a stumbling-block to the next. God's "light and truth" did lead Israel on: Revelation was continuous: but, for that very reason it was like an infinite series, each term of which, though a nearer approximation, needs to be corrected by the one that shall follow.

"*Thou didst break off peoples and didst make them spread.*"—The thought of a tree of God's *planting* (v. 2^b) is still in the poet's mind. The word we have translated "*make them spread*" is used of *branches* Is. xvi. 2, and also, according to the right meaning, in Gen. xlix. 21 "Naphtali is a *spreading tree*." The picture of Israel as a tree of God's planting is first suggested by the Song of Moses (Exod. xv. 17), and is expanded in Psalm lxxx. (an Asaph Psalm).

In our Psalm the heathen were "branches broken off" in order that Israel might "be grafted in." St Paul reverses the thought (Rom. xi. 17—24. For another reference to our Psalm in the same Epistle see note on v. 22).

v. 3. "*Because Thou didst favour them*"—or "*Because Thou didst take pleasure in them.*" The same word is used in Is. xlii. 1 of the Servant, "mine Elect in whom *I am well pleased.*" Thus the word carries our thoughts to the Baptism of our Lord (Matt. iii. 17, cf. xii. 18 R.V.). The calling of Israel was not for any merit of Israel, but for the merit of Christ and, for that very reason, that "calling is without repentance" (Rom. xi. 29). Cf. also the argument in Ps. lxxvii. 7 (8).

The standpoint of our Psalmist is the Book of Deuteronomy. This Book sets forth God's election (and love) of Israel. "He has reserved Israel for Himself; He has chosen it out of all peoples of the earth to be His own peculiar possession (iv. 37; vii. 6; x. 15; xiv. 2; xxvi. 18), the unique recipient of His self-revealing grace. And He has done this, not on account of Israel's merits, for neither its numbers nor its righteousness would constitute any claim upon Him for His regard (vii. 7; ix. 4—6); but from His *love* for Israel (vii. 8; xxiii. 6 (5)) and from the faithfulness with which, in spite of all its backslidings, He would nevertheless be true to the promise sworn to its forefathers (vii. 8, cf. i. 8; iv. 31, 37; vii. 12; viii. 18 *al.*), and forbear from destroying it (ix. 7—x. 11). In fulfilment of that promise, Jehovah has wonderfully delivered Israel from its bondage in Egypt (iv. 32—38; vi. 21—23; vii. 18 f.; viii. 2 ff.; xi. 2—6 and frequently), He has led it safely through the great and terrible wilderness (i. 19; ii. 7; viii. 15), He has assigned it a home in a bounteous and fertile land..." (Driver, *Introd. to Deuteronomy*, p. xx).

v. 4. "*Thou art He, my King...*" The thought of God as the King is one of the leading thoughts of the Korah Psalms (see *Introduction to Korah and Asaph Psalms*).

The context shews that "*My King*" might have been written "*Our King.*" The Kingship of God is manifested in delivering His People. Compare the parallel (Asaph) Psalm lxxiv. 12, "Yet God is my

5 Through Thee we shall push^a our enemies,
 Through Thy name shall trample our assailants.
 6 For not in my bow do I trust,
 Nor is it my sword that saves me.
 7 But Thou didst save us from our foes,
 And those that hate us Thou hast put to shame.
 8 In God we have given praise all day long,
 And shall give thanks to Thy Name for ever.

^a or *gore**Silver Trumpets.*

But now it seems
 just the reverse.

9 Nay but Thou hast cast^b us off and disgraced us,
 And goest not forth with our hosts^b.

^b Ps. lx. 10
(12)

King of old, Working salvation in the midst of the earth." Thus the Song of Moses ends (Exod. xv. 18) "YHVH is become King for ever and ever." There is a whole group of Psalms in the Third Collection whose central thought is the Kingship of God upon Earth, their motto being "YHVH has become King" (see on Ps. xciii.). The second Isaiah pictures this Kingship of God as a Divine Epiphany, Is. lii. 7 ff. "How beautiful upon the mountains.....that saith unto Zion, Thy God is become King!.....for they shall see, eye to eye, when YHVH returneth to Zion." Such a Divine Epiphany is the burden of Ps. xlv.

v. 5. "*Through Thee we shall push our enemies.*"—The verb is properly used only of an *ox* (or *ram* Dan. viii. 4, cf. xi. 40, Ezek. xxxiv. 21) *pushing* with its horns. It is found in the oldest Code (Exod. xxi. 28 f. 31, 32, 36), but only in the literal sense. The bold idea of God pushing the enemies of Israel as a Bull is taken, I believe, from the Song of Moses in Deut. xxxiii. 17, where it is said of the Joseph Tribe, whose emblem was the Bull, "He is the first-born of his Bull....And his horns are the horns of the wild-ox; with them he shall *push* the nations, all of them, (to) the ends of the earth...."

v. 8. "*In God we have given praise..... And shall give thanks....*"—The reference is to Psalms like the *Hallelu* and *Hodu* Psalms, which might be regarded as the national *Te Deums* of Israel.

The Korah and still more the Asaph guilds were specially connected with such Psalms, as may be seen from the following passages in which these two verbs are used together. 1 Chron. xvi. 4 ff.; xxiii. 30; xxv. 3, with context; 2 Chr. v. 13, where also the trumpets are mentioned; cf. vii. 6; Ezra iii. 11; Neh. xii. 24, 46.

vv. 9—16. These eight verses may be contrasted, almost verse by verse, with the first eight verses of the Psalm.

In the days of old.

v. 1. God was ours.
 v. 2. He fought for us.
 v. 3. His favour was shewn by His help.
 v. 4. He gave an angel-charge for the People of His love.
 v. 5. He gave His People the strength of a unicorn.
 v. 6. They had no need then of bow or sword.
 v. 7. He then put our foes to shame.
 v. 8. Our life then rang with the sound of thanks and praise.

In the present day.

v. 9. Now He has cast us off.
 v. 10. He fights against us.
 v. 11. He has numbered us for slaughter and scattered us as chaff.
 v. 12. He sets no value on His People.
 v. 13. He makes our weakness a scoff and derision.
 v. 14. He makes us now an object of contemptuous pity.
 v. 15. He now puts the shame upon ourselves.
 v. 16. Our life now rings with the sound of reviling and blasphemy.

The sharp contrast between the promise of the past and the disappointed hopes of the present is characteristic of the Asaph and Korah Psalms.

10 Thou makest us turn back from the foe:
And those that hate us plunder at their will.

v. 9. "*Nay but Thou hast cast us off.*"—The passages in the Psalter in which this verb is used are as follows. Elohist *Korah* [Pss. xliii. 2 (cf. note p. 179); xlv. 9 (10)]; Jehovistic *Korah* (Pss. lxxxviii. 14 (15); lxxxix. 38 (39)); *Asaph* [lxxiv. 1; lxxvii. 7 (8)]. The only other passages being Ps. lx. 1 (3) and 10 (12); this last passage occurring in duplicate in Ps. cviii. 11 (12). Thus the word is found four times in the Korah Psalms, twice in the Asaph and only in one other Psalm, that too being a Psalm which has other striking points in common with our present Psalm (see next note). This fact may help us to determine whether these Psalms are or are not to be grouped as Maccabaeian Psalms.

"*And goest not forth with our hosts.*"—These words occur again in Ps. lx. 10 (12) and in the duplicate passage Ps. cviii. 11 (12). Now Ps. lx. has been ascribed to the age of Josiah (see Graetz) on the grounds that it must have been written when the Kingdom of Judah was still standing and when there was no antagonism with Ephraim (v. 7). Moab, Edom and Philistia are claimed (v. 8) as belonging to God and therefore to God's People. In Ps. lx., as in Ps. xlv. the expectation raised by prophecy had not been fulfilled. What was that prophecy? Graetz suggests Zephaniah, who prophesied in the early days of Josiah (c. 620 B.C.) and promised that Judah should possess the Lands of Philistia (Ch. ii. 5, 7) of Moab and of Ammon (Ch. ii. 8, 9). Compare also Zeph. iii. 15—20, a passage which might easily lend itself to that exaggerated view of the inviolability of Jerusalem against which Jeremiah had, somewhat later, so painfully to contend. The author of the prophecy Zech. xii.—xiv. possibly belonged to the same period, i.e. between the fall of Josiah (B.C. 609) and the Exile (B.C. 587) and should be studied in connexion with the Korah Psalms. See also p. 203.

Never since the days of David had there been a time so full of promise as the age of Josiah. The Reformation had been thorough; Deuteronomy with all its promises of empire had been accepted as the voice of God; the world-power of Assyria was already tottering to its fall. No wonder if from the lips of Prophets the expectation went forth 'Lord wilt Thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?' Then came the crushing blow—the defeat and death of Josiah at Megiddo!—the reaction almost the despair!

*"Nay but Thou hast cast us off and disgraced us
And goest not forth with our hosts."*

As far as this verse is concerned it seems to suit the days of Josiah better than any other period of Jewish history. It must however be confessed that the word "*Hosts*," as applied to the People of Israel, points to a later date; this use of the word is one of the peculiar characteristics of the Priest Code (P) (see Driver *Lit. of O. T.* p. 126, First Edition).

The passages in which it is thus used (all from P), are as follows:—

Exod. ii. 26: vii. 4: xii. 17, 41, 51: Numb. i. 3, 52: ii. (the whole of this Chapter should be carefully studied, containing as it does twenty references to this word) Numb. x. 14—28 (13 references); xxxiii. 1.

In Josh. v. 14, 15 the thought is different. Thus we find the idea of the "*hosts of Israel*" first in the Priest Code B.C. 444 at a time when the returned exiles under Nehemiah could scarcely be said to possess an "army" at all.

The locus classicus for the use of *Ṣābāth* "*hosts*" when applied to Israel is Numbers, Chaps. ii. and x. which have always been interpreted by the Jews in a mystical sense. If the reader will study Numbers ii. making a plan of the order of the Camp, placing the Tribes on the circumference of a circle in the position there named, he will see that on the *east* side, under the standard of Judah (? the Lion) are ranged three "*hosts*" (viz. of Judah, Issachar and Zebulun).

On the *south* side, under the standard of Reuben (? the Man) are ranged three "*hosts*" (viz. of Reuben, Simeon and Gad).

On the *west* side, under the standard of Ephraim (the Ox) are ranged three "*hosts*" (viz. of Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh).

On the *north* side, under the standard of Dan (? the Eagle) are ranged three "*hosts*" (viz. of Dan, Asher and Naphtali).

In other words the Twelve Tribes (though as Tribes they had ceased to exist) were pictured in Four Camps, of Judah, Reuben, Ephraim and Dan, each under its own Sign, at the great points of the circle,

- 11 Thou givest us as mere sheep for the shambles^a;
And hast winnowed us out among the nations. ^a for food
- 12 Thou sellest^b Thy People for nought,
And makest no gain by their price! ^b Is. lii. 3
- 13 Thou makest us^c "a scorn to our neighbours,
A scoff and derision to those around us^c." ^c See Ps. lxxix. 4
- 14 Thou makest us a proverb^d among the Nations,
A laughing-stock^e among the Peoples. ^d Deut. xxviii. 37
^e lit. a shaking of the head
- 15 All day long my disgrace is before me,
And the shame of my face hath covered me,
- 16 By reason of the voice of the reviler and blasphemer;
By reason of the enemy^f and the revengeful^f. ^f Ps. viii. 2

East, South, West and North respectively. If we compare this with the Cherubim in Ezek. i. 10 we shall understand the thought which the author of Numbers ii. intended to convey. Each of the four "Living Creatures," who are the Throne-bearers of God, had "the face of a Man; and they four had the face of a Lion on the right side; and they four had the face of an Ox on the left side; they four had also the face of an Eagle." Thus the intention of the Priest Code is to connect the Camp of Israel on earth with the Camp of God in Heaven, the "hosts" of Israel with the Hosts of God. As the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac were gathered under the four great points East, South, West and North (i.e. Vernal Equinox, Summer Solstice, Autumnal Equinox, Winter Solstice) so the Twelve Tribes were gathered under the Four Camps each having relation to its corresponding point. I do not wish to imply that this conception was *new* in the time of the Priest Code indeed I shall have occasion to shew that the relation between Ephraim (the House of Joseph) and the West (Autumnal Equinox) was exceedingly old and that both *Joseph* and *Asaph* were derived from (or directly connected with) the root *asph* (אִשָּׁף) from which also the Autumnal Feast of the *Asiph* (Exod. xxiii. 16; xxxiv. 22 both JE), which afterwards became the Feast of Ingathering (or Tabernacles), was derived. We now turn to Numbers x. which professes to give the order in which the Four Camps marched from Sinai. It will be noted that the chapter begins with the ordinance of the silver trumpets *and the promise that God will hear the sound of the trumpet*, v. 9 "And when you enter into battle in your land against the foe that presses on you, you shall blow an alarm with the trumpets, that you may bring yourselves to remembrance before YHVH your God and may be saved from your enemies."

This promise we may call the Promise of the Trumpet. This Promise also has its root in times far older than the age of Priest Code (see *Introduction to Korah and Asaph Psalms*). It is this Promise which, to our Psalmist, has not been fulfilled; "Nay but Thou hast cast us off and disgraced us, *And goest not forth with our hosts.*"

If we may suppose that, in the Temple use of this Psalm, the interval between vv. 8 and 9 was filled by a blast on the silver trumpets the meaning would become still more clear. If the Psalm were set to music there should be three pauses, broken by the appeal of the Trumpets as I have indicated in the margin.

v. 11. "*And hast winnowed us out...*" i.e. scattered us like chaff from the threshing-floor. This word, not found in Deuteronomy, is common in Ezekiel (v. 10, 12: vi. 5: xii. 14, 15: xx. 23: xxii. 15). The same use of the word is found in 1 Kings xiv. 15, evidently a late passage, and in Lev. xxvi. 33. Zechariah [i. 19 (ii. 2): 21 (ii. 4)] also speaks of the "horns which scattered Judah." The very sound of the words (*sara* 'to scatter,' *sarg* 'to sow') may have suggested the thought that such *winnowing* was really a *sowing*, "He that winnowed Israel will gather him" (Jer. xxxi. 10), "I will sow them among the peoples" (Zech. x. 9 see context). Though the scattering be a punishment of Israel's sin, still, under God's Providence it is a seed sown among the Gentiles which shall bring in an abundant harvest.

v. 16. "*By reason of the voice of the reviler.*" The word *hērēf* "to defy," "revile" or "reproach" is very common in the Korah and Asaph Psalms. Thus *Korah Psalms* (xlii. 10 (11)) "mine adversaries

We suffer not for forsaking God but for serving Him.

17 All this (too) hath befallen us when we have not forgotten Thee;

When we have not been false to Thy Covenant.

18 Our heart hath not turned back,

Nor have our steps swerved from Thy path;

19 That Thou should'st have crushed us in the place of dragons, And covered us with the Shadow-of-Death.

20 Had we forgotten the name of our God,

And spread forth our hands to any strange god;

21 Would not God have searched this out?

For He taketh note of the secrets of the heart.

22 Surely for Thy sake are we slain all the day!

Are accounted mere sheep^a for the slaughter!

^a v. 11

Silver Trumpets.

revile me...": xliv. 16 (17): lxxxix. 51 (52) "Thine enemies have reviled...they have reviled the footsteps of Thine Anointed"). *Asaph Psalms* (lxxiv. 10 "How long shall the enemy revile"...v. 18 "The enemy hath reviled...": lxxix. 12 "wherewith they have reviled Thee").

The word is used of the enemies of Israel regarded as the enemies of God, e.g. of Goliath (1 Sam. xvii.) and of Sennacherib (Is. xxxvii.) where it is translated 'defy' or 'reproach.' Compare also Zeph. ii. 8 "I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children of Ammon whereby they have reproached thy people and magnified themselves against their border" (see also v. 10). Thus we see that the word does not in any way support the argument for a Maccabaeen date.

v. 18. "Our heart hath not turned back."—These words must have been written in an age of Reformation, but Commentators go too far when they assert that such a claim to sinlessness on the part of Israel could only have been made in Maccabaeen times. The Psalmists never forgot that "Merit lives from man to man And not from man O Lord to Thee." A similar claim to 'sinlessness' is found in Pss. vii.: xvii. 1—5: xviii. 20—24: xxvi. 1—3: xxxviii. 20: lxix. 7 (contrast v. 5): cxix. 22—24: 51—56 &c.

We might perhaps paraphrase as follows:—"If God be with us why has all this befallen us? (cf. Judg. vi. 13). We are not conscious of breaking His Covenant; otherwise we might have expected such a disaster. The Nations prosper by injustice." The difficulty of the Psalmist is not unlike that of Habakkuk (Chap. i.) who prophesied shortly after the fall of Josiah.

v. 19. "That Thou should'st have crushed us in the place of dragons." These words do not imply the locality of the defeat but the condition of the defeated. Kay well paraphrases, "Till we are become a mass of ruins, of which jackals are the tenants."

v. 20. "Strange god"—*El zar*. This expression is only found here and in the *Asaph Psalm* lxxxix. 9 (10): but the form *zarim* "strangers" is used for 'strange (gods)' in Deut. xxxii. 16: Jer. ii. 25: iii. 13: Is. xliiii. 12. The more common expression is *Elohēy Nakar* literally "the gods of the stranger."

v. 22. "Surely for Thy sake..." These words would doubtless suit the times of the Maccabees, but they would also suit much earlier times; indeed we find a parallel in Jer. xv. 15 ff. where Israel in the person of Jeremiah appeals to God as knowing the joy with which he had received the words of Deuteronomy and had embraced the Covenant, in spite of which God has left him to suffer: "Thou (*emphatic*) knowest O YHVH; remember me and visit me and avenge me of my persecutors....Take note that for Thy sake I have suffered reproach (cf. Ps. lxix. 7). Thy words were found (i.e. the words of Deuteronomy?) and I devoured them, yea Thy words were to me the very joy and delight of my heart; for Thy Name is named upon me (i.e. I have taken Thy Covenant upon me) O YHVH God of hosts.....Why is my grief perpetual and my stroke so grievous? It refuseth to be healed! Why shouldst Thou utterly be unto me as a deceiver and as waters that fail?" (cf. Ps. xlii. 1, f.). Thus, as far as this verse is concerned, our Psalm might have

- 23 Awake! why sleepest Thou, O Lord^a?
 Arouse Thee! cast^b (us) not off for ever!
 24 Why should'st Thou hide Thy Face,
 Forgetting our suffering and oppression?
 25 For our soul is bowed^c down to the dust,
 And our body^d cleaveth to the earth.

^a Adonai
^b Ps. xliiii. 2

^c Cf. Refrain
 of Ps. xlii.,
 xliiii.

^d lit. belly

Silver Trumpets.

- 26 Arise! as our Salvation,
 And redeem us for Thy lovingkindness' sake.

been written in the troublous times which followed the death of Josiah at Megiddo (B.C. 609) by a Psalmist who had hoped great things from the Reformation (B.C. 622) and who found it hard (like his contemporary Habakkuk) to reconcile the facts of life with the justice of God.

We must not however assume that our Psalm necessarily belongs to this period. History repeats itself; and there is at least one other period (besides the Maccabean times) in which the words of this verse would have been full of meaning. I refer to the period between the Restoration under Zerubbabel (B.C. 516) and the utter desolation in which Nehemiah found the City and Temple in B.C. 445.

Unfortunately this period is almost a blank, but it is clear that the news brought by Hanani from Jerusalem ("the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire" Neh. i. 3) which caused such deep grief to Nehemiah in 446 B.C. could not possibly refer to the destruction by the Babylonians 150 years before. Indeed it is evident (Ezra iv. 1—6) that the great hopes raised by Zerubbabel met with cruel disappointment, and Dr Sellin is perhaps right in assuming that he died a martyr's death (see *Critical Review* for Jan. 1899, p. 61 ff.). The time was one of mockery and religious persecution, "*Surely for Thy sake are we slain all the day.*"

Such words wrung from the heart of Israel in such an hour shew a trust in God which is stronger than death. On the surface they might seem to claim more love in Israel than in God, but St Paul brings out their true meaning when he inverts the thought, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written,

*For Thy sake we are killed all the day long;
 We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us..." (Rom. viii. 35 ff.). The context here abundantly shews that the love which can bear such a strain is not our love to Christ but His love to us.

v. 23. "*Awake! why sleepest Thou.*" The Levites used the last four verses of this Psalm as an appeal to God against the heathen. The passage, Tosifta *Sota* xiii. 9, is as follows:—"The awakensers, These are the Levites who say, from the dais, '*Why sleepest Thou O YHVH.*' But does He then sleep? for has it not already been said, 'The Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps' (Ps. cxxi. 4)? But the fact is when Israel are in trouble and the Nations are in security they say, '*Awake! why sleepest Thou.*'" The High Priest Johannes Hyrkanos I. forbade this use of the Psalm in the Temple (Graetz, *Hist.* III.² 120). We must not suppose that he regarded the words as irreverent, but that in seasons of prosperity their use would be meaningless. Grünwald calls attention to the interesting fact that the Christian Church, borrowing from the Synagogue, used these verses as an Introit for the Mass '*contra paganos.*'

v. 26. "*Arise.*" This prayer, which has found its way into our Litany, has its origin in the ancient passage (Numb. x. 35 JE). "And it came to pass, when the Ark set forward, that Moses said,

*Arise YHVH and let Thine enemies be scattered,
 And let them that hate Thee flee before thee."*

The prayer was used in times of national calamity (Jer. ii. 27) "*Arise and save us!*" and implied the expectation of a Divine Theophany whereby God would interpose for the salvation of His People (Is.

xxviii. 21). It is, as we might expect, chiefly confined to the Psalms (Pss. iii. 7 (8) : vii. 6 (7) : ix. 19 (20) : x. 12 : xvii. 13 : xxxv. 2 : xlv. 26 (27) : lxxiv. 22 : lxxxii. 8 : cxxxii. 8 cf. lxxviii. 1 (2), 2 Chr. vi. 41 also Pss. xii. 5 (6) : cii. 13 (14)).

"And redeem us." Two Hebrew words have contributed to the Christian thought of *Redemption* (1st) *Pada*, "to redeem" used here, in which the idea of *ransom* became uppermost through the fact that the Priest Code restricted it to the redemption of the *Firstborn* (Numbers xviii. &c.) or of a *slave* (Lev. xix. 20 &c.). In the Prophets and in Deuteronomy the word had been used in the wider sense of *deliverance*, especially of the Redemption from Egypt (Deut. vii. 8 : ix. 26 : xiii. 5 (6) : xv. 15 : xxi. 8 : xxiv. 18, cf. 2 Sam. vii. 23). Israel is God's *Firstborn*; God must *redeem* him from all evil. In this sense *Pada* is frequently used in the Psalms (xxv. 22 : xxvi. 11 : xxxi. 5 (6) : xxxiv. 22 (23) : xlv. 26 (27) : xlix. 7 (8), 15 (16) : lv. 18 (19) : lxix. 18 (19) : lxxi. 23 : lxxviii. 42 : cxix. 134 : cxxx. 8). (2nd) The other word *Gaal*, "to redeem," carries our thoughts to the *gōel* who because he was "next of kin" had the right "to redeem" (Ruth iii. 13 &c.). The conception of God as the *Gōel* of Israel is characteristic of the Second Isaiah (Is. xli. 14 : xliii. 1, 14 : xlv. 6, 22, 23, 24 : xlvii. 4 : xlviii. 17, 20 : xlix. 7, 26 : lii. 3, 9 : liv. 5, 8 : lix. 20 : lx. 16 : lxii. 12 : lxiii. 4, 9, 16). This word *gāal* is also used in the Psalms (Pss. lxix. 18 (19) : lxxii. 14 : lxxiv. 2 : lxxvii. 15 : lxxviii. 35 : ciii. 4 : cvi. 10 : cvii. 2, also xix. 14 (15) and cxix. 154). Thus we see that both words are based upon relationship between God and Israel, a relationship which, if we may dare so to say, throws the duty of Redemption upon God because it is nearer than any earthly relationship, "No man can by any means redeem a brother."...."Nevertheless God will redeem my soul" (Ps. xlix. *vv.* 7, 15).

PSALM XLV.

All attempts to explain this Psalm as the epithalamium of a Court poet (whether on the marriage of David and a daughter of the King of Geshur (2 Sam. iii.), or of Solomon and the daughter of Pharaoh, or of Ahab and Jezebel, or of Joram and Athaliah, or of Alexander Balas and Cleopatra (1 Macc. x.), or of Ptolemy Philadelphus and Arsinoe), seem to be eminently unsatisfactory. But the critics have done well in reminding us that the Psalm must have had a clear and definite meaning for the age in which it was written, and that any attempt to explain it merely as a prophecy of the future must be rejected. Who then was the Hero that was to conquer the Nations with such strange weapons? And who is his Bride? I answer that the Hero is 'Israel,' here conceived as the Servant of God, exactly as in the book of the Second Isaiah, which was written not long before (see notes).

The "Bride" I interpret as Zion or Jerusalem, who, according to the Second Isaiah, was to be "married" by "her sons" (see note *v.* 9). I maintain that the Psalm was written as an allegory, and that the language would necessarily suggest the mystical meaning to the Hebrew reader (see notes *vv.* 12, 13, 14).

As to the outer form of the allegory it may very possibly have been suggested by the Babylonian legend of the contest between Marduk¹ and the Dragon of Darkness

¹ On the arming of Marduk by his father Ea, his victory and his reward as 'the King,' see T. G. Pinches, *Religious Ideas of the Babylonians*, pp. 1-6.

(Tiamat). Israel is God's 'Son,' and is armed by Him to fight against all the powers of evil, and to conquer by weapons that are not carnal. After the Contest comes the Throne and the Marriage Feast. Such I believe to have been the thoughts in the mind of the writer of this Psalm. The Christian interpretation is obvious, and there is the less need here to insist upon it inasmuch as the Writer of the Apocalypse has given us an inspired Commentary on our Psalm in his nineteenth Chapter.

We have already called attention to the fact that a relation exists between the list of the *Elohistic* Korah Psalms and the list of the *Jehovistic* Korah Psalms. Thus (p. 173) we saw that Psalm xlii.—iii. the *first* of the Elohistic Korah Psalms corresponds closely with Ps. lxxxiv. the *first* of the Jehovistic Korah Psalms: also (p. 181) that Ps. xliv. the *second* of the Elohistic list answers to Ps. lxxxv. the *second* of the Jehovistic list.

We now invite the reader to compare our present Psalm, the *third* of the Elohistic Korah Psalms, with Ps. lxxxvii., which is the *third* of the Jehovistic Korah Psalms in which Jerusalem becomes the Mother-City of the whole world. Such a comparison will both illustrate and confirm the interpretation we have given of the Bride as Jerusalem the City of God.

PSALM XLV.

Prologue, cf. vv. 16, 17. 1 My heart overflows with a goodly theme,
It is I that speak, my subject^a is the King,
My tongue is the pen of a ready scribe.

^a or, *my poem*

v. 1. "*My heart overflows.*" The rapid movement of this verse in the Original suggests the excitement in the mind of the Seer. The vision is too wonderful for utterance. The thoughts of his heart chase and crowd one another like waters bursting forth from some abundant spring.

"*My subject is the King.*" Literally "*My works are to (or concerning) a King.*" Of the Greek versions Theod. and possibly Aquila and Sym. (see Field's note) read "*my poem,*" which well expresses the meaning. The usual rendering, "*I speak of the things which I have made unto the King*" (P.B.V., cf. E.V. and R.V. text), is obtained by neglecting the pause accent after the words "*I speak.*" This rendering also neglects the antithesis between the lowliness of the speaker and the greatness of his theme. The Midrash (compare Yalkut) suggests that the *overflowing heart* is already a *voice* in the ears of God, *the King*. Thus:—"My heart overflows—It is like the case of a man who wanted to go up to the tribune; he takes a folded sheet of paper, opens it and gives it to the Judge; the Judge says to him, Why hast thou not written it? He replies, I had not time. So with the Sons of Korah; they had not time to speak with their lips, so they spoke with their hearts. Therefore it is written, *I am speaking, my work is for the King.*" The Midrash is explaining how the Sons of Korah were saved by a moment of repentance when their father Korah was swallowed up (Numb. xxvi. 10, 11). The thought of God as *the King*, ruling upon earth, is one of the characteristics of the Korah Psalms (see *Introduction to Korah and Asaph Psalms*).

"*My tongue is the pen &c.*" Here, as often, the first verse is explained by the last, the Prologue by the Epilogue:—"I will celebrate thy name throughout all generations &c." As the scribe hands down to future times the great deeds of the past, so shall thy fame live in my poem, "*my tongue is the pen of a ready scribe.*"

The poet addresses the Hero. The praise of the Hero who goes forth to war.

His weapons are not carnal.

- 2 Thou art fairer far than the sons of men,
 Grace is outpoured on thy lips,
 Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.
 3 Gird thee sword on thigh, O Mighty One!
 Even with thy splendour and thy majesty;
 4 [And with thy majesty*]—Ride on and prosper!
 In the cause^b of truth and meekly-gotten right,
 And thy right-hand shall teach thee awe-inspiring deeds.

* or, *And bend the bow*
^b See *Sept.*

v. 2. "Thou art fairer far than the sons of men..." The Targum translates, "Thy beauty O King Messiah surpasses the sons of men, the Spirit of Prophecy is bestowed upon thy lips." The natural illustration is from Christ's first sermon at Nazareth, when "all bare him witness and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth" (Luke iv. 22). Words of grace may easily become a sharp sword: so when St John expounds the Vision of our Psalm he adds, "And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword" Rev. xix. 15.

v. 2. "Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever." The connexion of thought is as follows:—The physical beauty and gracious speech of the Hero is seen by the poet to be the fitting garment of the beautiful soul within—for "Soul is form and doth the body make." Therefore, like Samuel, the poet hears God's voice, "Arise, anoint him: for this is he" (1 Sam. xvi. 12). This explains the word "Therefore."

v. 3. "O Mighty One." This is one of the titles of the Messiah in Is. ix. 6, where the "Prince of Peace" is also called "the Mighty God." See also on Ps. xxiv. 8 "a hero in battle."

v. 4. "And with thy majesty ride on &c." Lit. "And thy majesty prosper ride on &c." There is some doubt here as to the text. The word *V'hadorka*, "and thy majesty," which ends 3^b is repeated (possibly through error) at the beginning of v. 4. The P.B.V. "Good luck have thou with thine honour" is possible but strangely abrupt. The Versions vary greatly, but the *Sept.* is by far the most probable and the most interesting, viz. *καὶ ἐρρεῖων, καὶ κατευοδοῦ καὶ βασιλευε*, i.e. "And bend (the bow) and prosper in thy way, and reign." Thus they read *V'hadrēk* "and bend the bow" (cf. Greek and Hebrew in Ps. vii. 12; Jer. ix. 2 (3) &c.) instead of *V'hadorka*, "and thy majesty." This would require no other change than that of the vowel points, and I fully believe it to have been the original reading. Clearly the Hero should be armed with a bow, since mention is made of his arrows (v. 5). The picture is thus brought into still closer harmony with Rev. vi. 2, "I saw and behold a white horse: and He that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto Him, and He went forth conquering and to conquer" (cf. Rev. xix. 11 ff.).

"In the cause of truth and meekly-gotten right." The last words might be rendered "meek righteousness" or "meekness (and) righteousness." (*Anvah*, "meekness," "lowliness," applied to God Ps. xviii. 35 (36), is identical with *qnavah*.) In the only other passage where the two words occur together, viz. Zeph. ii. 3, the context is suggestive: "Seek YHVH.....seek righteousness, seek meekness." In the later form of the language, and especially in the Second Isaiah, "righteousness" scarcely expresses the meaning of the Hebrew *tsedek* or *tsedaka* which might at times almost be translated *victory*, denoting as it does a *victorious manifestation of right* in the presence of the world. See Is. xli. 2, 10; xlii. 6; xlv. 13. Thus the translation "meekly-gotten right" expresses the thought of a victory won by meekness which underlies the words of the Original. The Vision of the Conqueror from Edom (Is. lxiii. 1 ff.) should be carefully compared, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, in blood-red garments from Bosrah? this that is splendid in his raiment, swaying in the plenitude of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, that am mighty to save..." Here too the words "speak in righteousness" might almost be translated "speak of victory." St John has combined the Vision of the Conqueror in our Psalm with that of the Conqueror from Edom: see Rev. xix. 11—16.

Dr Neale says, "There is much reason to suppose that the ceremonies with which the Church fenced admission to the order of knighthood were drawn in a great measure from this verse. There was the solemn *girding on* of the sword in front of the altar, the triple vow (i.) to defend the

5 Thine arrows are sharp;—Peoples fall under thee;
(They^a fall) in the heart of the enemies of the King.

^a i.e. the arrows

The joy, reward and marriage-feast of the Hero after the victory.

6 Thy throne (is as^b) God, for ever and ever,
A sceptre of equity^c is the sceptre of thy kingdom.
7 Thou hast loved right and hated wrong,
Therefore Elohim thy God^d hath anointed thee
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

^b or, O God

^c Is. xi. 4

^d or, God thy God, cf. Ps. l. 7

faith,—the word of *truth*; (ii.) the cause of widows and orphans,—the word of *meekness*; (iii.) to be loyal, just and true,—the word of *righteousness*; followed by the new-made knight mounting a courser, and *riding on*, or caracoling, fully armed, to display his strength and dexterity.”

v. 5. “*Peoples fall under thee.*” The old Assyrian sculptures often represent a King or Divine hero in gigantic proportion upon the field of battle, with whole Peoples falling before his single arm.

v. 6. “*Thy throne (is as) God...*” These words are capable of more than one translation. If we came upon them apart from the context we should no doubt translate “*Thy throne, O God...*” as in E.V. and R.V. text). Aquila certainly took this view; the other Greek versions retain the ambiguity of the Hebrew. The objection however arises from the context which shews beyond all doubt that the being who is addressed is the Hero. It cannot be denied that in the poet’s Vision this being, this ‘David’ of the future, was semi-divine; it is therefore *possible* that both here and in verse 7 he may have been addressed as *Elohim*, i.e. ‘God’ (cf. Ps. lxxxii. 6). Such a form of address, however, would be strangely abrupt, and involves an anticipation of Christian doctrine which the Christian at least has no need to assume. Before we dismiss this view there are two passages in its favour which ought in fairness to be considered.

1st, Zech. xii. 8 “and the very weakest of them in that day shall be as David, and the House of David shall be as God, as the Angel of YHVH before them.”

and, Ps. lxxxix. 27 “I too will make him (My) Firstborn,

A Most High to the kings of the earth.”

In this last passage the word *elyōn*, “*most High*,” is a Name or Title of God in every other passage of the Psalter, where it occurs twenty-two times. The rendering “*Higher than the kings of the earth*,” though it may be defended from Deut. xxvi. 19, xxviii. 1, is far too weak.

Thus it is just possible that in our present Psalm the Hero might be addressed as *Elohim*, “*Thy throne, O Elohim, is for ever and ever.*” We shall probably be on safer ground if we translate “*Thy throne (is as) God, for ever and ever.*” The point of the promise to David was the permanency of his throne. (Cf. 2 Sam. vii. 12—16; Ps. lxxxix. 29 (30); 36 (37).) This promise may at first have been understood merely as an unbroken succession of kings “sitting upon the throne of David,” but no one can read Is. ix. 5 f. or our present Psalm without seeing that the hopes of the Prophets were fixed upon a Son of David who in his own person should combine all God’s promises for man. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews quotes our Psalm in Chapter i. 8 f., where Bishop Westcott would translate “*but of the Son (He saith), God is Thy throne for ever and ever.*” The argument of the writer, in any case, depends upon the *permanence of the throne* and not upon the doubtful question whether the word “*God*” be or be not in the vocative case.

“*A sceptre of equity.*” The word for “*sceptre*” often signifies a *rod* (for correction). The best comment is found in Is. xi. 4 where it is said of the Messiah, “*with righteousness shall he judge the poor and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod (sceptre) of his mouth &c.*” The weapons of his warfare were not the weapons of earth but the weapons of God (see Introduction to Ps. xxi.); so too his reward shall be a God-like reward.

v. 7. “*Therefore.*” Compare v. 2 and also Phil. ii. 9. God does not reward humility with fulness of barns but with fulness of joy. When Hildebrand said, “I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and therefore I die in exile,” he did not well consider this.

“*With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*” As the High Priest was distinguished above his

8 Myrrh and aloes and cassia are all thy garments ;
 From ivory palaces harp-strains* make thee glad ;
 9 Kings' daughters are among thine honourable women ;
 The Queen is placed at thy right hand in Ophir gold.

* as Ps. cl. 4

fellow priests by the anointing oil of Consecration, so this King shall be distinguished above his fellow kings by the anointing oil of joy. The form in which these joys are pictured (*vv.* 8, 9) is necessarily sensuous. How little such joys, taken literally, could suffice may be judged from, Eccles. ii. 1—11; but the form is only the outer clothing of an allegory.

v. 9. "*The Queen.*"—The unusual word *Shēgāl* for "*Queen*" (only here and Neh. ii. 6; Dan. v. 2, 3, 23) points to a late date.

The Queen in the allegory represents Jerusalem, the Bride of God, here regarded as the Bride of the Hero; while the "*King's daughters*" are the Cities of the world who are also in a real though lowlier sense his queens. But the question naturally arises 'If Jerusalem be the Bride of God is it not unnatural that she should be regarded in this Psalm as the Bride of the Hero-King who represents the ideal "Israel"?' This question is important and must be fairly considered.

The thought of God as the Husband of His People has its roots in the word *Baal* which signified both *Lord* and *Husband*. Thus, Jer. iii. 14 "Return O backsliding children, saith YHVH, for I am a husband unto you." The second chapter of Hosea is founded entirely on this relationship between God and Israel. (See especially *vv.* 2 (4), 7 (9), 16 (18).) The Bride in this chapter is not the City, Jerusalem, but the People, Israel (see *v.* 15).

Strictly speaking, the Bride of God in the Old Testament is not the City but the People. There are however exceptions: e.g. Ezek. xvi. Throughout this chapter Jerusalem is the Bride of God; her father "was an Amorite" and her "mother an Hittite" (*v.* 3); nevertheless God had loved her, had clothed her with "broidered work" (*v.* 10, cf. *v.* 14 of our Psalm) and made her His own; and though she had been unfaithful she should at last be restored and receive her sister-cities (*v.* 61) as the dowry of her new espousals (cf. our Psalm *vv.* 10—15).

Two passages from the Second Isaiah are specially worthy of study inasmuch as they were probably written not long before the time of our present Psalm. The first is Is. liv. where the Barren Woman is Zion to whom God promises to return, "For thy husband is thy Maker—YHVH Sabaôth is His name" (*v.* 5). The other passage is Is. lxii. 1—5. "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until her righteousness go forth as the day-spring...And the Nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory...No more shalt thou be named 'Forsaken,' neither shall thy land any more be named 'Desolation'; but thou shalt be called 'My-delight-is-in-her' and thy land 'Married'; for YHVH delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." Here the City or the Land is the Bride and the Bridegroom is not God but Israel—"thy sons marry thee." The old names (a) 'Forsaken' (by God), (b) 'Desolation' (as deserted by her sons) answer respectively to (a) 'My-delight-is-in-her' (the return of God), (b) 'Married' (the return of Israel).

Thus if the Hero in our Psalm be the representative of 'Israel' it is quite in accordance with the usage of the Second Isaiah to regard him as the Bridegroom and the City as his Bride.

This idea is developed in Rev. xix., a chapter which clearly alludes to our Psalm (see marginal references). In this chapter, after the Harlot-City (Babylon), who is helped by the Dragon (xii. 1—17; xiii. 2, 4; xvii. 3), has been judged (*v.* 2), the Kingship of God upon earth is established (*v.* 6), and we read "the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife (the New Jerusalem) has made herself ready" (*v.* 7). Once more, in Rev. xxi., "the holy City, New Jerusalem" is seen "coming down, out of heaven, from God, adorned as a Bride for her (own) husband." The husband being not God but the Lamb.

The poet addresses the Bride. She must win with the same weapons of self-renunciation.

- 10 Hearken O daughter and see, incline thine ear,
 Forget thy people and thy father's house;
 11 So let the King have joy in thy beauty,
 For he is thy lord^a and worship thou him.
 12 Then the Daughter of Tyre (shall come) with a gift;
 The wealthiest peoples shall court thy^b favour.

^a *Adonai*

^b *i.e. of the Queen*

The joy, reward and marriage-feast of the Bride after her victory.

- 13 All glorious^c is the King's Daughter with pearls,
 Of ouches of gold is her clothing;
 14 In brodered array^d she is led^e to the King,
 Her virgin-friends in her train—(all) brought unto thee.

^c *Is. iv. 5
Eph. v. 27*

^d *Rev. xix. 8
Ezek. xvi. 10*

^e *v. 15*

v. 10. "Hearken O daughter..." Verses 10—15 which are addressed to the future Bride form properly another Act of the Drama; consequent in thought upon the first Act (*vv. 2—9*) but not consequent in time. The Bride is here considered, not as the throned Queen of verse 9 but in the process of becoming Queen. She, like her lord, has first a battle to fight—the same battle of self-renunciation, though the form the struggle takes is necessarily pictured as the conflicting claims in the maiden's heart between the old home of her birth and the new home of her husband that is to be.

"Forget thine own people and thy father's house." There is no need to press every word in the application of an allegory, but Zion had much to forget and forsake before she could enter upon that new life of married joy which the Second Isaiah had foretold for her (see note on *v. 9*).

v. 12. "The wealthiest peoples shall court thy favour." The pronoun *thy* is feminine and must therefore refer to the Bride.

"The Daughter of Tyre" in the first half of the verse corresponds with *"the wealthiest peoples"* in the second half. The personification of the City or Country under the name of *Daughter* is well known. Compare *'Daughter of Zion,' 'Daughter of Babylon,' 'Daughter of Gallim'* (Is. x. 30), *'Daughter of Tarshish'* (Is. xxiii. 10), *'Daughter of Edom'* (Lam. iv. 21 f.), &c., &c. The meaning of the passage is best explained from those texts which promise that the glory and wealth of the Gentiles shall flow into the Zion of the future. (See Is. liv. 3; lv. 5; and especially chap. lx.; lxi. 6; lxvi. 12; Hag. ii. 7 (where the *'Desire of all Nations'* signifies the *desirable things*); Zech. viii. 22.) It will be observed that almost all the passages which express this hope belong to the early Persian period in which we place this Psalm. Zion is to *"clothe herself"* with this wealth *"as with an ornament and gird herself with it as a bride doth"* (Is. xlix. 18).

v. 13. "All glorious is...with pearls." This reading is probable from the context; compare also Rev. xvii. 4; xviii. 12, 16; xxi. 21. If on the other hand we keep strictly to the letter of the text we must translate, *"All glorious is...within (the palace)."*

"Of ouches of gold." It can scarcely be an accident that in the only other passages in which the word *"ouches"* occurs it is used of that part of the High Priest's vestments in which the rows of stones were set which bore the names of the Tribes of Israel. These passages, all from the Priest Code, are as follows:

(a) of the two onyx stones, each bearing the names of six Tribes, on the High Priest's two shoulders (Exodus xxviii. 11, 13, 14, 25; xxxix. 6, 18).

(b) of the two settings of stones in the breastplate on the High Priest's breast (Exod. xxxix. 13, 16).

Just as in the case of the Bridegroom a priestly work was hinted at in the *"oil of gladness"* of verse 7, so now in the case of the Bride the *"ouches of gold"* remind us that she stands before God bearing the Nations upon her heart. Thus in imitating her lord she becomes partaker in his joy (compare *vv. 6—9* with *vv. 13—15*).

v. 14. "In brodered array." The word is used three times of Jerusalem as the Bride of God in Ezekiel xvi. (*vv. 10, 13, 18*). It is also used three times of Tyre (Ezek. xxvii. 7, 16, 24), for,

15 With joy and gladness shall they be led^a
And shall enter into the Palace of the King.

^a v. 14

Epilogue, cf. v. 1. 16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy sons,
Whom thou shalt make princes in all the earth.
17 I will celebrate thy name throughout all generations,
Therefore Peoples shall give thee thanks for ever and ever.

in Ezekiel, as in the Apocalypse, the City the Bride of God has its counterpart in the Harlot-City of the World. The Hebrew word specially lends itself to the allegory since it could be and is used of stones "*of divers colours*" (1 Chr. xxix. 2; cf. Rev. xxi. 19).

v. 16. According to the vowel-points this verse must refer to the Bridegroom and not to the Bride. The Empire of the Hero-King is world-wide, his sons, not as successors, but as vicegerents under him, have also a world-wide sway. If by the Bridegroom we understand 'Israel' then the promise denotes the extension of Israel's (spiritual) dominion over the Gentiles (cf. Is. lx., lxi. 9). If, on the other hand, we interpret the Bridegroom as Christ, the true Israel, then the 'sons that He makes princes in all lands' are those of whom He said, "Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke xxii. 28—30, see context).

Our Church has appointed this Psalm as one of the Special Psalms for Christmas Day. Such a use is justified from the fact that the Incarnation is regarded by St Paul (Eph. v. 25—32) as the one ideal Marriage (v. 32) in which the Bridegroom left all (v. 31), "gave Himself up" (v. 25) for the Bride and so entirely became "one flesh" (v. 31) with her as to make her partaker of His purity and of His glory (v. 27).

The historical preparation for this doctrine ran along two lines of thought which tended even in Old Testament times to merge in one, viz. the thought of God's re-union with His People and of the People's re-union with Zion.

The following parable from the Pesikta, based upon the words, "*I will greatly rejoice in YHVH*" (Is. lxi. 10), will illustrate the double thought of the Jewish Church as the Bride of God and Zion as the Bride of the People. "It is like the case of a Matron whose husband and whose sons and whose sons-in-law had gone to a city of the West: People came and told her, 'Thy sons are come'; she answered, 'Let my daughters-in-law be glad.' (They said) 'Lo thy sons-in-law (are come)'; she replied, 'Let my daughters be glad'; but when they said to her 'Lo here is thy husband,' she answered, 'Aha! rejoice rejoice with perfect joy.' So with regard to the time to come; the prophets say to Jerusalem, '*Thy sons come from afar*' (Is. lx. 4), and she says, '*Let Mount Zion rejoice*' (Ps. xlviii. 12): (they go on to say) '*and thy daughters are being carried in the arms*' (Is. lx. 4); she replies, '*Let the daughters of Judah* (i.e. the surrounding cities) *be glad*' (Ps. xlviii. 12); but when they say, '*Lo thy King cometh unto thee*' (Zech. ix. 9), she answers, 'Aha! rejoice rejoice with perfect joy.'"

PSALM XLVI.

In this Psalm, more almost than in any other, we trace the influence of Isaiah: but though the language be that of Isaiah the standpoint is that of a far later age. The Psalm is distinctly apocalyptic and is influenced by the thoughts of Ezekiel, Joel and Zechariah (see notes). It falls naturally into three Stanzas of 4, 3 and 4 verses respectively; the second and third Stanzas close with the Refrain "*YHVH of Hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our Tower.*" We might naturally have expected this Refrain at the close also of Stanza I., but it is virtually contained in the first verse "*God is ours! a Refuge and a Strength.*" The three Stanzas suggest the use of the Psalm as a Dedication Psalm in which the pilgrim makes the three-fold circuit of God's Altar or of His Courts. Thus we may either regard the three Stanzas as the three stages whereby man reaches (in faith) to God or as the three stages whereby God reaches (in Revelation) to man. In the latter case we should compare the three Names of God as (i.) "*He who was,*" (ii.) "*He who is*" and (iii.) "*He who is the Coming One*" (see Rev. iv. 8 Greek). Thus, in Stanza I. the confidence of Israel is founded upon the past mercy of God to the Nation (*He who was*); in Stanza II. upon the fact of His Presence in Zion (*He who is*); in Stanza III. Israel seems to ask the question "Art Thou He that should come?" and to receive the answer "*Come and see the doings of YHVH*" (*He who is the Coming One*).

The connexion between Psalms xlv. and xlvi. may be stated as follows:—The Second Isaiah expresses the feeling of his age when he writes (Chap. xlix. 14) "*And Zion said, YHVH hath forsaken me*" (cf. Deut. xxxi. 17). This fear he answers in the famous passage which likens Zion to a Bride (Is. xlix. 14—21) which is, I believe, the foundation of Ps. xlv. But the bridal union between Zion and her People was only another aspect of the return of God to Zion (see note on v. 7), so that Ps. xlvi. which shews us 'the Tabernacle of God with men' naturally follows the adorning of the Bride (Rev. xxi. 2 f.).

Our Psalm has many points in common with Ps. xlviii. with which it should be closely compared.

PSALM XLVI.

The world-shaking is, for us, a new Creation — Paradise restored.

- 1 God is ours! A Refuge and a Strength,
 A Help in distress^a, most ready to be found.
 2 Therefore will we not fear when earth shall suffer change,
 When mountains are moved^b into the heart of the Seas.
 3 Let its waters surge^c and foam;
 Let mountains quake at its pride!—
 4 A River^d!—its streams make glad the City of God,
 The Sanctuary-home of the Most High.

^a lit. *in distresses*.

^b *vv. 5, 6*

^c *v. 6*

^d *or flood*
cf. Is. xxxiii.
20 ff.

v. 1. "Most ready to be found." So God promises to Jeremiah that, after the seventy years in Babylon are accomplished, He will once more be favourable to His People, "And I will be found of you, saith YHVH" (Jer. xxix. 14).

The Psalm seems to have been written at a time of great expectation founded upon the fall of one of the world-empires (see notes on *vv. 8—10*). The early years of Persian rule would seem, on the whole, best to meet the historical conditions.

v. 2. "Therefore will we not fear when earth shall suffer change." The words are not a mere hyperbole, like those of Horace, Od. III. 3, "Si fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum ferient ruinae," but on the contrary they anticipate that shaking of Nature which must precede and usher in the New Creation.

"When mountains are moved..." The convulsions of Nature, Stanza I., prepare the way for that earth-shaking of Stanza II. where "the kingdoms are moved" (the same word being used). The best comment is to be found in the apocalyptic chapter (Is. xxiv.) of uncertain date. "The earth is utterly broken; the earth is utterly shattered; the earth is utterly moved." In this chapter also it will be noticed that the convulsions of Nature prepare for the Kingship of God in Zion (*v. 23*). The Second Isaiah compares God's covenant with Zion with His earlier covenant with Noah (Is. liv. 9, 10), "For this is with Me the Waters of Noah; as I have sworn that the Waters of Noah should not again pass over the earth, so have I sworn not to be angry (again) with thee (i.e. Zion) nor to rebuke thee. When the mountains depart and the hills are moved then My lovingkindness shall not depart and My covenant of peace shall not be moved saith YHVH that sheweth lovingkindness unto thee." The passage goes on to describe the glories of the New Jerusalem (see notes of last Psalm). Such promises imply, not merely that the Church of God shall survive the Flood, but that the very Flood itself shall bear it aloft in safety so that it is "saved by water." So when "the powers of heaven are shaken" Christ bids His disciples "look up and lift up (their) heads, because (their) redemption draweth nigh" (Luke xxi. 26—28, cf. Heb. xii. 26—28). Those whose hearts are now troubled at the results of Biblical criticism will find courage in the thought that each world-shaking that is past has added strength and beauty to the Church of God (see Hag. ii. 6—9 R.V.).

v. 4. "A River!—its streams &c." *Nahar*, "river," is often translated "flood" in E.V. (Josh. xxiv. 2, 3, 14, 15; Job xx. 17; xxii. 16; xxviii. 11; Pss. lxxvi. 6; xciii. 3; xcvi. 8; Cant. viii. 7; Is. lix. 19; Ezek. xxxi. 15; Jon. ii. 3 (4)). It denotes a great river, such as the Euphrates.

The other word, *peleg*, denotes a *stream* or *watercourse* such as would be used in Babylonia for the purpose of irrigation (Pss. i. 3; lxxv. 9 (10); Is. xxx. 25; xxxii. 2). Thus the two words taken together give us the picture of a Flood which is no longer a destruction (Is. viii. 7 f.) but a blessing. Both in Isaiah viii. and in the present passage the safety of Zion is due to Immanuel, i.e. to the fact that "God is with us." (Cf. Is. lix. 19.)

The apocalyptic prophecy (Is. xxxiii. 17—24) has points of striking resemblance both to our present Psalm and to the companion Psalm (xlvi. 12—14). In this prophecy the

Zion's King has returned to His City.

5 God is in her midst, she cannot be moved^a.
 God will help her at the morning dawn^b.
 6 The nations surge^c, kingdoms are moved^d—
 He uttereth His voice, earth melts away.
 7 YHVH OF HOSTS IS WITH^e US:
 THE GOD OF JACOB IS OUR TOWER.

^a *vv.* 2, 6

^b *lit. the turn of the morning*

^c *vv.* 3, 5

^d *v.* 2
 cf. *Is.* xvii.
 12-14

^e *Is.* viii. 8, 10

verses which now concern us are as follows: *vv.* 20—22 "Look upon Zion,...thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tent that shall not be removed (cf. Psalm, *v.* 5)..... But there YHVH will be with us in Majesty in the place of rivers and Nile-streams wide-extended wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby, for YHVH is our Judge, YHVH is our Law-giver, YHVH is our King," i.e. Babylon is defended by its river, Egypt lives by its Nile, but Zion has her God as *defence* without and as *life* within (cf. Zech. ii. 5).

Zion had no 'river.' If the Psalmist had been thinking of the brook from which the Temple received its water supply he would not have used *nahar* but *nahal* (Ezek. xlvi. 5, 6, 7, 9, 12) or *mayqan* (Joel iii. 18 (iv. 18)): still the fact remains that our Psalmist had in his mind a picture very similar to that of Ezekiel and of Joel. Isaiah contrasts "the waters of Siloah that go softly" with "the waters of the river (*nahar*) strong and many" (*Is.* viii. 6), but in our Psalm it is the River, or Flood, which becomes itself changed in nature, from destruction to blessing, from the waters of Chaos to the waters of Paradise (cf. 1 Pet. iii. 20), by the indwelling Presence of God. Thus the vision of the Psalmist seems to lie mid-way between the "River" of Paradise (*Gen.* ii. 10) and the "River of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb" (*Rev.* xxii. 1).

"*The Sanctuary-home of the Most High.*" Literally "*The holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.*" When the word *tabernacle* is used in the singular it denotes the dwelling-place of God but when it is used in the plural it signifies the dwellings of men (*Numb.* xxiv. 5: *Pss.* xlix. 11 (12): lxxxvii. 2: *Is.* xxxii. 18: *liv.* 2: *Jer.* ix. 19 (18): xxx. 18: *li.* 30: *Habak.* i. 6 &c.). Even in passages like the following, *Ps.* xliii. 3 "*Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles,*" *Ps.* lxxxiv. 1 (2) "*How beloved are Thy tabernacles,*" *Ps.* cxxxii. 5, 7 "*Tabernacles for the Mighty (God)*"... "*We will go into His tabernacles,*" the plural form shews that the thought is of God's *City* not of His *Temple*. This is indeed a characteristic of the Korah Psalms; their burden is "the City of God." In the present passage it is the City which is gladdened by the River. Compare *Rev.* xxii. 1 f. (R.V.) where the River is "*in the midst of the street thereof.*"

v. 5. "God will help her at the morning dawn." The Pesikta, commenting on the words "*And Zion saith, YHVH hath forsaken me*" (*Is.* xlix. 14), mentions the "nightseasons" which, in the past, have become jubilant with song, viz. "the night of Pharaoh" (*Exod.* xii. 29), "the night of Gideon" (*Judg.* vii. 9), "the night of Sennacherib" (*2 Kings* xix. 35), "the night of Ahasuerus" (*Esth.* vi. 1). Compare also note on *Ps.* xxx. 5.

The Hebrew scholar is advised to read the Chapters in the Pesikta which are founded upon texts from the Second Isaiah.

v. 6. "*He uttereth His voice.*" Literally "*He giveth (uttereth) with His voice.*" The exact phrase, with the preposition, is, I think, only found here and in *Ps.* lxxviii. 33 (34) "*He doth send out His voice*" (E.V.); but, without the preposition, the phrase is not uncommon, especially in Jeremiah and the later Prophets. It always indicates a mighty voice like that of a lion (*Jer.* ii. 15 &c.) or of the Sea (*Habak.* iii. 10: *Jer.* li. 55). Hence when used of God it signifies a voice of strength, "YHVH shall roar...and utter His voice" (*Jer.* xxv. 30: cf. *x.* 13: *li.* 16). "The Most High uttered His voice" (*Ps.* xviii. 13, see context). So in *Joel* ii. 11 "YHVH uttereth His voice before His army" and again, *Joel* iii. 16 (*Heb.* iv. 16) "YHVH shall roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake, but YHVH will be a refuge unto His people and a stronghold for the Children of Israel. So ye shall know that I am YHVH your God dwelling in Zion My holy

Wars and rumours of wars are, for us, the footsteps of the Prince of Peace (Is. ix. 5 f.).

8 Come and see^a the doings of YHVH,
 What desolations He hath wrought in the earth;
 9 He stilleth wars to the utmost bounds of earth;
 He breaketh the bow, snappeth the spear,
 Burneth the chariots with fire.

^a Ps. lxxvi. 5

Mountain.....And a fountain shall come forth from the House of YHVH and shall water the valley of Shittim..." It is impossible to read this prophecy without feeling the strong resemblance it bears to our Psalm. Compare also Joel ii. 17 with Ps. xlii. 10. Such points of resemblance become doubly interesting if we adopt the view of modern scholars as to the post-exilic date of Joel (see Driver's *Introduction*).

v. 7. "*YHVH of Hosts is with us.*" In the Prophets God dwells in Zion, i.e. in the City, whereas in the Priest-Code His dwelling is rather in the Sanctuary. The point of view of the Korah Psalms is that of the Prophets. Thus Isaiah maintains the inviolability of the City on the ground that "*YHVH of Hosts dwelleth in Zion*" (viii. 18: cf. xiv. 32). He expresses this thought under the symbolic name "*Emmanuel*" (vii. 14: viii. 8) and some scholars have even supposed, from the similarity of thought and language, that he was the author of our present Psalm. The truth of the Divine indwelling in Zion was, by the false prophets, perverted to imply Divine protection apart from holiness of life; they voiced the popular cry "The Temple of YHVH, the Temple of YHVH, the Temple of YHVH are these" (Jer. vii. 4). Jeremiah nearly lost his life in protesting against this as a "false trust in lying words" (vii. 4: cf. xxvi. 18 f.). The destruction of the Temple came as a lesson

"that God átributes to place
 No sanctity, if none be thither brought
 By men who there frequent, or therein dwell."

At the close of the Captivity the old truth of the Divine indwelling, duly guarded from error (Ezek. xliii. 9), became a mighty power (Zech. ii. 10 f.: Joel iii. 17, 21) especially through the writings of the Second Isaiah where the return of God to Zion is pictured in such glowing language that we seem to see Him treading in her streets (Is. lii. 7 ff. &c.). But the Presence of God in the City (of the Prophets) or in the Sanctuary (of the Priest-Code) could scarcely be more than the type and promise of the tabernacling of God in man which commenced in the Incarnation (Col. i. 19 f.: ii. 9); indeed a promise, necessarily conditional upon holiness, could have been of no use to us without the Incarnation. Rev. xxi. 2 f. shews the connexion between our present Psalm and the Psalm which preceded it: "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a Bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold the Tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His peoples, and God Himself shall be with them."

vv. 8, 9. "*Come and see &c.*" The signs to which the Psalmist points are probably the wars which broke up the Babylonian empire, in which he sees the fulfilment of the old prophecy of Isaiah (ix. 5—7).

The footsteps of the "Coming One" ever sounded with terror, but when He came He pointed to other 'signs,' "*Go and tell John the things that ye do hear and see*" (Matt. xi. 4). The prophet is justified in his vision, for "these things must needs come to pass" (Mark xiii. 7) but "the end" is not the earthquake or the fire but the still small voice.

"To him it glar'd afar,
 A token of wild war,
 The banner of his Lord's victorious wrath:
 But close to us it gleams,
 Its soothing lustre streams
 Around our home's green walls, and on our Church-way path."

10 "Be still, and know that I am God :
 I will be exalted among the nations,
 I will be exalted in the earth."
 11 YHVH OF HOSTS IS WITH^a US :
 THE GOD OF JACOB IS OUR TOWER.

^a Is. viii. 8, 1

v. 10. "*Be still &c.*" The thought is the same but a different word is used in Exod. xiv. 13.

PSALM XLVII.

We might take as the motto for this Psalm the words of Deut. xxxii. 43, as quoted in Rom. xv. 10, "Rejoice ye Gentiles with His People."

The cause of this joy is the fact that God has become "King" over all the earth (*vv.* 2, 7, 8) and that the Gentiles have become "a People of Abraham's God" (*v.* 9). There is, perhaps, no passage in the Old Testament, with the exception of the Jehovistic Korah Psalm lxxxvii., which admits the Gentiles so ungrudgingly to the full rights of fellowship. This fact, even if it stood alone, would indicate a post-exilic date.

The most probable occasion for the Psalm was the Dedication of the Altar by Zerubbabel in the Seventh month B.C. 536 when God, once more, seemed to be returning to His long abandoned City and the converts that flocked in from the surrounding Nations (1 Esdras v. 47) were regarded as the firstfruits of His world-wide Empire (see note *v.* 9).

The first day of the seventh month was known under two names, the 'Feast of Trumpets' and 'New Year's Day.' In the Jewish ritual for this day the leading thought is the Kingship of God in the world. Psalm xlvi. is recited seven times on this day before the blowing of the Trumpet (Dr Schiller Sziessy in *Prayer Book interleaved*, p. 257).

The connexion between the Trumpet and the Redemption of Israel may be gathered from the following Jewish Prayer for New Year's Day.

"O God of ours and of our fathers, sound the Great Trumpet as the signal for our freedom: and lift up the banner to collect our captives, and gather our dispersions from among the nations, and assemble our outcasts from the extremities of the earth; and bring us to Zion Thy City with joyful song and to Jerusalem, the house of Thy Sanctuary, with everlasting joy.....As it is said, 'And on the days of your gladness, and on your solemn festivals, and on the New Moon, ye shall blow with the Trumpets, by your burnt offerings, and by the sacrifices of your peace offerings, that they may be a memorial for you before your God. I am the Eternal, your God.' For Thou deignest to hear 'the sound of the Trumpet' and art attentive to the 'shout.'...Blessed art Thou, O Lord, that heareth the voice of the Shout of His people Israel with mercy."

The reader will remember that it was only when "the seventh angel sounded with the Trumpet" that voices were heard in heaven proclaiming that "the Kingdom of the world was become (the Kingdom) of our Lord and of His Christ" (Rev. xi. 15, see note on v. 8 of our Psalm).

The Psalm depicts the Ascension of God to His throne in the wills and hearts of men of all nations; it is therefore fitly appointed for our use on Ascension Day (cf. Eph. iv. 10).

PSALM XLVII.

Our God has be-
come King.

1 All ye Peoples clap your hands,
Shout to God^a with ringing voice;
2 For YHVH, the Most High, is held in reverence,
As a Great King over all the earth^b.

^a or "Elohim"
throughout
the Psalm
^b or *the Land*

3 He subdues Peoples under us,
And Nations beneath our feet.
4 He chooses out for us our heritage,
Even the pride of Jacob that He loved.

v. 1. "All ye Peoples..." Three names occur in the Psalm for those who were to be added to the Jewish Church—"peoples" (vv. 1, 3, 9), "nations" (v. 3), "Gentiles" (v. 8).

"Clap your hands."—This verb when used with *the trumpet* signifies "to blow a blast"; when used with *the hand* it signifies generally to strike hands (over a bargain or surety, see Prov. xvii. 18; xxii. 26; Job xvii. 3), but here and in Nahum iii. 19, it implies a clapping of hands for joy. The best comment is 2 Kings xi. 12 (where however another verb is used) "And they made him King and anointed him and they clapped the hands and said Long live the King."

"Shout to God." This verb also is associated with the Trumpet: thus in Numb. x. 9 it is translated "ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets," cf. Joel ii. 1, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm in My holy mountain." Indeed it is not always possible to determine whether it signifies shouting with the voice or blowing a long blast upon the trumpet: the E.V. escapes the difficulty by translating "make a joyful noise" (Ps. lxvi. 1: lxxx. 1 (2): xcvi. 4, 6: c. 1: xcv. 1, 2). See also note on v. 5.

v. 4. "He chooses out for us our heritage."—The expression is a strange one whether we take the verb as a present or as a future. If Israel had been in the quiet possession of its "heritage" such an expression would not have been used. The best comment is Ezekiel's use of the word "heritage" (Ch. xxxvi. 12, and Chaps. xlv.—xlvi.), where the return of the exiles is regarded as a new partition of the Land with God's "Portion" as a holy "oblation" in the midst of the Tribes (Ch. xlv. 1, ff.).

"Even the pride of Jacob..." The word "pride" or "excellency" is sometimes used in a good sometimes in a bad sense. God had said by Amos (vi. 8), "I abhor the pride of Jacob and hate his palaces," but in the days of our Psalmist He had said by the Second Isaiah (lx. 15), "Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated... I will make thee an eternal pride, a joy of many generations."

The promise of the Trumpet is being fulfilled.

5 God hath gone up at the shout^a;
YHVH at the voice of the Trumpet.

^a v. 1

6 Strike the harp to God, strike the harp,
Strike the harp to our King, strike the harp,

7 For God is King of all the Earth^b;
Strike the harp with the Psalm.

^b or the Land

The best of the Gentile world is already being drawn to God.

8 God is become King^c over the Gentiles;
God takes His seat upon His holy throne.

^c Rev. xi. 17

v. 5. "God hath gone up at the shout..." The "shout" (see note on Ps. xxvii. 6) and "the voice (or sound) of the Trumpet" refer distinctly to the promise of Numbers x. 8—10, that when the Children of Israel are fighting in their own Land and are pressed by their enemies then they should "blow with the Trumpets" and thus "bring themselves into (a sacramental) remembrance before God" so that He might work a miracle of deliverance for them as at the fall of Jericho. According to the Chronicle writer (2 Chron. xx.) Jehoshaphat complains before God (vv. 5—12), in words that remind us of Ps. xlv., that this promise of deliverance has not been fulfilled, then a son of Asaph (vv. 14—17) stands up and promises a great deliverance on the morrow; then the sons of Korah go forth before the army (vv. 21, 22) and God delivers up Ammon and Moab before Israel. Whatever criticism may determine as to the historical value of this passage it teaches us, in any case, that in the time of the Chronicle writer the promise of the Trumpet was associated with the Asaph and Korah guilds (see note on Ps. xlv. 9).

Delitzsch assigns the Psalm to the occurrence mentioned in 2 Chron. xx.; it would, in my opinion, be more correct to say that both the Psalm and the Passage in Chronicles had their origin in the wide-spread belief in that promise of Divine help which was connected with the Trumpets of every sacrifice and the Trumpets of every New Year (see Introduction to the Korah and Asaph Psalms). In the Chapter of the Pesikta, on "the seventh month," we read as follows:—"Judah the son of Nahmani in the name of Resh Lakish taught thus, *God is gone up at the shout, YHVH at the sound of the Trumpet* (Ps. xlvii. 7). At the time when the Holy One, blessed be He, goes up it is for judgement that He goes up, as it is written, *God hath gone up at the shout*; but when Israel take the Trumpet and sound the blast then the Holy One, blessed be He, stands down from the throne of judgement and sits upon the throne of mercy, as it is written, '*YHVH at the sound of the Trumpet*'...And when will this be? '*In the Seventh month, on the first day of the month*'."

I quote this passage now merely to shew that Jewish tradition associates our Psalm with the final Redemption of Israel and with the great 'New Year's Day' when "*YHVH is King over all the earth* (Zech. xiv. 9)." This interpretation justifies the use of the Psalm as one of the special Psalms for Ascension Day.

v. 6. "*Strike the harp with the Psalm.*"—The word *maskil* which we here translate "*psalm*" occurs in the Titles of Pss. xxxii., xlii., xlv., xlv., lii.—lv., lxxiv., lxxviii., lxxxviii., lxxxix., cxlii. The exact meaning of the word is unknown; but since the root has the sense of *instruction* (cf. 2 Chr. xxx. 22) most commentators, following the Septuagint, have supposed it to signify an *instructive Psalm*. If however the Psalms bearing this Title be studied there seems no special reason for assigning to them a distinctive character of *instructive* Psalms. In the present passage the P.B.V., following the Vulg. and Sept., translates, "*Sing ye praises with understanding.*" The words seem to me rather to suggest the union of *instrumental* with *vocal* music. It is possible that St Paul may have had this verse in his mind when he wrote, "*I will hymn (ψαλῶ) with the understanding also*" (1 Cor. xiv. 15, see context): instrumental music has the wider scope and power but the human voice must give it its meaning before God. Compare Browning's *Boy and the Angel*.

v. 8. "*God is become King.*"—The words mean much more than "*God is King.*" Compare Dante's *Inferno*, Canto 1. 127, "He governs everywhere and there (in the Holy City) *He reigns*"; on which

9 The noblest of the Peoples are ingathered
 (As) a People of Abraham's God;
 For the Shields of the Earth are God's;
 He is supremely* exalted.

* Ps. xcvi. 9

Mrs Gurney remarks "The word 'imperare' implies an exercise of force or external authority; while the word 'reggere' may be used for an internal rule or law of life" (*Dante's Pilgrim's Progress*, p. 13). The thought of the Divine Kingship upon earth is stated with remarkable force in the apocalyptic Chapter assigned to Zechariah (xiv. 9).

"And YHVH shall be King over all the earth:
 in that day YHVH shall be One and His Name One."

This prophecy was not earlier than the fall of Josiah at Megiddo (B.C. 609), while Dr Driver (see *Introduction*) inclines to follow the majority of critics who would assign it to a post-exilic date. We have already seen (p. 185) that this apocalyptic prophecy has other points of contact with our Korah Psalms. If the post-exilic date of the prophecy, Zech. xii.—xiv. be accepted it would fall in the period (B.C. 515—458) in which we place the Korah Psalms.

There is another group of Psalms (Pss. xcvi.—xcix.) in which the key-note is the Kingship of God upon earth. Graetz has called attention to the parallels between the Psalms of this group and our present Psalm. Thus:—

PSALM XLVII.

- 2 For YHVH, the Most High is held in reverence,
 A Great King over all the earth.
 8 God is become King over the Gentiles.
 1 Shout to God...
 6-8 God hath gone up at the shout;
 YHVH at the voice of the Trumpet.
 Strike the harp to God, strike the harp;
 For God is King of all the earth.
 10 He is supremely exalted.

PSALMS XCVI.—XCVIII.

- xcvi. 4 For great is YHVH...He is held in
 reverence above all gods.
 xcvi. 10 Say among the Gentiles, YHVH has
 become King.
 xcvi. 4-6 Shout to YHVH...
 ...and strike the harp.
 Strike the harp to YHVH...
 ...and the voice of the Trumpet.
 Shout before the King, YHVH.
 xcvi. 9 Thou art supremely exalted above all
 gods.

We may have occasion hereafter to shew the reason for this relation between the Psalms whose motto is 'YHVH has become King' and the Korah Psalms, meanwhile it may suffice to note that the words "God is become King" are to be interpreted exactly as in Rev. xi. 15 ff. where when the seventh Trumpet sounded, "there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, The Kingdom of the world is become (the Kingdom) of our Lord, and of His Christ...We give Thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, which art and which wast; because Thou hast taken Thy great power and art become King."

v. 9. "The noblest of the Peoples..." The thought is similar to that of Ps. xlv. 12, where "The Daughter of Tyre" and "the wealthiest peoples" are drawn to Zion and thus to Zion's Lord.

"Are ingathered." The verb may be translated "are gathered together" but I think it was here chosen to suggest the *Asiph* or feast of *Ingathering* in the seventh month. The fruits of the year which were then gathered into the storehouses of the Temple were felt to be a type of the ingathering of souls into God's Church. The Septuagint read *συνήχθησαν* which may be illustrated from 1 Esdras v. 47—50, where we read that, in the seventh month the Children of Israel "came all together (*συνήχθησαν*) with one consent" with Zerubbabel and also that "certain were gathered unto them (*ἐπισυνήχθησαν*) out of the other nations of the land." Such an addition to the General Assembly and Church of Israel may well have moved the Spirit of prophecy to look forward to the final Ingathering of all people (2 Macc. ii. 7) to God.

"A People of Abraham's God."—Instead of the word *qm*, "people," the Septuagint read *jm*, "with": but, even so, the sense remains the same.

Verses 8, 9 correspond with verses 1, 2. No doubt from the Psalmist's point of view the conversion

of the world was mingled with thoughts of the conquest of the world (compare the contemporary prophecy Zech. xii.—xiv.) but his words are fitted to a far wider meaning.

"*For the Shields of the Earth are God's.*"—The context shews that the "*shields*" are here to be taken as the "*rulers*" as in Hos. iv. 18. 'The noblest of the peoples are ingathered' and 'The rulers of the earth are become God's own people'; thus fulfilling the promise to Abraham in Gen. xii. 3.

"*He is supremely exalted.*" The verb is the passive form of the word which we translate "*hath gone up*" in v. 5. The Ascension of God consists in the fact that He has taken to Himself His own power and has become King: Ps. xvii. 9 expresses the same thought in a less forcible manner.

An old Latin Hymn for Ascension Day seems to echo the general thought of our Psalm.

" Idcirco, fratres,
pangite melos
huic deo nostro,
ut mereamur
scandere mente,
quo manet ipse."

[Mone's *Hym. Lat.* i. p. 231.]

PSALM XLVIII.

This Psalm is apocalyptic in its character and is closely related to the apocalyptic prophecy in Zech. xii.—xiv., especially to chap. xiv., a prophecy which very possibly belongs to the period between 515 and 458 B.C. (see Driver's *Introduction*). Now this is exactly the period to which we have assigned Pss. xlii.—xlvii. (see pp. 180, 181, 185 f., 193, 196, 199, 200, 203), so that we are led to the conclusion that all the Korah Psalms that we have already examined belong to the same age. Our Psalm should be studied in connexion with Psalm xlvi.; both might seem, at first sight, to refer to the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib (B.C. 701), but a closer study will convince us that, though they are coloured by the recollection of that deliverance, they belong to post-exilic times.

We may divide the Psalm into four Stanzas of 3, 4, 4, 3 verses respectively. The first Stanza answers to the last, and the second to the third.

In Stanza I. (vv. 1—3) we have a picture of Zion as she will be in the "latter days"; throned as a queen, "the joy of the whole earth," the home in which God now dwells in a new and special manner (Zech. ii. 10).

Stanza II. (vv. 4—7) takes up the thought of Ps. xlvi. and shews how the indwelling of God (Emmanuel) is the safety of His Church against all the evil powers of the world [cf. Ezek. xxxviii. xxxix.; Zech. xiv. 3—5; Rev. xx. 8f.].

Stanza III. (vv. 8—11) is a meditation on the history of God's Church, in which past deliverances are seen as an assurance of Divine care for the future. Thus Stanza III. draws the lesson from Stanza II.

Stanza IV. (*vv.* 12—14) is a meditation in the form of a pilgrimage round the walls of the heavenly Zion, in which the pilgrims are bidden to mark the marvellous growth and beauty which God has added to her, and to learn from her *towers*, her *ramparts*, and her *palaces* the threefold lesson of Emmanuel as (*a*) a sure Guardian, (*b*) a personal Friend, and (*c*) an eternal Guide.

The Psalm is thus a Psalm of the Divine Indwelling in the Church, and, as such, is appointed for Whitsunday.

PSALM XLVIII.

The latter-day prophecies of Zion's exaltation (e.g. Zech. xiv. 10 f.) are fulfilled.

1 Great^a is YHVH—supremely worthy of praise—

In the City of our God—His holy Mountain.

2 Beauteous in its exaltation, the joy of the whole earth—

Mount Zion^b—recesses of the North—the City of the Great King^c!

^a Ps. xcix. 2

^b Rev. xxi. 10

^c Matt. v. 35

v. 2. "*Beauteous in its exaltation.*" The substantive *nof*, "*exaltation*," "*elevation*" (R.V.), is only found here, but the verb is frequently used in the Priest-Code for the ritual act of *lifting up* the wave offering, while the kindred substantive *l'nufah* denotes the *wave offering* itself. Now the portion of the offering which was *waved* was, as it were, God's portion, which by its acceptance hallowed all the rest; if therefore Zion, "*the joy of the whole earth*," be lifted up as a wave offering to God then the whole earth is accepted by Him.

The chief prophecies which speak of the uplifting of "the mountain of the Lord's house" are as follows: Is. ii. 2—4 (with Micah iv. 1—3); Jer. xxxi. 38—49; Ezek. Chapters xlv. and xlvi. where the portion set apart for God is actually called "*the oblation*" (about 16 times). It is true that Ezekiel uses the word *l'rumah*, which denotes the "*heave offering*," and not *l'nufah*, "*the wave offering*"; but the thought is similar.

Another prophecy, which is of special interest as being probably contemporaneous with our Psalm, is Zech. xiv. (see note, p. 203). In this Chapter we find much that reminds us of the Korah Psalms. Jerusalem, in great distress (cf. Ps. xlv.), is delivered by a remarkable interposition of YHVH (*vv.* 1—5; cf. Ps. xlv.); "living waters" come forth from Jerusalem, making the earth once more a Paradise (*vv.* 8—11; cf. Ps. xlv.); "YHVH is King over all the earth" (*v.* 9; cf. Ps. xlvii.) and the Gentiles are drawn to Him (*vv.* 12—21; cf. Ps. xlvii., notes). The verse of this prophecy which specially bears upon our present Psalm is as follows: "All the Land shall be turned round (or "*gone round*," the same verb as in 12th verse of our Psalm) as the Plain, from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem; and she shall be lifted up (cf. Mic. iv. 1, Is. ii. 2) and shall dwell in her own place (cf. Chap. xii. 6); from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananel unto the king's wine-presses." This means that all the higher land to the south of Jerusalem is to sink into a plain while Jerusalem is lifted up as the central joy of the whole earth. The mention of her 'gates' and towers suggests a Dedication Procession, as in Neh. xii. and in our Psalm (see *vv.* 12—14, notes).

"*Recesses of the North.*"—To Ezekiel the "Recesses of the North" represented the land of mystery whence the "kings of the earth" should come up against Israel (Ezek. xxxviii. 6, 15; xxxix. 2, cf. Jer. vi. 22). A late prophecy, ascribed to Isaiah (Is. xiv. 13), makes the King of Babylon say, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit upon the Mount of the Assembly in the *Recesses of the North.*" Babylonian mythology had its "Mountain of all lands," which was the

3 God, throughout her palaces,
Is known as a Tower of strength.

God, in her, has
overcome the world
(Zech. xiv. 3—5).

4 For lo! the kings gathered themselves,
They marched along together—
5 They did but look—were wonder-struck,
Confounded, put to flight!
6 Trembling possessed them there
Pangs as a travailing woman—
7 With a storm-blast
Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish.

The deliverances of
the past all pointed
to this.

8 As we have heard so have we seen
In the City of YHVH of Hosts—in the City of our God—
God will establish her for ever.
9 We contemplate Thy loving-kindness, O God,
In the midst of Thy Palace-Temple*.
10 As is Thy Name, O God, so is Thy praise
To earth's remotest bounds,
Thy right hand is full of righteousness.
11 Let Mount Zion exult and the daughters of Judah be glad
Because of Thy judgements.

* Sept. reads
Thy people

home of the gods. This mountain represented the Earth, so that the word *Ekur* was sometimes used as a name of the *Earth*, sometimes of the *Mountain-home* of the gods, and sometimes of a *Temple* which was shaped after the similitude of a mountain (see Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia*, p. 558). Dante's Mountain of Purgatory was just such a mountain as that pictured by the Babylonians (see the illustration in Rossetti's *Shadow of Dante*, p. 107). It is clear that a special sanctity is attached to the North (Lev. i. 11): but why? Was it because the pole-star in the North seemed like the motionless Throne of Heaven to which all the stars in their courses were ever climbing?

v. 3. "*God...is known...*" The verb implies that God has *made Himself known*. There has been such a Theophany as that pictured in Zech. xiv. 3 "Then shall YHVH go forth and fight against those nations" &c. Compare also the Asaph Psalm l. 2 "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shone forth."

v. 4. "*For lo! the kings gathered themselves.*" In an apocalyptic passage like the present it is quite out of place to seek for an historical allusion. Even in the times of Jeremiah and Ezekiel (see references in note v. 2) the "kings of the earth" represented that world-power which must at last be destroyed by God (see Rev. xvi. 14—16, xx. 8—10).

"*They marched along together.*" The verb is often used to depict the stately movement of an army (Numb. xxxii. 21, Josh. iv. 13, Is. viii. 8, x. 28 f., &c.). It would no doubt be possible to translate it "*They passed away*" (cf. Job vi. 15 &c.) but such a meaning is against the parallelism of the verse and introduces the climax too soon. Verse 4 shews us the muster and stately march of an overwhelming host. Verse 5 shews us the same host melting away in panic-flight without a blow.

v. 9. "*We contemplate Thy loving-kindness.*" The verb *dāmāh* signifies *to be like, to compare, and hence to think*. In the present passage it implies such a *thought* upon God's mercies in the past history of the nation as shall become the ground of a larger hope (see context).

The rendering of the Prayer-Book, "*We wait for Thy loving-kindness,*" is impossible as a translation, but is capable of interpretation from the general bearing of the passage.

Make a pilgrimage
of the heart around
this City of God that
you may see what
God has done.

- 12 Go round^a about Zion,
And circuit^b her round.
(a) Tell her towers;
(b) 13 Set your heart to her rampart^c;
(c) Mount^d up to her palaces;
(a₁) So that ye may tell it on to a later age;
(b₁) 14 For this God is our God, for ever and ever;
(c₁) He (Himself) will lead us on, to all eternity.

^a Josh. vi. 4,
14, 15

^b Josh. vi. 3,
11

^c Ps. lxxxiv. 7
(note)

^d a doubtful
word

vv. 12—14. The division into verses is here misleading and must be entirely neglected.

The passage begins with the command to make the pilgrimage of the heart round Zion. Three stages in this pilgrimage are then pictured; first come the "towers," then the "rampart," and last of all the "palaces," as the procession winds from without upwards and inwards. These stages we have marked (a), (b) and (c): the three lines which follow draw the lesson from each stage of the pilgrimage; we have marked them (a₁), (b₁), (c₁) because they correspond with (a), (b) and (c) respectively.

v. 12. "Go round about Zion and circuit her round." The two verbs occur together in Joshua vi. (see marg. references) where they are used in the old record (JE) to describe the "encompassing" of Jericho in the seven circuits. Those seven circuits were an acted parable of the seventh month which ushered in the Day of God's New Year (cf. notes on preceding Psalm).

We learn from Neh. xii. 27—43 that, at the Dedication of the Walls of Jerusalem, two companies were appointed to move in procession with music and song round the walls of Jerusalem. Such processions were indeed a form of Dedication. God's Altar was "encompassed" (Ps. xxvi. 6, note) by the worshippers; especially in the seventh month; and the Jewish Prayer-Book still retains prayers for the "seven circuits" in the Order of Hoshanna Rabba.

The present Psalm (which was one of the seven appointed in the Sarum use for the Dedication of a Church) may very possibly have indicated an actual procession "round about Zion" like that of Nehemiah: but, in any case, it implied a pilgrimage of the heart. The Zion which in *vv.* 1—3 was "lifted up" is now to receive the Dedication of her walls.

The verb *sāvav* which we translate "go round about" is used, not only in Ps. xxvi. 6 of *encompassing* the Altar, but also in two mystical passages which allude to the increments which Zion shall receive in the future. These passages are

(a) Ezek. xli. 7 "And there was a widening and *encompassing* in the case of the side-chambers higher and higher; for the *encompassing* of the house went higher and higher round about the house: therefore the breadth of the house (continued) upward."

(b) Zech. xiv. 10 "All the Land shall be *encompassed*...and it shall be lifted up" (see context).

Thus the word "*encompass*" seems to hint at that increasing upward spiral which is the symbol of all aspiration to God.

"Tell her towers." The commentators have been misled by the superficial resemblance between this passage and Is. xxxiii. 18, which the R.V. renders, "Where is he that counted, where is he that weighed the tribute? where is he that counted the towers?" This rendering is however very doubtful; the Septuagint, Vulgate, Aquila, and Targum are all against it, and all agree more or less closely with St Paul's quotation (1 Cor. i. 20) "Where is the wise? where is the scribe &c." Indeed it is evident that all the ancient versions read *m'gudalim*, "grown up" (cf. Ps. cxliv. 12) instead of *migdālim*, "towers."

Let us then dismiss all thought of Is. xxxiii. 18 and find the true meaning in the context of our Psalm. "Tell her towers"... "So that ye may tell it on to a later age." As the pilgrims, whether in thought or in reality, wind round the walls of Jerusalem they count her towers, outstanding in their security, as waymarks in the history of the Divinely guarded city: next, as they note her *rampart*, the emblem of her *strength*, they learn that her true rampart is none other than her God; "For this God is our God, for ever and ever": lastly, as they end the pilgrimage in the inner mansions of her *palaces*, they think of the many mansions of their Father's House and gain the assurance that "He (Himself) will lead them on, to all Eternity."

But though in the matter of "counting the towers" we reject the allusion to Is. xxxiii. yet the fact remains that the thought in that Chapter is very similar to the general conception of Pss. xli., xlvi., xlvi. See note on Ps. xli. 4 and compare Is. xxxiii. 3 with Ps. xlvi. 5, Is. xxxiii. 14 with Ps. xlvi. 6, Is. xxxiii. 18 with Ps. xlvi. 8. Some critics (Cornill, Cheyne) place this prophecy of 'Isaiah' at the close of the Exile or in post-exilic times. The similarity of thought might prove that the Korah Psalms were written under similar conditions and possibly in the same age, but it must not be used to establish the Sennacherib date in the face of the evidence which points to a later time.

v. 13. "*Set your heart to her rampart.*"—When Jeremiah is exhorting the Daughter of Israel to return to a reconciled God he says, "Set thee up waymarks, make thee guide-posts, set thine heart toward the highway" (Jer. xxxi. 21). In these words we have, I think, an allusion to an act of ancient ritual.

The first clause, "*Set thee up waymarks,*" alludes to the *matzevas* or sacred pillars (Gen. xxxi. 13, 45 &c., Exod. xxiv. 4, Is. xix. 19, Hos. iii. 4 &c.) which were used up to the time of Deuteronomy. Unfortunately the exact use of these sacred pillars is unknown.

The second clause, "*Make thee guide-posts*" (E.V. "*high heaps*"), is also difficult, so much so that the Septuagint have merely reproduced the sound of the Hebrew word which they did not understand.

The third clause, "*Set thine heart toward the highway,*" is exactly parallel to the words of our Psalm, and denotes the pilgrimage of the heart up the steep terraced way that leads to God. Compare note on Ps. lxxxiv. 5 (6) where the same word "*highway*" is used, "*There are highways in their hearts.*" Such pilgrims are, as Dante says,

"Like people who are thinking of their road,
Who go in heart, and with the body stay."

(Purg. II. 10.)

With regard to this "*highway*" I would suggest the following interpretation.

The Semitic Temple (or *zikkurat*) was a pyramid rising in steps or terraces, generally three or seven, which represented the spheres; the Sanctuary was at the top and was approached by an inclined plane, which, exactly as in Dante's *Purgatorio*, ran round the mountain from the bottom to the top. Such an approach would, in Hebrew, have been called *m'silla*, "*a highway*" (see 1 Chr. xxvi. 16, 18; 2 Chr. ix. 11, and compare Judg. v. 20). This "*highway*" would, of course, be a symbol of man's pilgrimage to God and a festival procession up this way would be an acted parable. We shall have occasion to return to this subject when we treat of the "*Songs of Degrees*," suffice it now to say that the "*encompassing*" of the Altar (Pss. xxvi. 6, xxvii. 6 notes), the processions of Nehemiah round the walls (Neh. xii.), and the "*seven circuits*" in the Order of Hoshanna Rabba (see Jewish Prayer-Book), all have their origin in the thought of the Dedicated Way which leads from Earth to Heaven. The same words for *rampart* and *palaces* occur together in Ps. cxxii. 7, "*Peace be within thy rampart, Prosperity within thy palaces.*"

"*Mount up to her palaces.*"—The verb is only found here, so that its meaning is doubtful: hence the various renderings, E.V. "*consider*" (marg. or, *raise up*), R.V. marg. *traverse*. The root is found in the name *Pisgah*, or with the definite article "*the Pisgah*" (Numb. xxi. 20, xxiii. 14; Deut. iii. 27, xxxiv. 1), which probably signifies "*the height,*" or "*the section.*"

In verse 3 the Psalmist has already alluded to the "*palaces*" of Zion throughout which God has 'made Himself known as a Tower of strength'; he now bids the pilgrims to mount up (in thought) to these same palaces and so to consider them that they may understand what the indwelling of God must imply.

v. 14. "*He (Himself) will lead us on, to all eternity.*"

"*He*"—the pronoun is emphatic—God Himself and no other will be our Guide.

"*will lead us on*"—as a shepherd leads his flock.

"*to all eternity.*" The rendering "*unto death*" (E.V. and R.V. text) is almost impossible.

Some modern Commentators would omit these words altogether, supposing them to belong to the heading of the next Psalm (cf. Title of Ps. xli.).

It is better, however, to follow the Septuagint and to translate "*for ever and ever*" or "*to all eternity.*" Even if we omit the words the sense remains the same. If God Himself 'leads us on' His guidance cannot be limited by time.

The relation between the lines (c) and (c₁) is obvious; the "*palaces,*" which are as it were the

Sanctuary of the City, form the goal of the pilgrimage:—they represent “*the many mansions*” of our Father’s House:—the lesson that the pilgrim is to learn from them is that “*He (Himself) will lead us on, to all eternity.*”

An old Latin Hymn for the Dedication of a Church expresses a somewhat similar thought.

“ Haec festiva
transitiva
dedicatio
infinitam
signat vitam
plenam gaudio.
Nos hanc vitam
contemnetes,
infinitam
appetentes
benedicamus domino.”

On these words Mone (*Hymn. Lat. i. 329*) quotes Gregor. m. *hom. in evang. 2, 26, 10*: “*Umbra venturae solemnitate est solemnitas praesens, idcirco hanc annue agimus, ut ad illam, quae non est annua sed continua, perducamur.*”

PSALM XLIX.

It is a mistake to interpret this Psalm as though it contained merely a string of commonplaces on the impotence of wealth and honour to save any man from death.

The fact is the Psalmist is not thinking of the death of the individual at all but of the death of Nations. In his view the Nations of the World, living a purely animal life, die as mere men (cf. Ps. lxxxii. 7), nay rather as the beasts that perish (*vv. 12—14, 20*). In his vision, as in Balaam’s,

“ In outline dim and vast
Their fearful shadows cast
The giant forms of empires on their way
To ruin : one by one
They tower and they are gone.”

Such being the future of Israel’s foes why should Israel fear them, or still less envy them? (*v. 5 ff.*).

Israel on the other hand walks with God; he is the true Enoch (*v. 15 note*); *he will never see death*; God will take him to Himself; his Kingdom will not pass away (Dan. vii. 14).

Thus no argument can be drawn one way or other as to the Psalmist’s belief in the Resurrection of the dead, the difference between the natural man (the Nations) and the spiritual man (Israel) being that the one sees death and the other does not see it.

This Psalm is the seventh and last of the Elohist Korah Psalms and it corresponds closely with Psalm lxxiii., the first of a group of Asaph Psalms. Enoch is “the seventh

from Adam" (Jude 14) and this Seventh Korah Psalm might well be called an Enoch Psalm. It is interesting to note that it has relations with those passages of 2 Peter and Jude which were probably derived from the Book of Enoch.

If we turn now to the structure of the Psalm we see that, after four verses of Introduction, it falls into two equal Parts of eight verses each. Part I (*vv.* 5—12) corresponds so closely with Part II (*vv.* 13—20) that the one will bear comparison with the other, verse by verse; especially we note the relation of *v.* 6 to *v.* 14; *v.* 7 to *v.* 15; *v.* 10 to *v.* 18; *v.* 11 to *v.* 19 and *v.* 12 which is identical with *v.* 20.

Words which apply to the death of sinful Nations must not be transferred without thought to the death of sinful men (see e.g. Ps. ix. 17 note); and yet there is a certain amount of analogy, so that the sinners of 2 Peter and Jude are pictured in words which cannot fail to recall the words of our Psalm.

The Psalm should be studied in close connexion with Psalm lxxiii.

PSALM XLIX.

INTRODUCTION.

An appeal against
the Nations of the
World.

- 1 Hear ye this, all ye peoples,
Give ear all ye Citizens of Time!
- 2 Both high and low,
Rich and poor alike.
- 3 My mouth shall speak wisdom,
And the utterance of my heart shall be of understanding.
- 4 I will incline mine ear to parable
And will open my dark-speech^a to the harp.

^a Ps. lxxviii. 2

PART I.

Why should Israel
be envious at the prosper-
ity of these world-
lings?

- 5 Why should I fear in the evil days?
(When) the iniquity of my supplanters is round me?
- 6 These that trust in their wealth^b!
And in the abundance of their riches place their pride!

^b *v.* 10

v. 1. "Give ear all ye Citizens of Time." The word *heled* which we have translated "Time" occurs in three other passages in the Psalms and always marks the contrast between the short duration of life on earth and the Eternity of life with God. Thus:—Ps. xvii. 14 "From men who *wholly are of earth*" (see note); Ps. xxxix. 5 (6) "And my *life-time*, in Thy sight, is nothing"; Ps. lxxxix. 47 (48) "Remember how *short my time* is" (lit. "how *transitory* I am").

Such being the meaning of the word, it is evident that our Psalmist does not simply address "all the *inhabitants of the world*" (R. V.) but rather those whose home and end is in Time as contrasted with Israel the Citizen of Eternity.

It is quite possible that, in the horizon of the Psalmist's vision, there was no distinction between "all the *peoples*" and the "Citizens of Time."

v. 4. "I will incline mine ear &c." The figure is that of a minstrel bending over his harp till the words and music are given to him in the full flood of inspiration. Compare the Introduction to Scott's *Lay of the last Minstrel*.

v. 5. "My supplanters." The verb *qqab* signifies *to take by the heel* (Hos. xii. 3 (4)) or *supplant* (Jer. ix. (3) 4; Gen. xxvii. 36). The substantive is translated in the E. V. by *heels, steps, footsteps* but

What foundation have they for life?	7 Nay but ^a no man can at all redeem Nor pay his ransom to God—	^a v. 15
	8 For precious ^b is the redemption of their life And he must let (that) alone for ever—	^b Ps. lxxii. 14
	9 That he should live on continually And not see corruption ^c .	^c <i>the pit</i>
	10 For one sees that wise ^d men die, The foolish and brutish perish together And leave unto others their wealth .	^d but see note ^e v. 6, cf. Luke xii. 16-20

also by *liers in wait* (Josh. viii. 13). The word is used in Ps. lvi. 6 (7) "They mark *my steps*," cf. Ps. lxxxix. 51 (52).

v. 7. "*Nay but no man can at all redeem.*" The present text reads, "*No man can at all redeem a brother.*" But the text is doubtful for the following reasons:—

(a) The order of the words, "*A brother no man can at all redeem,*" is peculiar.

(b) The context would have led us to expect, "*No man can at all redeem himself.*"

(c) The statement that no man could redeem his brother, if pressed to its logical conclusion, would contradict the whole ritual of the Old Testament and its fulfilment in Christ. Matthew Arnold has pathetically expressed this thought:

"From David's lips this word did roll,
'Tis true and living yet:
*No man can save his brother's soul,
Nor pay his brother's debt.*"

See the whole passage quoted in Marson's *Psalms at Work*, p. 73. The fact is however that the Psalmist intends verse 7 to be explained by verse 15.

(d) The first word *ah*, "*a brother*" could easily have been confused with *ak*, "*nevertheless,*" "*nay but,*" which indeed occurs in the parallel verse (v. 15) of Part II. "*Nay but God will redeem my soul &c.*" This word *ak* "*nay but*" is also characteristic of the parallel Psalm lxxiii.

If, with Ewald, Cheyne, Wellhausen and others, we make this slight change we should translate, "*Nay but man cannot at all redeem nor pay &c.*" Wellhausen would further change the vowel points of the verb and translate, "*Nay but man cannot at all be redeemed.*" The 'redemption' in the Psalmist's mind is chiefly if not entirely immunity from death.

v. 8. "*For precious is...*" This verse touches the key-note of the Psalm. The same word which here, as a verb, is translated "*is precious*" occurs again twice (vv. 12, 20) in the Refrain, as a substantive, where we are forced to translate it by "*honour.*" The Septuagint use *τιμή* in all three passages. The Hebrew word is often used of *costly* stones i.e. *weighty* stones for the foundation of the Temple (1 Kings v. 17 (31); vii. 9, 10, 11, &c.). In this sense also it is used of the "*precious corner stone*" (Is. xxviii. 16) which is to be the one foundation for life.

"*The redemption of their life.*" The only other passage in which the word *pidyôn*, "*redemption,*" occurs is Exod. xxi. 30 where the "*redemption*" is a payment made by a man whose life would otherwise have been forfeit to the law.

The whole of verse 8 must be regarded as a parenthesis. The Yalkut makes exception in the case of Israel. "Dearly loved are Israel unto whom the Holy One, blessed be He, has given the nations of the world as a ransom for their life, as it is said '*I have given Egypt for thy ransom &c.*' And why? '*Since thou wast precious in Mine eyes*' (Is. xliii. 3 f.)."

v. 10. "*For one sees that wise men die.*"—These words in such a connexion are strangely unexpected. The whole point of the Psalm has been to shew that Israel (the wise man) walks with God and has an eternal future, whereas the Nations of the World (who are 'brutish' in their folly) will soon pass away and cease to be. It is true that the Author of Ecclesiastes complains (Ch. ii. 16) that "there is no remembrance of the wise man any more than of the fool" and that "as the wise man dies so the fool

- 11 Their grave^a is their long home
 Their dwelling for ages and ages.
 They give their names to (heaps of) earth^b.
 12 YEA MAN CANNOT ABIDE IN HONOUR^c,
 HE IS BUT AS THE BEASTS THAT PERISH.

^a or graves are^b pl. only here^c preciousness

PART II.

Such is the end of
 those I had half en-
 vied!

- 13 This their way is (the ground of) their self-confidence,
 And their latter end is that they approve their choice^d.

^d text doubtful

dies," but to import such a thought into our Psalm would contradict its whole meaning. The Hebrew word for "a wise man," *hakam*, in Prov. xi. 30 is almost certainly a mistake for *hanef*, "a godless man," the Septuagint rightly translating it by *παράνομος* (cf. also Hebrew and Sept. on Job xvii. 8; xx. 5). I would suggest therefore that the original text of our Psalm ran as follows: "One sees that the godless die..."

v. 11. "Their grave is their long home."—We must undoubtedly read *qibram* "their grave" (or plural *graves*) with the Septuagint, Targum, Syriac and Vulgate instead of *qirbam* "their inner being," or "thought." This inversion of *qirbam* for *qibram* is noted by Aben Ezra and is accepted by most modern scholars. The verse recalls to our minds the touching words of Horace (*Odes* II. xiv. 21) "Linquenda tellus &c." and the still more pathetic cry of our own Chaucer

"What is this world? What axen men to have?
 Now with his love, now in the coldé grave,
 Alone! withouten any company!"

"They give their names to (heaps of) earth."—The word for *earth* here is the plural of *adama*. It cannot be an accident that the next words should be "Yea man (i.e. *adam*) cannot abide..." So then we must not translate, "They give their names to *lands*" but rather "They give their names to (or men celebrate their fame over) dust!"

The Yalkut refers to the attempt of Cain the city-builder to perpetuate his name, "And he builded a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch." The home of Cain's Enoch is in the earth; the home of Seth's Enoch is in heaven. They represent respectively the natural man and the spiritual man.

v. 12. "Yea man cannot abide in honour."—*Man*, throughout the Psalm stands for the natural man who is "of the earth, earthly." "Except above himself he can erect himself how mean a thing is man!" The word "honour" here signifies "preciousness" and is used of the *stability* of a foundation-stone (see note on v. 8). The natural man merely shares animal life with the beasts. He has no foundation, no stability for life with God. For the development of the thought of the "precious corner-stone" see Additional Note at the end of this Psalm.

v. 13. "This their way is (the ground of) their self-confidence." Lit. "This is their way, self-confidence is theirs." The word *kesil* signifies *the loin, the flank*, as the seat of fat (Lev. iii. 4, 10, 15; iv. 9; vii. 4), hence *confidence*, whether good (Prov. iii. 26; Ps. lxxviii. 7) or bad (Job xxxi. 24; Eccles. vii. 25).

The passage which connects the two meanings is Job xv. 27 when Eliphaz, much in the style of our present Psalm and of Psalm lxxiii., says of the rich fool who defies God, "He hath covered his face with fatness, and hath made collops of fat on his loins."

The Yalkut on this verse of our Psalm quotes Raba as saying "The wicked know that their latter end is for death but they have fat upon their loins." The allusion of course is to Job xv. 27.

The Hebrew idiom, "This their way, self-confidence is theirs" implies a relation of cause and effect; their "way," i.e. their whole manner of life (cf. v. 6), is the cause of "their self-confidence." The thought is identical with that of the companion-Psalm lxxiii., see especially vv. 4—11.

The Targum translates "This their way is the cause of their folly." The Aramaic word here used for "folly" occurs also in the proverb, "The fool is returned to the way of his folly" which is given in

14 Like sheep they are pent^a in Sheôl,
 Death is their Shepherd.
 The Righteous-ones must rule them betimes^b.
 Their form Sheôl must wear out
 So that no Sanctuary is left them.

^a they set
 (them)
 Ps. lxxiii. 9
^b in the morn-
 ing

I have the sure founda- 15 Nay^c but God will redeem my soul from the power^d of Sheôl. ^e v. 7
 tion. For He will "take" me. ^d hand

Vaiyikra Rabba xvi. in connexion with Prov. xxvi. 11 "The dog is returned to its own vomit" (quoted by Buxtorf). Thus we may trace a connexion of thought between the 'brutish' sinners of our Psalm and those of 2 Peter ii. 22.

"And their latter end is that they approve..." The present text reads, "And after them they favour their mouth." This is supposed to mean, "And those that come after them approve their saying." But even if we grant the possibility of such a rendering, it would harmonise neither with the context nor with the parallelism. The fact is that the Versions vary greatly. The Targum seems to have read אחריהם "their latter end" instead of אחריהם "after them." Raba also had the same reading (see last note). In modern times this reading has been adopted by Wellhausen. The next word *yirtsu* "they favour" or "take pleasure in" is also doubtful; Aquila and Jerome read *yarutsu* "they run." Amid so much that is uncertain, we can only say that the parallelism favours the reading "their latter end," which would correspond with "their way" in the first member of the verse. Perhaps we might render

"This their way is (the ground of) their self-confidence
 And their latter end is that they approve their own choice!"

The passage suggests 2 Peter ii. 10 ff. and Jude 10 ff. See also last note.

v. 14. "Death is their Shepherd."—The Babylonian Under-world was presided over by Ner or Ner-gal who was called the 'Lord of the Great City' and, according to Prof. Sayce, the phrase "Mankind, the cattle of the god Ner" is not unfrequent in the Babylonian Hymns (*Hibbert Lectures*, p. 198). Prof. Cheyne well quotes Lyall's translation of an Arabic poem "And to-day they wander, a trembling herd, their herdsman Death."

"The Righteous-ones must rule them betimes."—i.e. Israel in the future will have the dominion over the Nations of the World, cf. Is. lxxv. 24. But, since the whole context is in the style of Dante, may not the "Righteous-ones" be like the Greek Eumenides?

"Their form &c."—The last two lines of the verse are of doubtful meaning. The Versions vary considerably.

The word *sebul* which we have translated *Sanctuary* properly means a *high dwelling*; *Beth sebul* (1 Kings viii. 13) signifies "a House of exaltation" or "a House of honour"; while the verb *zabal* (Gen. xxx. 20) ought to be translated "now will my husband exalt or honour me" (see Delitzsch *Hebrew and Assyrian*, p. 38 f.; Schrader *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, I. 175; II. 228). This sense of *honour* will account for the Sept. ἐκ τῆς δόξης ἀνθρώπων and the Vulgate, "a gloria eorum."

Symmachus combines the two ideas of *sebul* as a 'House of honour' and renders ἀπὸ τῆς οὐχθσεως τῆς ἐντίμου ἀνθρώπων.

The words of the Psalmist seem to signify that, inasmuch as these sinners have defiled the Temple of their body, it wastes away in Sheôl so that no Sanctuary is left them. Compare the Refrain in vv. 12, 20.

The reader of Dante will remember that the *bestialized* i.e. those who had refused to retain God in their knowledge, and had thus become like the brutes that perish, were seen by him in the 6th Circle of his *Inferno*, the City of Dis, which was a City not of houses but of tombs! See Rossetti's *Shadow of Dante*, p. 53.

"The City of Dis is the Antithesis to the City of the living God. Its turreted walls and Sepulchres keep in Death, and shut out Life. The Heavenly Jerusalem has no confines but Light and Love" (Mrs Gurney *Dante's Pilgrim's Progress*, p. 43).

v. 15. "Nay but God will redeem..." This third verse of Part II. answers exactly to the third

- 16 Fear^a not thou when a man grows rich ^a v. 5
 When the glory of his house increases,
 17 For he can take nothing with him when he dies,
 Nor can his glory follow him.
 18 Though in life he flattered^b himself— ^b Deut. xxix. 18
 And men thank thee that thou hast done well by thyself!—
 19 He must come to the dwelling-place^c of his fathers, ^c or generation
 Who never again see the light.
 20 MAN CANNOT ABIDE IN HONOUR^d, ^d preciousness
 HE IS BUT AS THE BEASTS THAT PERISH.

verse of Part I. That which is impossible to the natural man (*v.* 7) is not only possible but natural to the Israel of God (*v.* 15). The little word *ak*, "nay but" occurs three times in the parallel Psalm (lxxiii. 1, 13, 18).

"For He will take me..." Here, and in the parallel passage (Ps. lxxiii. 24) there is an undoubted reference to Gen. v. 24, "And Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him." In the Babylonian story of the Deluge, Parnaphishtim, who answers both to Enoch and to Noah, is taken to live with the gods, i.e. *he escapes death* (see Jastrow's *Religion of Babylonia*, p. 577). The Biblical Enoch is "the seventh from Adam"; he is a type of the second Adam; the spiritual man; the new Creation; his name implies the *dedicated* life; he "walks with God" and God takes him to Himself without dying. It is important to observe that Enoch does not mark a *deliverance from death* but an *exception to the otherwise universal power of death*.

In the thought of our Psalmist, the Nations of the World die and share, with the beasts that perish, the universal lot of man; but Israel, like Enoch, walks with God, and God "takes" him to share His own immortality. The transition from *v.* 14 to *v.* 15 is like passing from the 6th Circle of the Inferno to the 7th of the Paradiso. The parallel passage in Psalm lxxiii. should be carefully considered.

v. 20. "Man cannot abide in honour."—The refrain in this verse slightly differs in the Hebrew text from that of verse 12. Instead of "Man, in honour, cannot *abide*" it reads "Man, in honour, and (who) cannot *understand*." But the similarity of the Hebrew words *yalin*, "abide," and *yabin*, "understand" obliges us to conclude that the refrain was originally the same in both verses. The Septuagint, in both passages read *yabin*; this gives good sense but *yalin* was, I think, the true reading.

Additional note on the use of "preciousness" in the Old and New Testaments.

"For to you therefore which believe is the *preciousness*" (1 Pet. ii. 7 R. V. see the Greek).—To understand these words we must go back to Is. xxviii. The Assyrian was threatening Jerusalem. The leading men of Judah wanted to form an alliance. Isaiah opposes. He calls such a trust "*a refuge of lies*" (*v.* 15); a house built on the sand which the floods will sweep away (*v.* 17). With this he contrasts the God-laid foundation. "Behold I have laid in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a *precious* corner stone of sure foundation" (*v.* 16). That foundation was *God's purpose for man's holiness*. He that reposes on this foundation is safe (*v.* 16). The "*preciousness*" of the rock-foundation will bear all the weight that is built on it.

But the Jewish Nation, as a whole, sided with the false prophets who, like the Nations of the World, sought their foundation not in God but in earthly policy. Thus the God-laid foundation was "*a stone which the builders rejected*" (Ps. cxviii. 22). Nevertheless the fact remained that there was no other foundation for the life of man, "Yea man cannot (of himself) abide in *preciousness*" (Ps. xlix. 12, 20).

Thus even the Old Testament proclaims, "*Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid*"—and the New Testament adds, "*which is Jesus Christ*" (1 Cor. iii. 11), God's purpose for man, realized on earth and thus become the Foundation for the Temple of Humanity. According to St Peter's thought (1 Pet. ii. 4 ff.) each Christian is a "living stone" built into the Temple and so remaining in vital union with Christ, the precious Corner-Stone, as to share His Life.—"Unto you therefore that believe belongs the *preciousness*."

PSALM L.

This Psalm has been well called "the Psalm of the Great Assize." It is not however a vision of the general Judgement but only of the Judgement of God upon His own People (see note on *v.* 4).

According to the Title Ps. l. is one of the (twelve) Asaph Psalms the other eleven being Pss. lxxiii.—lxxxiii. which form the opening of Book III. The reason for an Asaph Psalm occurring in the position of Psalm l. will best be discussed in the *Introduction to the Korah and Asaph Psalms*.

The Vision of Judgement opens with a Theophany. God shines forth, not from Sinai, but from Zion which has become the world-centre whence the word should go forth (Is. ii. 3, &c.). First He summons before Him those "called to be saints" and reminds them that the Covenant of Sinai was founded on *obedience* (*v.* 5).

Then (*vv.* 7—15) He pleads with them (cf. Is. i. 18) respecting this same *obedience*: without it all sacrifice is worthless. What He does value is "His little human praise" springing from a heart full of gratitude (*v.* 14) and manifesting itself in a dedicated life (*v.* 23).

Next (*vv.* 16—22) the Divine Judge speaks to those who, though nominally belonging to Israel, were living in utter disregard of the moral Law; with burning light He consumes the veil that is upon their hearts and shews them to themselves as haters of good (*v.* 17) and lovers of all evil (*vv.* 18—20). This judgement ends (*v.* 21) in words that remind us of Browning's Vision of Judgement in "*Christmas-eve and Easter-day*";—the sinner is forced to see and realize what his choice means!

Verse 22 shews us that this Vision of Judgement is sent in mercy to save the sinner before it be too late.

As to the date of the Psalm I desire to speak with caution. The invocation "*El, Elohim, YHVH*" (*v.* 1) would seem to be archaic (see note). Verse 8 could not have been written in the Captivity and the whole tone of *vv.* 8—15 with respect to Sacrifice reminds us rather of the Prophets of the 8th and 7th centuries than of the Priest-code (see notes) or of a late Prophet like Malachi. Graetz and Baethgen assign our Psalm to the times of Josiah's Reformation; say between B.C. 622 and the Babylonian Exile (B.C. 587).

It will be well to pronounce no positive opinion until we have studied the other 'Asaph' Psalms.

PSALM L.

All Nature proclaims the Great Ingathering as a Judgement Day. This Judgement must begin at the House of God.

- 1 El, Elohim, YHVH, hath spoken, and summoned earth,
From east to western sunset :
2 From out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God^a hath shone^b forth.

^a Elohim
^b Ps. xciv. 1

v. 1. "*El, Elohim, YHVH, hath spoken.*"—The three Divine Names must be kept distinct; as indeed is indicated by the punctuation of the Hebrew. The Targum gives us a hint as to the true meaning when it says that God has '*uttered His song from Creation.*' The three Names occur again, in the same order, in Josh. xxii. 22 where the tribes of Reuben and Gad call God to witness to their fidelity to the Covenant. "*El, Elohim, YHVH; El, Elohim, YHVH, He knoweth and Israel, he knoweth.*" On this passage the Yalkut (see also the Midrash) asks "Why did the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben mention these three Names twice?" The answer is, (1) "Because by them (i.e. by these three Names) He created the Universe, as it is said '*El, Elohim, YHVH spoke and called the earth*'"; (2) "*El, Elohim, YHVH,*" because by them the Law was given to Israel "For I am *YHVH* thy God (*Elohim*) a jealous God (*El*)."^a To some this will appear mere Rabbinic fancy. But let us look deeper.

It is being recognised more and more fully how the religion of the Old Testament was influenced by the religion of Babylonia. Now from the earliest times the Babylonian pantheon was presided over by the Triad *Anu, Bel* and *Ea* who represented respectively the regions of *Heaven, Earth* and *Water* (Jastrow, *Relig. of Babylonia*, p. 107). The rulers both of Babylonia and of Assyria constantly invoke *Anu, Bel* and *Ea* (Jastrow, p. 149). "When therefore *Anu, Bel* and *Ea* were invoked, it was equivalent to naming all the powers that influenced the fate of man" (Jastrow, p. 147). Thus we find the tribes of Reuben and Gad invoking *El, Elohim, YHVH*, where the Babylonians or Assyrians would have invoked *Anu, Bel, Ea*; the difference being that, in the former case, the Unity of God is fully recognised. But further, I suggest a certain correspondence between the names in the two triads.

As *Anu* represents the distant Heaven and is almost identified with the Universe (Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, p. 191) so *El* represents the *power* of God in Nature (see note on "*the Living God*" Ps. xliii. 2, p. 174 f.).

As *Bel* (not *Bel* Marduk but the older *Bel*) represents the Earth, the Underworld of the dead, and is associated with the Autumn; so *Elohim* also is closely associated with the Autumn Feast of the Ingathering as I have already shewn in my *Lectures on the Asaph Psalms*.

Lastly as *Ea* represents the *goodness* of God and is associated with the sun rising from the waters at the Winter solstice, so *YHVH* is the merciful God, the God of the Covenant.

Thus the words "*El, Elohim, YHVH, hath spoken*" might be paraphrased, 'God has spoken through the three Seasons of His Year (cf. on Ps. xxix., Part I., p. 121 f.) and through the three realms of His Universe'; or, with the Targum, 'God has uttered His song from Creation.' Such an appeal to Creation may be compared with Rom. i. 19 (Greek or R.V.).

"*From east to western sunset.*" Literally, "From (the place of) the rising of the sun to (the place of) his setting." In English we speak of 'from sunrise to sunset' to mark the duration of time, but in Hebrew it always signifies the interval of space, from east to west (Ps. ciii. 12; cvii. 3; cxliii. 3; Mal. i. 11). In the present passage the words denote the totality of Earth, in all its length and breadth, summoned before the Judgement-seat of God.

v. 2. "*From out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shone forth.*" The Prayer-Book version, following the *Sept.* and *Vulgate*, refers the "*beauty*" to God, but it is evident from Lam. ii. 15, where however a slightly different form of the word is used, that Zion itself is regarded as "the perfection of

- 3 [Let our God come, and let Him no longer refrain!]
 Before Him burns a fire,
 And round about Him all is tempest-tost.
- 4 He summoneth the Heavens from above
 And the Earth for judgement for His People.
- 5 "Ingather for Me mine Elect^a,
 My covenant-bound by the sacrifice."
- 6 The Heavens proclaim His righteousness,
 That Elohim^b He is the Judge.

^a My saints^b God

beauty." The group of prophecies which foretell the exaltation of Zion (see on Ps. xlvi. 2 (3)) would sufficiently account for this name without assuming that Lam. ii. 15 implies a recollection of our Psalm.

The beauty of Zion consists, as we have already seen throughout the Korah Psalms, in the Presence of her God. (Contrast the "beauty" of the World-City in Ezek. xxvii. 3—11; xxviii. 12, 17). This Presence is now manifested in a glorious Theophany. Therefore it is said, "*God (Elohim) hath shone forth.*" There seems to be a reference to Deut. xxxiii. 2 "YHVH came from Sinai, He beamed forth unto them from Se'ir; He *shone forth* from Paran." The same verb is used (in the Hiphil) in Pss. lxxx. 1 (2); xciv. 1. See notes.

The Theophany in the Song of Habakkuk (Chap. iii.) should also be compared with the Theophany in our Psalm.

There is however this important difference, in the Theophanies mentioned above God is supposed to come for judgement against the Nations whereas in our Psalm He comes for judgement upon His own People.

v. 3. "*Let our God come, and let Him no longer refrain!*" The form of the verbs in the Hebrew requires an *optative*. Wellhausen thinks that this line "is the sigh of some ancient reader. It does not suit the context and ought to be struck out." If the words belong to the original text we may compare them with Rev. xxii. 20 "*Amen: come, Lord Jesus.*"

v. 4. "*He summoneth the Heavens from above.*" So in Deut. xxxi. 26 ff. the Book of the Covenant is placed by the side of the Ark "*that it may be there for a witness against thee*"; and, in v. 28 Moses himself is quoted as fulfilling the command (of v. 10) by reading the Law in the seventh month of the year of Release, "Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears *and call to witness against them the heavens and the earth.*"

In the earliest form in which the 'Law' was read it probably consisted of little more than the Blessings and the Curses. Heaven and Earth are fitly called to testify to the fulfilment of both (Deut. iv. 26; xxx. 19; xxxi. 28. See also on the word "*testimony*" Part I., p. 51).

"*For judgement for His People.*"—The word *din* generally implies a *judgement of vindication* and we must so interpret it in the present passage. The nearest parallel is, again, from Deuteronomy (xxxii. 36) "For YHVH *shall judge* His People, and repent Himself for His servants."—Such *judgement* however, as we see from the context, is not without pain. In the same way, in our Psalm the Judgement "begins at the House of God" (1 Pet. iv. 17, cf. Jer. xxv. 29; xlix. 12; Ezek. ix. 6) as a vindication of that justice which must precede the final deliverance.

v. 5. "*Ingather for Me mine Elect.*" I retain the word "*ingather*" in order to remind the reader that the verb *asaph* is the word used of the *ingathering* of the fruits of the earth and gave the name *Asaph* to the Feast of *Ingathering* in the seventh month to which I refer all the *Asaph* Psalms (see *Introduction to Korah and Asaph Psalms*). In that month "the Tribes of Israel were gathered together" (Deut. xxxiii. 5, cf. Ezra iii. 1; Neh. viii. 1; xii. 28; 1 Esdras v. 50) to hear the reading of the Law and to ratify the Covenant. This seventh month was also associated with the Advent of the Divine Judge (see *Introduction to Korah and Asaph Psalms*). Thus the General Assembly of the Jewish Church while it reminded men of the Giving of the Law pointed onward to a better Covenant and to the final *gathering together* of all things unto God.

Judgement on the elect.

7 "Hear, O My People, for I would speak,
O Israel I would take thee to witness,
I am Elohim* thy God.
8 It is not for thy sacrifices that I have to reprove thee,
Nor for burnt-offerings ever before Me.

* Exod. xx. 2

So the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews writes, "Ye are come unto Mount Zion and to the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem; and to myriads of Angels in General Assembly, to the Church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven; and to the God of all who is the Judge" (Heb. xii. 22 f., cf. also 2 Thess. ii. 1). The General Assembly of Israel for the reading of the Law in the Seventh Month was no new thing in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah for it is already commanded in Deut. xxxi. 9—13 though apparently it was to be observed only once every seven years, in the year of Release and, as Dr Driver remarks (Deut. xxxi. 12 f.), "All are to be assembled for the purpose, not the males only (who alone were under an obligation to attend the Feast of Booths, xvi. 16), but the women, the children, and the strangers, or foreigners resident in Israel." Thus the Assembly of Israel in the Seventh Month laid the foundation for the Christian Ecclesia.

"*My covenant-bound by the sacrifice*"—or "*Those that have made a Covenant with me by sacrifice.*" It is clear from these words and from their context that there can be no intention of disparaging sacrifice in the later portion of the Psalm. The reference is to an ancient passage of the Elohist, Exod. xxiv. 1 ff., where, after the People had promised to observe all the words of God, Moses sprinkled both them and the Book with the blood of the sacrifice saying, "Behold the blood of the Covenant which YHVH has made with you on the basis of all these words." (Contrast St Matt. xxvi. 28 and Heb. xii. 24 where "*the blood of sprinkling*" alludes to the act of Moses.) The first Covenant was based upon entire obedience; and earth, as witness, cried for vengeance upon all that broke it. The second Covenant is based upon the entire obedience of Christ; and heaven and earth, as witnesses, cry for mercy upon all who hold to Him. "*Ingather for Me mine Elect, My covenant-bound by the sacrifice.*"

v. 7. "*I am Elohim thy God.*" We should naturally have expected "*I am YHVH thy God.*"

"*I am YHVH thy God*" is not merely the first "Word" of Sinai (Exod. xx. 2) but it is the seal to the whole Covenant; thus in the group of miscellaneous laws (Lev. xix. 1—37), in which the Priest-code develops the Decalogue, we find the formula "*I am YHVH thy God,*" and the shorter formula "*I am YHVH,*" each repeated eight times. If this passage be studied it will be seen that Israel's call to holiness is based upon the holiness of God (Lev. xix. 2). This too is the thought in our Psalm. For this reason no mere outward service of sacrifice can meet the requirements of God. Compare our Lord's words (Matt. v. 48) "*Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect*" with the words that follow: (cf. 1 Pet. i. 15 f.).

v. 8. "*It is not for thy sacrifices that I have to reprove thee.*" We need not enter upon the question of the origin of sacrifice; whether it was actually ordained by God or only tolerated by Him during the infancy of the world. If we assume the latter the fact still remains that when once it had become Law no jot or tittle could pass away till all was fulfilled. But thanks to the Higher Criticism we now know that, before the publication of the Priest-code (say B.C. 444) the whole ritual of sacrifice was comparatively simple. When then we find Prophets and Psalmists speaking, as it might seem, in disparaging terms of sacrifice we must remember that they were not opposing an earlier Mosaic ritual but were merely setting themselves against a tendency to formalism which they felt to be a growing danger.

The most important passages from the Prophets may be arranged in chronological order as follows: Amos (760—746 B.C.) Ch. v. 21—27; Hosea (746—735 B.C.) Ch. vi. 6; Isaiah (740—701 B.C.) Ch. i. 11—14; Micah vi. 6—8 (? 696—642 B.C.); Jeremiah (626—587 B.C.) Ch. vi. 20, and especially Ch. vii. 21—23 a passage which could not have been written if the Priest-code had been recognised in Jeremiah's time as the work of Moses. We must not however suppose that Jeremiah was opposed to sacrifice (see Chaps. xvii. 26; xxxiii. 18). He, like all the Prophets, insists on the priority of the Moral Law (cf. Luke xi. 42). His standpoint is exactly that of our Psalmist; from whence we may perhaps infer a similarity of date.

"*Nor for burnt-offerings ever before Me.*" It is difficult to see how these words could have been

9 I would not take an ox from thy homestead,
 Nor he-goats from thy folds;
 10 For Mine is each beast of the forest,
 And cattle on mountains by thousands.
 11 I know each bird of the height^a,
 And the wealth^b of the fields is before Me.
 12 Were I to hunger I would not tell thee,
 For Mine is the world and the fulness thereof:
 13 Should I eat the flesh of bulls,
 Or drink the blood of goats?
 14 Sacrifice unto God^c thanksgiving^d;
 And, unto the Most High^e, pay thy vows^d;
 15 And call upon Me in the day of trouble,
 I will set thee free that thou mayest honour Me."

^a So *Sept.* &c.^b plenitude^c Elohim^d Jonah ii. 9^e Elyôn

Judgement on the
 apostates.

16 But, to the wicked, thus spake God^c,
 "What right hast thou to recite My statutes,
 To take My covenant upon thy lips?
 17 Thou! that hatest instruction,
 And that castest My words behind thee!
 18 Hast thou seen but a thief thou hast pleasure in him,
 And with adulterers is thy chosen portion.
 19 Thou hast let loose thy mouth unto evil,
 And thy tongue thou hast yoked unto fraud.

written after the Babylonian Captivity (B.C. 587—537) when sacrifice ceased for more than fifty years. On the other hand it is undoubtedly true that the impossibility of offering Sacrifice would tend to a more spiritual interpretation of the Law (see further on *v.* 23).

v. 11. "*And the wealth of the fields...*" The word *zfx* which we translate "*wealth*" or "*plenitude*" is of doubtful meaning as it only occurs in two other passages, in one of which (Ps. lxxx. 14) it clearly refers to some creatures which live in the fields, while in the other (Is. lxvi. 11) it signifies "*abundance*." I think it probable that, both in our Psalm and in Psalm lxxx., the word was used as a poetical expression to denote the *plenitude* of life with which the fields abound. This translation has also the authority of the Versions: Aq. and Sym., "*the abundance of the field*"; Jerome, "*universitas agri*"; Sept., "*the beauty of the field*" (see Field's *Hexapla*). The usual translation, "*the wild beast of the field*" would be merely a repetition of *v.* 10, whereas the "*wealth*" of the fields includes everything that is good for food.

v. 14. "*Sacrifice unto God thanksgiving,*" see note on *v.* 23. There is an interesting passage in the *Vaiyikra Rabba* (sect. 27, end) on Lev. xxii. 29 in which it is said that "In the world to come all the offerings cease, but the offering of thanksgiving (*korban thoda*) does not cease for ever."

v. 19. "*Thou hast let loose thy mouth.*" So in Job xxx. 11, "*They have also let loose the bridle*": so also, in English, we speak of an "*unbridled tongue*."

"*And thy tongue thou hast yoked unto fraud.*" The verb, only found here in the *Hiphil*, is used three times in the *Niphal* of those who "*joined themselves to Baal-peor*" (Numb. xxv. 3, 5; Ps. cvi. 28). The substantive is constantly used of "*a yoke of oxen*," i.e. a couple of oxen joined together for ploughing.

20 Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother,
 Yea thou canst slander thine own mother's son.
 21 Such hast thou done—yet I refrained Myself:
 Thou thoughtest Me one wholly like thyself!
 I (now) convict thee—ranging all before thee.”

A last word to the
 apostates.

22 Consider now this, ye who forget Eloah^a,
 Lest I rend and there be no deliverer.

^a God

A last word to the
 elect.

23 He that sacrificeth thanksgiving^b shall honour^c Me;
 And to him that prepareth the way I will shew the salvation^c
 of God.

^b v. 14

^c v. 15

Thus the image of the ploughing ox would seem to be continued in the second member of the verse. Not only is the mouth unbridled, to pasture, as it were, in evil, but also the tongue is actively joined to Fraud as its yoke-fellow. So when the son cast off the restraint of the home he went and “joined himself” unto the citizen of the far country.

v. 21. “*Thou thoughtest Me one wholly like thyself!*” The Hebrew scholar will notice that, instead of the *absolute infinitive* with the tense, we have here the *construct infinitive*. May it not be that the writer intended to allude to the most holy Name “I AM”?—“*Thou thoughtest that I AM was like thyself.*”

v. 23. “*He that sacrificeth thanksgiving.*” The reference is to v. 14 “*Sacrifice unto God thanksgiving.*” The verb *śvāh* implies the *slaying* of an animal in sacrifice and the later portion of the Priest-code actually speaks of the “*sacrifice of thanksgiving*” (*śvāh thoda*) as if it were as much a matter of ritual as the *peace offering*. “Now this is the law for a sacrifice of peace offering which they make to YHVH. If they offer it for *thanksgiving (thoda)* then they shall offer with the *sacrifice of thanksgiving (śvāh thoda)* unleavened cakes, &c.”...“But the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten, &c....” (Lev. vii. 11 f., 15). A somewhat older law (Lev. xxii. 29) also speaks of an animal sacrifice, “And when ye sacrifice a *sacrifice of thanksgiving* unto YHVH, ye shall sacrifice it that ye may be accepted.”

Are we to interpret our Psalm from the ritual of the Priest-code? I think not. I suggest that the following passages give the *earlier* meaning of *thoda*.

Jer. xvii. 26 “And they shall come from the cities of Judah.....bringing burnt-offering and sacrifice and meal-offering and incense; and those that bring the *thoda* (E.V. sacrifice of praise) into the House of YHVH.”

Jer. xxxiii. 11 “The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those that say ‘Give thanks (*hodu*) to YHVH of Hosts, for YHVH is good, for His mercy endureth for ever’ as they bring the *thoda* into the House of YHVH.”

In both these passages the bringing of the *thoda* seems to have been rather a musical procession than an act of sacrifice. We know that such Processions accompanied the presentation of the First Fruits (see Edersheim, *The Temple*, p. 336). It is also evident from 1 Chron. xvi.; 2 Chron. v. 13 that the words “*For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever*” formed part of the special service of the Asaph guild.

If now we turn to Neh. xii. vv. 27, 31, 38, 40 we find that Nehemiah expressly gives the name of *thoda* to each of the processions of singers at the Dedication of the Walls of Jerusalem, “And I brought the singers of Judah upon the wall, and I appointed two great *thodas* and processions.” In this Chapter of Nehemiah the word *thoda* is translated in the E.V. by “*thanksgivings*” in v. 27, and in the three other verses (vv. 31, 38, 40) by “(company of them that gave) *thanks.*”

If now we turn to the use of the word *thoda* in the Psalms we are confirmed in our view that the *Thanksgiving* was a religious Procession associated with the Hymns of the Temple Singers rather than with the Sacrifices of the Priests.

The passages are as follows:—Ps. xxxvi. 7 “*In order to make heard the voice of the Thanksgiving, In order to recount Thy wonders*” (see notes).

Ps. xlii. 4 (5) "*I shall...lead-them-in-procession to the House of God With the voice of music and thanksgiving (thoda) a jubilant multitude.*"

Ps. lvi. 12 (13) "*My vows to Thee are upon me, I will render Thanksgivings to Thee.*"

Ps. lxix. 30 (31) "*I would praise the name of God with a song And magnify it with Thanksgiving.*"

See context where such service is contrasted with sacrifice.

Ps. xcvi. 2 "*Let us come before His Face with Thanksgiving.*"

Ps. c. 4 "*Enter into His gates with Thanksgiving.*"

Ps. cvii. 22 "*Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of Thanksgiving
And recount His doings with ringing-joy.*"

Ps. cxvi. 17 "*Unto Thee will I sacrifice a sacrifice of Thanksgiving.*" See notes and compare *vv.* 13 and 18.

Ps. cxlvii. 7 "*Respond unto YHVH with Thanksgiving;
Hymn unto our God with the harp.*"

These are the only passages in the Psalms where the word occurs with the exception of our Psalm, where it occurs twice, viz. *v.* 14 "*Sacrifice unto God thanksgiving,*" and *v.* 23 "*He that sacrificeth thanksgiving shall honour Me,*" i.e. 'he shall have occasion to honour Me.'

We therefore conclude that the Thanksgiving denoted a public recognition of the mercies of God, most probably in the form of such religious Processions as were organised by Nehemiah. See further on the *Hodu*-Psalms.

"*And to him that prepareth the way I will shew the salvation of God.*" Lit. "*And he that prepareth a way I will cause him to look with joy upon the salvation &c.*" Here again the thought of the religious Procession suggests the image of all life as a dedicated way to God. Such as walk in this way will "*look with joy upon the salvation of God,*" cf. Ps. lxxxiv. 7. All who "*walk in the light*" will end by becoming "*children of light*" (S. John xii. 36).

PSALM LI.

We have everything to gain, nothing to lose, by interpreting this Psalm historically as the confession of the Jewish Church to God. The Psalm falls naturally into two parts which correspond very closely the one to the other. Part I consisting of verses 1—8; Part II of verses 9—15. The four last verses (16—19) give a summary closely connected with the whole thought of the Psalm but *possibly* added by a somewhat later writer.

The Psalm, which is known in the Church as the *Miserere*, may be analysed as follows:—

Verses 1, 2—Israel's prayer for such a forgiveness as shall bring, not merely pardon but, complete restoration.

This prayer he bases first upon the depth of his own need which, through the discipline of the Captivity, has come home to him. This he expresses in three thoughts in *vv.* 3—5. See marginal notes (a) (b) (c).

Having thus confessed the helpless state of man's corruption (cf. Rom. vii. 23.f.) he sets in sharp contrast the absolute purity required by God (*v.* 6). But this thought, instead of bringing despair brings hope; the "*innermost truth*" and "*deep-seated wisdom*" that God "*requires*" in man, God must, and will, supply to man. Thus, just as in Browning's Poem the sympathy that David feels towards Saul drives him to the truth that

God Himself must and will enter into and bear every human sorrow, so, our Psalmist rises from the corruption of man, to the Divine remedy (*vv.* 6—8) whereby, in the New Covenant, God will meet the three-fold need of this corruption (*cf.* *vv.* 6—8 with *vv.* 3—5).

The Second part of the Psalm begins with *v.* 9 which is practically a repetition of *vv.* 1, 2 except for the fact that the promise of the New Covenant is now uppermost.

Verses 10—12 again base the prayer upon Israel's need but the deep sadness of the corresponding verses 3—5 is lost in the promises which Jeremiah and Ezekiel had given of the New Covenant (see notes).

Verses 13—15 again base the prayer for forgiveness upon God's honour (*cf.* *vv.* 6—8). Israel will not receive the gift in vain; he will use it to bring back sinners unto God, and to offer unto God the reasonable service of a devoted life and of constant praise.

In considering this Psalm as the voice of Israel we trace God's dealings, not with one penitent however great, but with the whole of humanity; but, inasmuch as the whole of God's thought for Israel was summed up in Christ, and as every Christian is a member of Christ, it also follows that the voice of Israel in the Psalms may and ought to be the voice also of the individual Christian.

When then we use this Psalm in Public Worship we should do well to let it speak as the voice of the Church but when we use it in private devotion we may make every word of it as completely our own as if God had given it to us alone to express our needs our hopes and our resolves.

PSALM LI.

Israel's prayer for a complete forgiveness.

1 Be gracious to me, O God, after Thy lovingkindness;
 After Thine abounding compassions blot^a out my trans-^a *v.* 9
 gressions;
 2 Abundantly wash^b me from my guilt, ^b *v.* 7
 And cleanse me from my sin.

v. 1. "*Blot out my transgressions.*" The verb is used of "*wiping*" a dish (2 Kings xxi. 13); of *wiping away* tears (Is. xxv. 8); of *wiping* or *blotting* a name *out* of a book (Exod. xxxii. 33; Deut. xxix. 19 (20); Ps. lxix. 28 (29) &c.). The Second Isaiah twice uses the word of that great act of Divine forgiveness which blots out the handwriting that was against Israel. Thus:—Is. xliii. 25 "*I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake; and will not remember thy sin.*" Is. xli. 22 "*I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins.*" The thought of our Psalmist here, as elsewhere in the Psalm, is identical with that of the Second Isaiah.

v. 2. "*Abundantly wash me &c.*" *cf.* *v.* 7 "*Thou shalt wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.*" The verb properly denotes only the washing of *clothes*. It is only by a strong figure of speech that it can be applied to washing the *person*. The other two instances of this use are Jer. ii. 22 "*Though thou wash them with nitre &c.*" and Jer. iv. 14 "*O Jerusalem wash thine heart from wickedness.*" It will be seen that in all four instances there is an underlying thought of such a washing as takes the stain out of

*This prayer based on
the depth of his need.*

(a) Sin—The ever-
present sorrow of it!

(b) Sin—The pa-
tent enormity of it.
Against God!

(c) Sin—The depth
of it. Ingrained.

3 For my transgressions I myself do know,
And my sin is ever before me.

4 Against Thee—Thee only—have I sinned!
And evil in Thy sight have I done!

[In order that Thou mightest be justified in Thy sentence,
Clear in giving Thy judgment]^a

5 Behold in guilt I was born
And in sin did my mother conceive me!

^a Rom. iii. 4

the very texture of a garment as the fuller does when he "whitens" clothes. He who is to change the heart of man is "like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap," Mal. iii. 2.

"And cleanse me from my sin." This (*Pial*) verb is often used in the Priest Code of the priest pronouncing any person or thing to be clean. If God pronounce any to be clean He will certainly make them so (Rom. viii. 30); thus *v.* 7 uses the *Kal* of the same verb, "Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop and I shall be clean." The reader will note the progression of thought in the Psalm. The same nice distinction between the *Pial* and the *Kal* may be seen in Lev. xvi. 30, "For on this day (of Atonement) atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; from all your sins ye shall be clean before YHVH."

The three verbs *blot out*, *wash*, *cleanse* mark the completion of Forgiveness and give the Key to the whole Psalm. The *blotting out* of transgressions would, like the forgiveness of a debt, leave the debtor otherwise unchanged. The *washing* from guilt takes the stain out of the soul: but even that washing, like the washing of the priests (Heb. x. 22) is only preparatory to Service; therefore he says, "And cleanse me from my sin." This marks the restoration of the sinner to the full and joyous priesthood of Service. The marginal notes will shew how these three thoughts run through the Psalm.

The reader will also notice that the three-fold prayer for forgiveness is based on two thoughts, the need of man ("transgression," "guilt," "sin") and the goodness of God ("lovingkindness," "compassion"), "Lord if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean." The need of man (Israel) is developed in *vv.* 3—5 while the goodness of God is seen in the corresponding verses, 6—8.

v. 3. "For my transgressions I myself do know." Israel cannot and will not plead ignorance of God's will, for 'by the Law came the knowledge of sin.' Perhaps it would be equally true to say, 'by the Captivity came the knowledge of sin.' Thus Jeremiah says (xiv. 19 f.), "Hast Thou utterly rejected Judah?...O YHVH we know our wickedness, the guilt of our fathers for we have sinned against Thee." And, in like manner, the Second Isaiah, or some similar writer (Is. lix. 12), "For our transgressions are multiplied before Thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us and, as for our iniquities we know them."

v. 4. "In order that Thou mightest be justified...Thy judgement." These difficult words form a parenthesis. According to their plain grammatical meaning they imply that the sin was committed "in order that" God might be recognised as righteous in the sight of the world! No individual sinner could have dared to use such words. If, however, we regard the speaker as Israel, in the latter years of the Captivity, confessing to God that deep sense of sinfulness which the Captivity alone had brought home to him, and feeling for the first time a sympathy with God's great purpose of salvation for the Gentiles, then we can understand that he should regard his fall as a stage made necessary by his own blindness, and therefore plead it, not as an extenuation but as an aggravation of his guilt.

It is I think clear that St Paul interpreted the words in this sense in Rom. iii. 3 ff., "For what if some were without faith?...Yea, let God be found true, but every man a liar; as it is written,

'That Thou mightest be justified in Thy words,
And mightest prevail when Thou comest into judgement.'

The argument of St Paul throughout the whole Chapter is that the "unrighteousness" of man "commendeth the righteousness of God" (*v.* 5), or, as he expresses the same thought in Ch. xi., the fall of Israel is not an end to be judged by itself but a means whereby salvation should come to the Gentiles (*v.* 11) and that the mercy of God should be extended to all His children (*vv.* 30—32).



The same prayer based on the depth of God's need.

(a₁) God's remedy must and will go deep to the grain.

(b₁) God Himself must and will undo the sin.

(c₁) God will restore joy to His mourners.

6 Behold Thou delightest in innermost truth,

And, deep within, shalt make me to know wisdom:

7 Thou shalt sprinkle^a me with hyssop and I shall be clean, ^a *unsin me*

Thou shalt wash^b me and I shall be whiter than snow: ^b *v. 2*

8 Thou shalt make me to hear of joy and gladness,

The bones Thou hadst crushed shall rejoice.

If this be true St Paul must have interpreted our Psalm as the confession, not of David, but of Israel. In the time of the Captivity the sin of Israel was measured by the suffering of Israel. The Second Isaiah was perhaps the first to bring home the truth that those sufferings had a meaning for the salvation of the Gentiles and the greater glory of God. Our Psalmist, who is deeply versed in the writings of the Second Isaiah, anticipates the argument of St Paul and sees, even in the fall of Israel, the guiding hand of God.

v. 5. "*Behold in guilt I was born.*" These words have much more force when we regard them, not as the words of an individual but, as the confession of the Jewish Church. Thus we read in Ezekiel, "*Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, and say, Thus saith YHVH God unto Jerusalem: Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of the Canaanite; the Amorite was thy father, and thy mother an Hittite*" (Ezek. xvi. 2 f.). So too in the Second Isaiah, in a passage much like our present Psalm, God says to Israel, "*I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions... Thy first father sinned*" (Is. xliii. 25—27): and again, "*Thou wast called a transgressor from the womb*" (Is. xlvi. 8). In all these passages the ingrained sin of Israel does but set forth the freedom and magnitude of God's redemption.

v. 6. "*Behold.*" This word links *v. 6* with *v. 5*, "*Behold in guilt I was born,*" "*Behold Thou delightest in innermost truth.*" "Teach me," says St Augustine, "to know myself, but teach me also to know Thyself." Verse 5 shews a new creation needed; verse 6 implies a new creation promised.

In the marginal notes to *vv. 5, 6* I have called attention to this relation whereby the thought is continued, but the reader will observe that *v. 3* also corresponds with *v. 6*; the *conscience of man* (*v. 3*) with what we might almost dare to call the *conscience of God* (*v. 6*).

"*innermost truth.*" Lit. "*truth in the inward parts.*" The word only occurs here and in Job xxxviii. 36, "*Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts?*" If "*truth in the inward parts*" be God's intention for Israel, then sooner or later that intention must find realization. Thus the Psalmist rises from "man's nothing-perfect to God's all-complete," from the depths of man's sin (*v. 5*) to the heights of God's Redemption in *v. 6*.

"*And, deep within, shalt make me to know wisdom.*" In *v. 3* the Psalmist had said, "*My transgressions I myself do know*"; but now, anticipating the New Covenant, he says, "*Deep within Thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*" This justifies the relation which I have indicated by (a), (a₁) in the margin of the text. Compare also (a₂) and (a₃).

v. 7. "*Thou shalt sprinkle me.*" Lit. "*Thou shalt unsin me.*" The act of God is pictured as a ritualistic act whereby He so undoes the sin as to restore to the sinner, not merely forgiveness but, the priestly right of standing before Him for Service. Compare the corresponding verse 14 in the second part of the Psalm. For the New Testament development of the thought of *cleansing by sprinkling* see Hebrews ix. 13, 19, 21; x. 22; xii. 24; 1 Pet. i. 2.

v. 8. "*Thou shalt make me to hear of joy and gladness.*" So too the Second Isaiah says of Zion, "*Joy and gladness shall be found therein*" (Is. li. 3). "*They shall attain to joy and gladness, sorrow and sighing shall flee away*" (Is. li. 11). Jeremiah also promises that, "*the voice of joy and the voice of gladness*" shall yet again be heard in Jerusalem (Jer. xxxiii. 11, cf. xxxi. 13).

"*The bones Thou hadst crushed shall rejoice.*"—According to Hebrew thought the "*bone*" is the very "*self*;" consequently the penitential Psalms constantly speak of innermost sorrow as sorrow *in the bones*

The prayer for forgiveness (cf. *vv.* 1, 2).

Based on man's need.

(*a*₂) Give me the New Covenant gift of a new heart.

(*b*₂) Let me stand before Thee, cleansed for Service.

(*c*₂) Let me find my joy in Thy Service.

9 Hide thy face from my sins
And blot^a out my iniquities.

^a *v.* 1

10 Create for me a clean heart O God
And renew a right spirit within me.
11 Cast me not away from Thy Presence
And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
12 Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation,
And uphold me with a devoted spirit.

(Ps. vi. 2 (3): xxii. 14 (15), 17 (18): xxxii. 3: xxxviii. 3 (4): li. 8 (10): cii. 3 (4), 5 (6)). This innermost sorrow of *v.* 8 answers to the inborn *guilt* and *sin* of *v.* 5.

v. 9. "Hide thy face from my sins." This verse takes up again the prayer for forgiveness of *vv.* 1, 2; but though the words are similar the tone is different. In *vv.* 1, 2 the prayer is founded, we might almost say, upon Natural Religion, *i.e.* upon the fact that God's nature and property is always to forgive, whereas in *v.* 9 the Psalmist has already reached to the promise of the New Covenant: we may therefore consider that the Second Part of the Psalm begins with *v.* 9 and we must carefully note the references to the New Covenant in the verses which follow. The relation between Part I (*vv.* 1—8) and Part II (*vv.* 9—15) is very close and should be carefully followed in the marginal notes.

v. 10. "Create for me a clean heart." The word *tahbr* signifies *clean* because *cleansed* (See note on *v.* 2); or *clean* as opposed to *unclean*. Thus (Job xiv. 4), "Who can bring a *clean* (thing) out of an *unclean*?" The only other passage in which it is applied to *the heart* is Prov. xxii. 11. A different word is used in Pss. xxiv. 4: lxxiii. 1. The Psalmist does not begin by asking for the "pure" heart, which sees God, but for a heart in which the leprosy of sin is *cleansed*. This, he feels, must be a new *creation*. God had promised this to Israel in the New Covenant. Thus: Jer. xxxi. 33 ff., "I will put My law in their inward parts &c."

Jer. xxxii. 39 "And I will give them one heart...that they may fear me for ever &c."

Ezek. xi. 19 "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh &c."

Ezek. xxxvi. 25 ff. "And I will sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean...A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and will give you an heart of flesh &c." (See Context.)

All these prophecies relate to the New Covenant and I believe that our Psalmist had them in his mind when he wrote the words, "Create for me a clean heart O God."

"And renew." The word is used of *repairing* a broken house or city (2 Chr. xxiv. 4: Is. lxi. 4 &c.) but also of the new creative power of God's Spirit in *renewing* the face of the earth (Ps. civ. 30).

"And renew a right spirit within me."—The "right" spirit is literally a *prepared* or *established* spirit. The word is used in Ps. cxii. 7 (See note, Part I. p. 47 f.) of the good man whose "heart is fixed," *i.e.* stayed upon YHVH. It is also applied to the *heart* in Pss. lvii. 7 (8): lxxviii. 37: cviii. 1 (2), but only in the present passage to the *spirit*. The 'New spirit' is essentially the gift of the New Covenant.

v. 11. "Cast me not away from Thy Presence."—Not merely 'from' Thy Presence but 'from being in Thy Presence,' *i.e.* from standing before Thee.

The verb is used, Deut. xxix. 28, of God 'casting away Israel into another land,' also in 2 Kings xiii. 23, "neither cast He them from His Presence until now" (cf. 2 Kings xvii. 20; xxiv. 20; Jer. vii. 15). In all these passages the reference is to Israel; if he is cast out into another land he is unable to serve God so that, in a certain sense, he is cast out from God's Presence. The form of the words would seem to imply that the Psalm was written in Palestine even though the Temple may not have been standing. See *vv.* 16—19.

"And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me."—In a passage of late date (Is. lxiii. 9 ff.) God's "Holy

Based on God's honour.

(a₂) The new heart will bring new converts.

(b₂) The clean heart shall gladly serve.

(c₂) The glad heart shall tell God's praise.

13 I would teach transgressors Thy ways,
And sinners shall be converted unto Thee.

14 Deliver me from bloodshed O God, Thou God of my help,
That my tongue may sing for joy of Thy righteousness

15 O Lord^a Thou shalt open my lips,
And my mouth shall tell Thy praise.

^a Adonai

Spirit" seems to be identical with the "Angel of His Presence" (v. 9) who guided the people of Israel through the Wilderness. "But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit" (v. 10). When this Divine Guide was lost(?) then Israel "remembered the days of old...saying, Where is He that brought them up out of the Sea...Where is He that put His Holy Spirit in the midst of them?" (v. 11, see also v. 14.) Again, Neh. ix. 19 f. "The pillar of cloud departed not from over them by day to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night to give them light...Thou gavest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them &c."

Also in Ps. xliii. 3 (see note) God's "Light and Truth" refer to the operations of the Holy Spirit.

Lastly, Ps. cxliiii. 10, "Let Thy good Spirit guide me in an even land." Thus we see that before the Holy Spirit was revealed as a Person He was conceived of as the Guiding Light or the Divine Presence, which distinguished Israel from the other nations, of which Moses had said, "If Thy Presence go not, carry us not up hence" (Exod. xxxiii. 15). Thus Israel prays in our Psalm, "cast me not away from Thy Presence, And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." The Holy Spirit who dwelt in Israel as the Guiding Spirit of Revelation now dwells in the heart of each Christian, "For He abideth with you and shall be in you" (John xiv. 17). Thus the individualistic use of the prayer is justified.

v. 14. "Deliver me from bloodshed..." These words would never have been translated "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness" except for the old tradition which assigned the Psalm to David. The plural *damim* "blood" lit. "bloods" signifies *bloodshed* (Is. xxvi. 21 &c.) or even *murder* (Mic. iii. 10). But "Deliver me from bloodshed" does not mean "Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed: indeed if David had prayed to be forgiven for the murder of Uriah he would have used quite another expression (See, "innocent blood" Deut. xxi. 9: Jer. vii. 6 &c.). Evidently Rashi felt the difficulty for he paraphrases the words thus "So that I may not die by the sword as a punishment for my killing Uriah."

If however we take the words as the words of Israel there are two meanings which they will bear,

1st. The obvious meaning, 'Deliver me from (the suffering of) bloodshed' (cf. Ps. lix. 2 (3)).

2nd. 'Deliver me from pollution.' See Ezek. xvi., especially vv. 6, 9, 22. In this Chapter Zion's birth in sin (cf. our Psalm v. 5 note) is first pictured, then her polluted state out of which God delivered her and made her His Bride. This state of pollution is called *her blood* (vv. 6, 9, 22).

We have already seen reason to believe that the author of Ps. li. was familiar with the writings of Ezekiel (See v. 10 note). I am therefore inclined to interpret the present passage from Ezek. xvi. and to paraphrase 'Deliver me from pollution, like that of blood.' If we read consecutively the verses marked (b), (b₁), (b₂), (b₃) the meaning will become clear. In (b) the sinner sees himself in the presence of God's Holiness (v. 4). In (b₁) the very holiness of God's requirement begins to be a promise (v. 7). In (b₂) he holds his prayer both upon his own need and upon God's promise (v. 11). In (b₃) being delivered from the foulness of his guilt, for which he can find no other term than "blood," he is set free to fulfil the holy requirements of God, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of this body of death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vii. 24 f.).

v. 15. "O Lord Thou shalt open my lips." God is here called by his name of Love, *Adonai*. The "reasonable Service" that God desires is the sacrifice of a joyful obedience (Rom. xii. 1). Thus there seems to be a connexion of thought between verses 15 and 16.

From very early times this verse was used in the Jewish Liturgy. It was repeated three times in the Liturgy of St James (Grünwald, p. 78). It was also repeated, as Versicle and Response in the Sarum Use at the opening of Morning Prayer, from whence it was adopted in our Prayer Book. When the Prayer Book was revised in 1552 A.D. the pronouns were altered from the *singular* to the *plural*

In the Captivity
God accepts the sacri-
fice of Israel's poverty.

- 16 For thou delightest^a not in sacrifice that I should give; ^{a v. 6}
Burnt-offering Thou dost not desire.
17 The sacrifices of God are a contrite spirit,
A heart contrite and crushed, O God, Thou dost not despise.

In the Return God
will accept the sacri-
fice of Israel's wealth.

- 18 O prosper Zion with thy favour!
Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem!
19 Then shalt thou delight in sacrifices of righteousness, burnt-
offering and whole-offering^b,
Then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine Altar.

^b Deut. xxxiii.

10

probably because the thought of the Congregation speaking to God with one mouth was not grasped by the people (See note on Ps. xl. 13, p. 165).

Thus our Prayer Book reads

V. O Lord, open thou our lips.

R. And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

vv. 16—19. These verses must hang together (See marginal notes). It is not easy to decide whether they were a later addition or no. Certainly the Psalm would have been more symmetrically complete if it had ended with verse 15. On the other hand *vv.* 16—19 though absolutely inconsistent with Davidic authorship are not inconsistent with the interpretation we have given to the Psalm.

PSALM LII.

We must class this Psalm among the imprecations and assign it, not necessarily to the hand, or even to the age, but at least to the influence of Jeremiah. Compare Introduction to Psalm xxxv.

If the reader will study that section of Jeremiah which refers to the treatment he received from his own kinsmen the Priests (?) of Anathoth and especially from Pashur the son of Immer (Chaps. xi.; xii.; xviii. 18—23; xx. 1—13) he will see that the circumstances there mentioned would not only account for our Psalm but that the allusions which we trace to Jeremiah in *vv.* 1—4, 5, 8 (see notes) are all contained in this section of the Prophet.

Pashur the son of Immer was, like Jeremiah, a Priest, but he was also a leader of the false prophets (Jer. xx. 6) and therefore not merely an individual foe but a representative of the lying spirit, and a type of the Man of Sin. The words in which Jeremiah denounces him (Jer. xx. 3—6) should be compared with Ps. lii. 5 (see note).

But further, our Psalm belongs to a group of Psalms (lii.—lix.; lxii.; lxiv. cf. lxix.—lxxi.) which might be called Psalms of the Persecution.

K. 11.

30

In these Psalms the enemy attacks, not with the sword but, with *the tongue* (Ps. lii. 2-4; lv. 3, 9-11; (cf. Jer. vi. 7); lv. 20 f.; lvi. 5; lvii. 3 f.; lviii. 3 f.; lxii. 3 f.; lxiv. 3 ff., 10). The chief enemy is one who was an "equal" and once a "friend" (Ps. lv. 12-14 with Jer. ix. 3 f. Compare also the individual enemy in Ps. lii.).

But the Psalmist, anticipating or actually seeing the victory of truth, praises God for deliverance (Ps. lii. 9; liii. 6; liv. 6, 7; lv. 22 f.; lvi. 9-13; lviii. 10 f.; lix. 16 f.; lxiv. 10).

All these Psalms, and also Pss. lxix.-lxxi., bear traces of the influence of Jeremiah.

We must however bear in mind the fact that history repeats itself and that the language used by Jeremiah, who certainly identified himself with Israel, might well be used by Israel when, in the days of Nehemiah, another 'Man of Sin' had arisen in the person of 'Tobiah the Ammonite' and the faction of priests who sided with him and the Samaritans.

PSALM LII.

1 Why shouldst thou boast in evil thou tyrant?
The loving-kindness of God^a is ever-enduring.

^a *El*

v. 1-4. The use (*v.* 1) of the word *gibbor* "tyrant," lit. "Mighty One," implies that his "might" was manifested only in evil so that there is every reason to see here (with Baethgen) an allusion to Jer. ix. 2 (3) "And they bend their tongue (as) their bow for falsehood and have become mighty (cf. Ps. xii. 4 (5)) in the Land, but not for truth, for they proceed from evil to evil, and Me they have not known, saith YHVH." See also note on *v.* 7.

Keble's metrical translation of the opening verses of our Psalm is specially good.

"Why boast of thy misdeeming might,
Thou warrior arm'd for wrong?
Whereas the goodness of the Lord
Endureth all day long.
Thy tongue all evil darkly frames,
As razor keenly whet,
Ever in wiles: thy heart on ill,
And not on good, is set.
The tones of fraud and not of truth
Fast to thy lips have clung;
All greedy, harmful words to thee
Are welcome, O false tongue.
Thee too will God for aye break down,
Will gripe thee fast, and tear
From hearth and home, and root thee out
From living earth and air."

1. "The loving-kindness of God &c." It must be granted that these words introduce a new thought somewhat abruptly and the Versions (Sept. Aq. &c.) read a different text: very possibly they interpreted *hesed*, "loving-kindness" in its Aramaic sense of "shame," "disgrace." Even in Biblical Hebrew this

- The Man of Sin
- 2 Thou devisest mischief—thy tongue is sharp as razor,
Thou worker of guile!
- 3 Thou lovest evil rather than good,
Lying rather than right-speaking,
- 4 Thou lovest all destructive words,
Thou false tongue!
- destroyed in his own
corruption (cf. 2 Pet.
ii. 12).
- 5 Yea God^a shall break thee down for ever,
Shall seize^b thee and pluck thee from the tent^c,
And uproot thee from the land of the living.

^a *El* cf. v. 1^b or *smash*^c Job xviii. 14
Mal. ii. 12

sense of the word is found (see Lev. xx. 17; Prov. xiv. 34). The Septuagint omit *el*, "God" altogether and translate "*Iniquity all the day.*"

There is, however, no need for any such change of the text, especially as the "*loving-kindness of God*" is again mentioned in v. 8.

The verse, then, might be paraphrased, 'Why shouldst thou set thy trust in violence and wrong? It will quickly pass, and see how it will leave thee (v. 5—7)! My trust, on the other hand, is in the loving-kindness of God which is eternal (v. 8). This cannot pass away (v. 1b) and it will leave me firmly rooted in Him (v. 8a).'

v. 2. "*Mischief.*" The word denotes "*calamity*" or "*destruction.*" Of the seven instances in which it occurs in the Psalms three are in the present group, viz. Ps. lii. 2 (4). "*Thou devisest mischief (calamity).*" Ps. lv. 11 (12), "*Mischief (calamity) is in the midst thereof.*" Ps. lvii. 1 (2), "*Until mischief (calamities) be overpast.*"

Compare also Ps. xxxviii. 12 (13) and note that Ps. xxxviii. belongs to a group of Psalms in which we have traced the influence of Jeremiah.

v. 4. "*Destructive words,* literally "*words of swallowing up.*" The substantive *belq* is only found here and in Jer. li. 44 but the verb is frequently used, e.g. of Babylon "*swallowing up*" Israel "like a dragon" (Jer. li. 34); of the fish "*swallowing up*" Jonah (Jonah 1. 17 (ii. 1)) and especially of the punishment of the Egyptians at the Red Sea (Exod. xv. 12) and of Dathan and Abiram (Numb. xvi. 32, 34 (JE), Deut. xi. 6) or, according to Priest-Code, of Korah (Numb. xxvi. 10 (P)). According to Jewish thought the sin of Korah was a sin of the mouth and was punished by the open mouth of the earth. Korah became a type of the "false prophets" (2 Pet. ii. 1) who speak '*destructive words*' and bring upon themselves '*swift-destruction*' (cf. Jude v. 11).

v. 5. "*Yea God &c.*" As though he had said 'Yea the strong God (*El*) too, of Whom I said that His loving-kindness to us is ever-enduring, will not look idly on while the tyrant works his will.' Compare Browning's *Instans Tyrannus*.

The verbs "*break down,*" "*pluck*" suggest in the original the breaking down of a building. The former is constantly used of breaking down a house or altar or a city wall. The latter only occurs in three other passages, viz. Prov. ii. 22 "But the wicked shall be *plucked* from the land, and they that deal treacherously shall be rooted out of it." (cf. Deut. xxviii. 63 when the *Niphal* is used.) Prov. xv. 25 "YHVH will *pluck down* the house of the proud."

The other verb which we translate "*seize thee*" is very doubtful. If the text be right it occurs only in three other passages, in all of which it is used of *taking* or *scooping up fire* (Is. xxx. 14; Prov. vi. 25; xxv. 22). If however we make a change in the vowel points we obtain another word for *breaking* or *smashing* (cf. Jer. li. 56).

There is doubtless a correspondence between the sin of the tyrant and the punishment that is to overtake him. As he had wished to *break down* (? the walls of) Jerusalem and to *uproot* the Remnant of Israel from its Land so he himself shall be *broken down*, left tentless, and *uprooted* from the land of the living. The juxtaposition of "*tent*" and "*land of the living*" lends some slight probability to the view,

- 6 So the righteous^a shall see and shall fear ^a plural
 And shall laugh him to scorn,
 7 "Lo, this is the man^b that took not God for his strength, ^b hero
 But trusted to the multitude of his riches,
 And strengthened himself in his mammon^c." ^c So Targum
&c.

that the 'tyrant' was a priest. Clearly the enemy was one who had firmly established himself in Jerusalem and who attacked the Jews not by force but by lies or by false accusations (*vv.* 1—4).

There are, in the small portion of recorded history, two periods which would fulfil the conditions of our Psalm. (1) The opposition of the false prophets, headed by Pashur, to Jeremiah, B.C. 607—597, during which period he was not only a "derision all the day" (Jer. xx. 8) but was in constant danger of his life because he dared to oppose the popular cry of the false prophets. The words in which Jeremiah denounces Pashur are as follows: "And thou Pashur and all that dwell in thine house shall go into captivity: and thou shalt come to Babylon and there shalt thou die.....thou and all thy friends, to whom thou hast prophesied falsely" (Jer. xx. 6).

(2) The other period would be in the days of Nehemiah when a large number of the priests sided with Tobiah 'the Ammonite' in his desire to unite with the Samaritans and to oppose the building of the walls of Jerusalem. Tobiah himself was related to a priestly family (Neh. vi. 17 f. cf. xiii. 3). Tobiah had taunted the builders of the wall in words which (in the Hebrew) suggest *v.* 5 of our Psalm. See Neh. iii. 35 (E.V. iv. 3), "Yea forsooth they are building! (but) if a jackal should go over he would break this wall of theirs." That taunt called down at the time the prayer of Nehemiah, "Hear O our God; for we are despised, and bring back their reproach on their own head." Such a taunt may well have given rise to our Psalm.

Tobiah actually established himself in the Temple (Neh. xiii. 4 ff). When Nehemiah returned he tells us with great satisfaction, "I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber." This action of Nehemiah's should be compared with his earlier prayer and with this 5th verse of our Psalm.

v. 7. "Lo this is the man....." The word *gēvēr* here translated "man" properly denotes a mighty man or hero being derived from the same root as *gibbōr* which, in *v.* 1, we have translated "tyrant." It is used in the famous passage (Jer. xvii. 5, 7) which lays down, once and for all, the only foundation for man's strength, "Cursed is the man (*gēvēr*) that trusteth in man..." "Blessed is the man (*gēvēr*) that trusteth in YHVH..." The word *gēvēr* only occurs nine times in the Psalms and in, at least, the first four of these instances the influence of Jer. xvii. 5—7 can be distinctly traced. See on Ps. xxxiv. 8 (9); xxxvii. 23; xl. 4 (5); lii. 7 (9). In the present instance this connexion with Jeremiah is specially interesting as there are other passages in the Psalm which seem to be derived from this Prophet (see notes on *vv.* 1—4, and 8), and it belongs to a group of Psalms which afford similar traces of his influence.

"And strengthened himself in his mammon." The Hebrew text reads "in his mischief" as in verse 2 (see note) but even the most conservative commentators (e.g. Delitzsch, Kay &c.) admit that the right reading is "hono," "his substance," wealth or "mammon." This reading is allowed to stand in the margin of the E.V. (cf. Prov. x. 3 text and margin) but, strange to say, the Revisers ignore it altogether though it is required by the context and has the authority of the Syriac and of the Targum.

The contrast between the Tyrant who trusts in his wealth and Israel who trusts in God is very similar to that which we have already discussed in Ps. xlix. *vv.* 6, 15. The chief difference between these Psalms is that, in Ps. xlix. the Rich refer to the Nations of the World while in our present Psalm the rich Tyrant would seem to apply, at least in the literal significance, to the action of an individual and of a traitor.

v. 8. "But as for me, I am like a green olive &c." The chief passages in which Israel is likened to a tree are as follows: Is. lxi. 3 "Trees of righteousness, a planting of YHVH, that He may be glorified." (See Is. lx. 21 and cf. St John xv. 1—8): Ezekiel Chap. xv.: Is. lxxv. 22 "As the days of a tree shall be the days of thy People." See also Ps. i. with notes and Ps. xxxvii. 35.

The passages in which Israel is likened to an olive tree should also be studied. Thus: Hos. xiv. 6 "His branches shall spread and his beauty shall be as the olive tree." Jer. xi. 16 "YHVH called thy name a green olive tree."

The Man of God,
growing in grace (cf.
2 Pet. iii. 18).

8 But as for me, I am like a green olive^a, in the House of God : ^a Jer. xi. 16
I trust in the loving-kindness^b of God (which is) for ever ^b v. 1
and ever.

9 I will praise Thee for ever, because Thou hast done (it)
And will wait^c (for) Thy Name, because it is good, in the ^c or *shew forth*
sight of Thy Saints.

This reference to Jeremiah should be specially noted as affording some indication of date (see notes on vv. 1—4; 7). St Paul, too, in Rom. xi. likens Israel to the olive. There are more reasons than one for choosing the *olive* as a type of God's people. The olive has a leaf that "never fails," and is therefore a fit emblem of *life* (cf. Gen. viii. 11; Neh. viii. 15). The olive renews its youth by sending up young plants from the "table" of its roots (Ps. cxxviii. 3 note). The olive is the emblem of rich fertility (Jud. ix. 9) and the giver of light and life to men (Zech. iv. 3, 11 f. cf. Rev. xi. 4).

"*In the House of God.*" We are not to suppose that Israel is compared to "*a green olive in the House of God*"; but that Israel, being planted *in the House of God*, is like a *green, i.e. flourishing, olive*. Just as Ezekiel (chap. xxxi.) compares the World-power (Assyria) to a Cedar planted *in the Garden of God* (vv. 8 f. 18) and nourished by channels of water at the roots (v. 4), so the Spritual-power (Israel) is, in a much truer sense, *planted in the House of God*. From this planting or *transplanting* (Ps. i. 3; Jer. xvii. 5—8) Israel derives his strength and eternity (cf. Ps. xcii. 14 (15)).

The contrast between verses 5 and 8 should be specially noted. The tyrant, who trusted in force, left homeless, uprooted as a tree! Israel, who trusted in God, filled with perennial life and vigour because rooted and grounded in Him as a Home.

v. 9. The words "*Thou hast done (it),*" find their exact parallel in Ps. xxii. 31 "*He hath done (or finished).*" What God has done is not stated, but it is the outcome of a "*loving-kindness which is for ever*" and which fitly calls forth a "*praise*" which is "*for ever.*"

"*And I will wait (for) Thy Name.*" The verb which we have translated "*wait*" strikes a saddened note of hope deferred which in the present context seems out of place; many modern scholars therefore read *dhavveh* "*I will celebrate*" or "*shew forth*" instead of *dgavveh* "*I will wait.*" This word is used in Ps. xix. 2 (3) "*Night unto night discourseth (or sheweth forth) knowledge.*" It is a common thought in the later Hebrew poetry that Israel does, on earth, the same work that the stars do in heaven, in setting forth God's praise in the watches of the night.

"*In the sight of Thy Saints.*" The word "*Saints*" (*hasidim*), used for the Congregation of Israel, is not found in the Prophets and therefore favours the later date for the Psalm: but the argument from silence must be used with caution.

PSALM LIII.

This Psalm is merely another version of Ps. xiv with *Elohim* instead of *YHVH* and certain other changes which all indicate a common text. See Part I p. 74.

PSALM LIV.

Jacob speaks (Gen. xlviii. 15) of "*the Angel who redeemeth (not redeemed) him from all evil,*" Who is identified with God Himself; and in another place (Exod. xxiii. 20 f.) God says of this Angel-Guide of Israel "*My Name is in Him.*" In other words God's 'Name' was manifested by saving acts in the history of Israel before He was manifested in the flesh as the Saviour of the World. Every such act of mercy was not merely a victory for Israel but a Revelation whereby he could "*declare God's Name unto his brethren*" and thus pointed onwards to the complete Revelation (cf. Ps. xxii. 22 with Heb. ii. 11, 12).

The present Psalm falls into three parts. In the *first* (vv. 1—3) Israel appeals, in his distress, for a manifestation of this saving Name. In the *second* part (vv. 4, 5) he thinks how that Name, revealed as "the Compassionate and Merciful," has been justified by God's dealings in the past. See notes and compare especially the parallel Psalm (lxxxvi. 14, 15). Thus he rises (in the third part, vv. 6, 7) to realise not merely the coming victory but the certainty of the ultimate manifestation of the Name that is above every name in which all Creation shall give thanks (Phil. ii. 9—11).

PSALM LIV.

Israel prays for his
Angel-Guide, the
Name of God.

1 O God, save me with Thy Name^a,
And right my cause with Thy power:
2 O God, hear my prayer,
Give ear unto the words of my mouth:
3 [For strangers^b are risen against me
And tyrants seek my life:
They have not set God before them.]^c

^a Pss. xx. 1,
lii. 9

^b or *proud ones*
Targ. and
Ps. lxxxvi.
14

^c Ps. lxxxvi.
14

v. 1. "*With Thy Name...with Thy power.*" The prepositions being the same we must translate them by the same words (as in the Sept., Vulgate and E.V.). The P.B.V. "*For thy Name's sake... in thy strength*" may be more euphonious but it obscures the leading thought of the Psalm which is *salvation by the Name of God*. See note on vv. 6, 7, which again take up the thought of v. 1.

God may "*right (man's) cause with His power*" but it is only "*with His Name*" (i.e. with the revelation of His Nature) that He can "*save*" man. See notes on verses 4, 6, and 7.

v. 3. "*For strangers (or proud ones) are risen against me...*" The Hebrew letters *r* and *d* are so much alike that a confusion between *zrim*, "*strangers*" and *zdim*, "*proud ones*" is not unfrequent. (See e.g. Mal. iii. 15; iii. 19 (iv. 1) in Hebrew and Greek versions.) We cannot therefore be sure whether to read "*strangers*," with the text, and with Is. xxv. 5 where "*strangers*" and "*tyrants*" occur

He realizes this
Name as Love mani-
fested in history.

4 Behold God is my helper,
The Lord^a is the great upholder of my soul:
5 He makes^b evil to recoil on mine entrappers,
Destroy Thou them with Thy truth.

^a Adonai
Lam. iii. 58
^b or *evil recoils*

together, or to read "*proud ones*," with the Targum, and with Ps. lxxxvi. 14 which seems to be a free quotation from our Psalm. This last passage is as follows:—

*"O God, the proud are risen against me,
The congregation of tyrants have sought my life
And have not set Thee before them."*

v. 4. "*The Lord*," i.e. "*Adonai*." It is a misfortune for the English reader that both the E.V. and the R.V. have obliterated the distinction between *YHVH* and *Adonai*, translating, as they do, both names by "*the Lord*."

The passages in which *Adonai* occurs in the Psalms are well deserving of special study. They may all be divided into two classes, as follows:—

I. *Tender appeals to Adonai as the God of Love and Mercy towards Israel.*

Thus:—Pss. xxxv. 17, 22, 23 ("Adonai, how long wilt Thou look on?" "Adonai, be not far from me," &c.): xxxviii. 9, 15, 21 ("Adonai, before Thee lies my whole desire," "'Tis Thou shalt give the answer, Adonai, my God," "Adonai my Salvation"): xxxix. 7, A 'Jeduthun' Psalm ("And now what is it that I wait for, Adonai? My hope it turns to Thee"): xl. 17 ("As for me—poor and needy—Adonai taketh thought for me"): xlv. 23, A Korah Psalm ("Awake! why sleepest Thou, Adonai"): li. 13 ("Adonai, Thou shalt open my lips..."): liv. 4 ("Adonai is the great upholder of my soul"): lvii. 10: lix. 12 ("Adonai our shield"): lxii. 12 ("To Thee, Adonai, belongs mercy"): lxvi. 18: lxxvii. 2, 7, An 'Asaph' Psalm ("In the day of my trouble I sought Adonai," "Will Adonai cast off for ever?": lxxxvi., a so-called 'Davidic' Psalm in the midst of a group of Korah Psalms, *Adonai* occurs 7 times, vv. 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 15; note especially vv. 5, 15 "For Thou, Adonai, art good and forgiving &c.," "But Thou, Adonai, art the God compassionate and merciful, slow to anger &c." (this Psalm is the companion to Ps. liv.; compare liv. 3 with lxxxvi. 14): lxxxix. 49, 50 "Where are Thy former mercies, Adonai...," "Remember, Adonai, the reproach of Thy servants..."; this Psalm closes a group of Korah Psalms: xc. 1 "Adonai, Thou hast been our dwelling-place": cxxx. 2, 3, A plaintive Psalm among the 'Songs of Degrees.'

II. *Appeals to Adonai as the Warrior.*

Thus:—Pss. ii. 4; xxii. 30; xxxvii. 13; lv. 10; lix. 11; lxxviii. 11, 17, 19, 22, 26, 32; lxxiii. 20, An 'Asaph' Psalm; lxxviii. 65, An 'Asaph' Psalm; lxxix. 12, An 'Asaph' Psalm; cx. 5.

The above include all the passages in which *Adonai* occurs in the Psalter. It will be observed that a large proportion are found in the 'Asaph' and Korah Psalms: indeed the use of *Adonai* may be reckoned as one of the characteristics of these Levitical Psalms. Undoubtedly the pathetic appeals to Adonai as representing the God of Love and Mercy towards Israel often pass into appeals to Him as the Warrior to arise for the destruction of Israel's foes; nevertheless the distinction is, I think, important and will help to explain a certain difference in tone between the plaintive Psalms of Korah and the more warlike Songs of Asaph.

With reference to Class I. I suggest a relation between the name *Adonai* and God's revelation of His Name to Moses (Exod. xxxiv. 6 f.) as "the God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger &c." Compare v. 9 where Moses at once addresses God as *Adonai*.

The reader would do well to study the use of the Divine Name *Adonai* in Dan. ix. 3, 4, 7, 15, 16, 17, 19 (three times); Lam. i. 14, 15 (twice); ii. 1, 2, 5, 7, 18, 19, 20; iii. 31, 36, 37, 58. This last verse is very similar in thought to the 4th verse of our Psalm.

"*The Lord (Adonai) is the great upholder of my soul.*" Thus Cheyne well translates the words.

We have here the well-known Hebrew idiom of the *beth essentialiae*: we must not therefore translate with bald literalism "*The Lord is with them that uphold my soul*"; as though God were one among

Therefore he already sees the coming Victory.

6 I would offer unto Thee the free-will offering,
 Would give thanks to Thy Name^a, O YHVH, "Because It^b ^a Ps. lii. 9
 is Good^a":

7 Because from every trouble It^b has rescued me, ^b or He
 And mine eye has seen its will upon mine enemies.

many helpers! for the idiom implies exactly the reverse. He is the *unique* Helper. Baethgen gives a good illustration of this idiom from Judg. xi. 35 where Jephthah says to his daughter, "*Alas my daughter.....thou art become my greatest troubler.*"

v. 6. "*I would offer unto Thee the free-will offering.*" Compare the *sacrifice of thanksgiving*, Ps. l. 23 note.

"*I would give thanks unto Thy Name... 'Because It (or He) is Good.'*" There is a special group of Psalms which we have called the *Hodu*-Psalms because of the word *hodu*, "*give thanks*" (Pss. xvii. 12; c. 4; cv. 1; cvi. 1; cvii. 1; cxviii. 1, 29; cxxxvi. 1, 2, 3, 26). The reader will observe that in these passages the first three refer to the *Name* of God while the last eight use the liturgical formula "*Give thanks...for He is Good*" or "*for His loving-kindness endureth for ever.*" God's *Name* denotes the gradual revelation of His Nature to man and is therefore, throughout the Psalter, but especially in the Third Collection, coupled with the verb, which may be regarded almost as the Baptismal name of *Judah* (Gen. xxix. 35) "*I will give thanks*" (Pss. vii. 17; ix. 1, 2; xviii. 49; xlv. 8 (note); lii. 9, a close parallel; liv. 6; lxxvi. 12; cxxxviii. 1, 2. Cf. also Pss. lxxv. 1; xcix. 3; cxl. 13 &c.).

The special relation of the *Hodu*-Psalms to the historical revelation of God's loving-kindness to Israel (i.e. to His *Name*) will be seen at length in our Introduction to those Psalms.

v. 7. "*Because from every trouble It has rescued me.*" Strictly speaking "*It*" should refer to "*Thy Name*" (v. 6). This interpretation is borne out by the fact that the whole Psalm is in honour of the *Name* of God and that here, as often, the last verse returns in thought to the first, what was prayed for in v. 1 being realised in v. 7. There is no better comment on this verse than Ps. cvii. which is one of the *Hodu*-Psalms. The verb *rescued me*, or *set me free* is also used in Ps. xxxiv. 4, 17, 19 "*And from all my fears He set me free,*" "*And from all their afflictions He frees them,*" "*But YHVH frees him out of all.*" In that Psalm there is probably an allusion to the story of Jacob (see p. 32, note); so also here we are reminded of the words which the Elohist puts in the mouth of Jacob (Gen. xlviii. 15 f.) "*God, who has been my Shepherd, ever since I was in being unto this day, the Angel who Redeemeth me from all evil &c.*" (cf. Ps. xx. 2). This Angel bears the *Name* of God (Exod. xxiii. 20 f.) because He reveals God. This Revelation being historical must necessarily be continuous, and at last complete (Heb. i. 1 ff.).

PSALM LV.

In this Psalm we have two distinct Voices, a tender, plaintive voice, which we have indicated in the marginal notes as *first Voice*, and a fierce note of denunciation, which we have called *second Voice*. The transition from one to the other is singularly abrupt; indeed it is unintelligible; but if the passages assigned to the *first Voice* be read continuously (viz. vv. 1—8, 12—14, 16—18, 22, and, perhaps, 23^c) a far clearer perception is gained as to the meaning of the Psalm. In the same way the *second Voice* (vv. 9—11, 15, 19—21, and 23^{ab}) is best understood when read as one continuous utterance. The musician could easily bring out the significance of these two Voices, but in order to help the eye of the reader the words of the avenging Voice are placed in inverted commas. Three passages which have greatly contributed to mould the thoughts and language of our Psalm as to the ultimate fate of *apostates* are (I) Gen. vi. 1—7 (J.), (II) Gen. xi. 1—9 (J.), and (III) Numb. xvi. 1—34 (the Jehovistic portions). A hint respecting each of these may suffice.

(I) The first tells the fate of the “*giants*.” “*These are the mighty-ones* (cf. Ps. lii. 1, note), which were from of old, *men of renown*.” “*YHVH saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every device of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*.” (Compare vv. 9—11 of our Psalm.) The end of this apostasy was the Flood.

(II) The second passage (Gen. xi. 1—9), also from the Jehovist, records the apostasy of the Babel-builders and its consequent punishment, the *dividing* of the nations through the *division* of tongues, “*Let us go down and confound their speech...*” “*Therefore was the name of it called Babel, because YHVH did there confound (balal) the speech of the whole earth*.” The writer of course knew that *Babel* was not derived from *balal*, but the sound suggested the thought; as though he had said, ‘This World-city with its ruined Temple of the Spheres is not the *Gate of God* (*Bav-el*) but rather does it point the lesson of presumption *confounded*.’ So our Psalmist prays, “*Confound (belq) O Lord—divide their tongues*.”

(III) The third passage (Numbers xvi. 1—34) also belongs to JE. though it has been interpolated by the author of the Priest-code in order to introduce a rebellion by *Korah* which is unknown to the Prophetic writer and to Deuteronomy (see Deut. xi. 6). The earlier story (see Critical Commentary) referred to Dathan and Abiram, sons of Reuben, whose rebellion against Moses was avenged by their “*going down alive into Sheol*.” (Compare v. 15 of our Psalm.) These men also, like the ‘giants’ of Gen. vi. 1—7, are called “*men of renown*.” The very doubtful verb (*laqaḥ*) which in E.V. is translated “...and Dathan and Abiram...took (men)” is, in the Targum, translated “*divided themselves*” or “*were divided*.” The Chaldee verb (*ṣelag*, “to divide”) being specially used of *causing division by flattery* or by *the double tongue* (see Targum on Prov. xxviii. 23; xxix. 5), just as in Hebrew the verb *ḥalaq* has the

double sense of *dividing* and of *flattering*. Thus according to Jewish tradition the passage (Numb. xvi.) which describes the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram (and according to a later tradition of *Korah*) became the locus classicus which has influenced all denunciations of apostates, and which may be clearly traced in the Second Epistle of St Peter and the Epistle of St Jude. Our Psalmist alludes to the old record of the rising of Dathan and Abiram against Moses not only in verse 9 but in verse 15; there is however no evidence whatever to shew that he knew of the later story respecting the rebellion of Korah against Aaron and of his death by fire. The reader will notice that all these allusions to apostates occur in the passages we have assigned to the *second Voice*.

The Psalm should be compared with Ps. xiv. (liii.). See Part I. p. 74. A difficult question still remains. Was the enemy, of verses 12—14, an individual traitor like Pashur or Tobiah (see notes on Ps. lii.)? or was he rather a personification? Certainly in favour of the latter view we must note the abrupt change twice repeated from the *plural* (vv. 1—11; 15—19) to the *singular* (vv. 13 f. 20 f.). Even if an act of individual hostility had shaped the words of the Psalm we can scarcely suppose that it would have found a place in the Temple worship of the Jewish Church unless it had been felt from the beginning to represent the wounds wherewith that Church was wounded in the house of her friends.

PSALM LV.

1st Voice.

Israel forced to dwell with evil from which no escape is possible.

- 1 Give ear, O God, unto my prayer,
And hide not thyself from my supplication.
- 2 Oh attend unto me, and answer me :
I go straying in my meditation, and am troubled^a; ^a Sept.
- 3 Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the pressure
of the wicked ;
For they make ruin to devolve upon me,
And fiercely pursue me with hatred.
- 4 My heart is in pain^b within me, ^b Sept.
And the terrors of death are fallen upon me ;
is troubled
- 5 Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me,
And I am wrapt in dread.
- 6 Then I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove !
I would fly, I would find me a rest ;
- 7 Yea I would flit far away,
And would lodge in the wilderness ;
- 8 I would speed to that refuge of mine
Away from the storm-wind and tempest.

and Voice.

May God confound
these Babel-builders
as He did of old!

- 9 "Confound^a, O Lord, divide their tongues!
"For I see Violence and Strife in the City:
10 "Day and night they go the circuit of her walls;
"Unrighteousness and Trouble are within her;
11 "Mischief^b is within her;
"Wrong^c and Fraud^c never leave her streets."

^a or *Devour*
Numb. xvi.
30
Ps. xxi. 9

^b Ps. v. 9:
xxxviii. 12;
lii. 2:
lvii. 1

^c Ps. x. 7

v. 1. "*And hide not Thyself from...*" This form of the verb occurs three times in Deut. xxii. 1, 3, 4, where God commands that a man who finds an ox or ass or other lost property of his neighbour is *not to hide himself from them*, i.e. he is not to act as though he had not seen them. So too, in Is. lviii. 7, of the duty of caring for the homeless and destitute it is said, "*thou shalt not hide thyself from thine own flesh.*" God, who requires of man such care for the lost and even for dumb animals, will not be likely to hide Himself from the supplication of His children.

v. 2. "*I go straying.*" A strange word: used primarily of an animal that *strays* or *wanders*. Thus, Gen. xxvii. 40, "When *thou shalt wander* (R.V. *break loose*) thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck" (cf. Jer. ii. 3; R.V.). May it not be that the Psalmist uses this word with conscious reference to Deut. xxii. 1, 3, 4 (see last note)? If so we might paraphrase as follows: Thou hast commanded man to have pitiful regard to the straying beast. I, blinded by sorrow, go straying like that lost beast. Do Thou fulfil Thine own Law. Have pitiful regard to me.

"*In my meditation.*" It is suggestive that the word *sevah* must sometimes be translated "*meditation*" and sometimes "*plaint*." "*Meditation*" should be "*sweet*" (Ps. civ. 34), but most frequently it falls into the minor key and becomes "*a plaint*" (Ps. cxlii. 2 (3)).

"*And am troubled.*" Another strange word. The Psalmist uses almost the same expression again in verse 17 where we have translated "*I make my cry*" (cf. Ps. lxxvii. 3 (4)). The word probably denotes a cry that is wrung out by pain or trouble.

v. 3. This verse surely implies "*an open enemy*": we must bear this in mind in interpreting vv. 12—14.

v. 4. "*My heart is in pain...*" The verb is often used of the pangs of birth. Heart sorrow is sometimes the necessary condition for the birth of joy (cf. St John xvi. 20—22). The Septuagint translates, "*My heart is troubled.*" St John uses the same word for the "*trouble*" felt by Christ in the presence of the traitor (St John xiii. 21). May it not be that this Psalm was in his mind?

vv. 6—8. The striking parallel in Jer. ix. must be carefully noted. "Oh that I were in the wilderness, in a lodge of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people and go from them, for they be all.....an assembly of treacherous men. And they bend their tongue (as) their bow for falsehood (cf. Ps. lii. 1—4 note) and they have become mighty in the land, but not for truth;.....Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit (cf. vv. 9—11, 15 of our Psalm); through deceit they refuse to know me, saith YHVH. Therefore thus saith YHVH of Hosts, Behold I will melt them, and try them (cf. Psalm, v. 19); for how (else) should I do, because of the daughter of My people? Their tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaketh deceit; one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth but in his heart he layeth wait for him" (cf. Psalm, v. 21). Jeremiah does not here speak in his own name, but rather identifying himself with the very Spirit of Israel he voices the thought, 'How long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?' So also in our Psalm; the cry is not that of a tired worker (Hymn 543, A. and M.) but of the Spirit of Israel, the unborn Christ, suffering through contact with evil not merely in the world but in the inner circle of his own People and of his own Home. This interpretation is perhaps borne out by Rev. xii. 13 f.

v. 6. Cheyne very rightly regards these words, not as the words of an individual but of "the whole body of persecuted but faithful Israelites of Palestine." He gives a good parallel from Sophocles, *Œdipus at Colonus*, where the Chorus personified is the speaker:

"I know not, but my mind
Presageth me that soon
The spoiler shall give back
The maiden sorely tried, sorely by kinsman vexed.

1st Voice.

The evil is not merely without but within
—Like a false friend
in the home.

12 For it was not (merely) an enemy that defied^a me—
That I might forgive^b—
Not (merely) a foe that did magnify^c himself against me—
For then I could hide from him—

^a Ps. xlv. 16,
note

^b or bear

^c Ps. xli. 9

13 But thou! a man I ranked with myself,
My companion and familiar friend^d!

^d Ps. xli. 9,
note

14 We were together in sweet fellowship†,
And walked the House of God in festal-throng.

† De Witt

2nd Voice.

May they share the
fate of Dathan and
Abiram!

15 "Let death beguile them—
"Let them go down alive into Sheól^e
"For wickedness is in their dwellings—in their very hearts."

^e Numb. xvi.
30

To-day, to-day, some great thing Zeus shall do:
I prophesy the triumph of the right.
Oh that I were a dove, that I might wing the wind
With pinion swift and strong,
And from some airy pinnacle of cloud
Content mine eyes with gazing on the fray."

[*The Christian Use of the Psalms*, p. 186.]

v. 10. "*Day and night they go the circuit of her walls.*" Literally "*they encompass her upon her walls.*" The verb is often used of a ritual act (Ps. xlvi. 12 note) such as the religious processions round the walls at the Dedication (Neh. xii. 27 ff.). It is of the ideal or 'heavenly' Jerusalem that God says, "thy walls are continually before Me" (Is. xlix. 16), and "Upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen, all day long and all night long, they shall never be silent. O ye that memorialize YHWH let there be no rest to you, nor let there be rest to Him until He establish and until He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Is. lxii. 6 f.). According to Jewish tradition these "watchmen" are the Angels; perhaps it would be more accurate to say that they are those graces of Righteousness, Mercy, Truth, &c. which God appointed for walls and bulwarks and which ever appeal to Him as His ideal for the Holy City. Now just as the Holy City has its heavenly watchmen so when that city has become a Babel the watchmen who 'go the circuit of her walls' are no longer from above but from below. When Dante descends to the fiery city of Dis (*Inferno*, Cant. ix.) he sees the terrible Furies on its battlements, so too on the walls of this Babel, which is the antithesis to the City of God, the Psalmist sees seven evil angels which may be regarded almost as personifications of *Violence, Strife, Unrighteousness, Trouble, Mischief, Wrong, and Fraud.*

v. 13. "*A man I ranked with myself*"—Not "*a man of my own rank,*" for then *ish* rather than *emosh* would have been used. The speaker throughout Voice 1 is meek and lowly of heart, he does not here imply that he had any social rank in which the traitor shared but rather that he had a human heart which he had shared with the traitor. Compare Ps. xli. 9 (note).

v. 14. "*sweet fellowship*"....."*festal-throng.*" i.e. 'The traitor was one with whom I was closely associated both in *private* and in *public* life' (cf. Ps. lxiv. 2 (3) where the two words occur). The allusion to the "*House of God*" tends to prove that the Temple, whether of Solomon or of Zerubbabel, was standing when the Psalmist wrote. A national foe, like Edom, would not fulfil the conditions of this verse, but a band of apostates within the city, taking part in her councils and in her public worship, would entirely meet the requirements of the Psalm; and since Israel speaks as an individual it is quite in accordance with Hebrew thought that the foe should also appear as an individual.

- 1st Voice.*
The one refuge is God.
- 16 As for me^a, I cry unto God,
And YHVH will save me; ^a v. 23
- 17 At eve and morn and noon^b I muse^c and make my cry
For He hath heard my voice. ^b Dan. vi. 11
^c v. 2
- 18 He hath redeemed my soul in peace
From the battle that was against me,
For in great force did they withstand me[†]. † Kay
- 2nd Voice.*
(Text somewhat doubtful.)
- 19 "Let God^d hear and humble^e them—
"Seeing He is throned from of old—
"These that have no changes^f!
"And that fear not God. ^d El.
^e Sept.
^f cf. Ps. lxxiii.
4 ff.
- This false and perjured enemy!
Cf. vv. 12—14.
- 20 "He put forth his hand against those at peace^g with him;
"He profaned his covenant^h. ^g Ps. xli. 9,
note
^h Obad. 7
- 21 "The buttered speech of his mouth was smooth—
"While his heart was all battle;
"His words were more glib than oil—
"Yet were they drawn swords."
- 1st Voice.*
- 22 Cast thy burden upon YHVH
And HEⁱ shall sustain thee ⁱ Emphatic
Nor shall He for ever suffer the righteous to be moved.

v. 20. "those at peace with him." The plural is significant and must not be forgotten in the interpretation of verses 12—14.

v. 22. "Cast thy burden"—Perhaps more literally "thy portion." The primary sense of the word is 'a gift,' 'that which is given thee.' In later Hebrew (see Buxtorf) it is used of the *burden* (e.g. of a camel), the *dowry* (of a bride), the *portion* (of the priests), the *portion* (of a cup, Targ. on Pss. xi. 16, xvi. 5), i.e. a man's lot in life. In the present Psalm we must give the widest meaning to the word. The Cup that God had given Israel to drink was the seeming victory of evil (vv. 1—8), and the ingratitude of those that should have been close friends (vv. 12—14). This is the burden that he casts upon God in an agony of prayer (vv. 16—18; cf. Hebrews v. 7), and having learned this lesson of obedience he sums up, for us, his experience, "Cast thy burden upon YHVH," &c.

What was true of Israel, and of Christ, became true of the persecuted Christian Church; therefore St Peter, following the Septuagint, aptly quotes our text, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in fitting season. Casting (all) your care upon Him, because He (Himself) has a care for you" (1. Pet. v. 6 f.).

"And HE shall sustain thee"—The pronoun is emphatic, "He Himself." Those who thus wait for God's "fit season" shall find God waiting upon them: "Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them" (St Luke xii. 37). The Midrash draws out the force of the emphatic pronoun in words that may be worth quoting—"A man has a friend and he goes to him once and he receives him graciously, also a second and a third time he accepts him, but a fourth time he won't attend to him: but the Holy One, blessed be He, is not like this; however many times thou mayest trouble Him (by coming) He graciously receives thy burden, therefore 'Cast thy burden upon YHVH And HE will sustain thee'."

"Nor shall He for ever." He may and does suffer it for a time, but it is only because He is waiting for one of His "fit seasons."

*2nd Voice.*Compare *v.* 15.

23 "And Thou, O God, shalt bring them down^a to the Pit of^a *v.* 15
Destruction;
"Men of bloodshed and fraud shall not live out half their
days."

*1st Voice.*Compare *vv.* 16—
18.But as for me^b I will put my trust in Thee.^b *v.* 16

PSALM LVI.

This Psalm consists of three well-defined parts; the first two ending with the same Refrain (*vv.* 4 and 10 f.). The third part is an ascription of praise; either because the Psalmist has now risen to the vivid realization of the hoped-for deliverance or because it has actually become historical reality. In the latter case we should regard *vv.* 12, 13 as a later addition to the Psalm. The key to Parts I and II is to be found in *vv.* 3 and 9 respectively, which in each case prepare the way for the Refrain. *In the day that I fear I trust. In the day that I cry I conquer.*

The student who reads the Hebrew and Greek texts will see reason for believing that corruptions have been introduced through the use of a duplicate text, exactly as in the case of Pss. xiv. and liii.

PSALM LVI.

My very fear drives
me nearer to my God.

1 Be gracious unto me, O God, for man panteth for me;

All day long, devouring^a, he presses me.^a or *fighting*
Ps. xxxv. 1

2 Mine enemies pant (for me) all day long:

For many are devouring^a me from their high vantage ground.

3 In the day that I fear—

As for me in Thee do I trust!

4 IN GOD I GIVE PRAISE, (FOR) HIS WORD^b:^b *promise*IN GOD I TRUST; I WILL NOT FEAR^c:^c Ps. cxviii. 6
cf. xxvii. 1
Heb. xiii. 6WHAT CAN FLESH DO UNTO ME^c?

v. 1. "for man panteth for me." "Man" (*enosh*) is here regarded, as often in the Psalms, in his frailty and folly, in contrast with the eternity and goodness of God (Ps. viii. 4 (5); ix. 19 (20), 20 (21), x. 18, &c.). The verb, "panteth," denotes the sharp drawing in of the breath (Ps. cxix. 131): it is used of animals "snuffing up" the wind (Jer. ii. 24; xiv. 6), and hence of any eager desire (Job vii. 2; xxxvi. 20) or greedy pursuit (Amos ii. 7; viii. 4). In the Psalms it only occurs (with the exception of Ps. cxix. 131) in this verse and the following and in Ps. lvii. 3 (4).

v. 2. "from their high vantage ground." Literally "on high." Hence E.V. and P.B.V. take

My very sufferings
call forth the loud
crying and tears that
He will answer with
victory.

- 5 All the day long they wrest my words ;
All their thoughts to me-ward are for evil ;
6 They band together and lurk^a,
Such as these watch my steps,
While they wait for my life!
7 Because of iniquity let there be for them (no) deliverance :
Cast down the peoples, O God, in anger.
8 My wandering^b Thou hast noted—even Thou !
Oh put my tears into Thy bottle^b !
[Are (they) not in Thy book^c ?]
9 In the day that I cry then shall mine enemies be turned
back ;
This I know, that God is on my side^d.
10 IN GOD I GIVE PRAISE (FOR) HIS WORD :
[In YHVH I give praise, (for) His Word^e]:
11 IN GOD I TRUST ; I WILL NOT FEAR^f :
WHAT CAN FLESH DO UNTO ME ?

^a Prov. i. 11,
18

^b But see Gk
version

^c Possibly a
gloss

^d Ps. cxviii. 6

^e Probably a
gloss

^f v. 4

the word as a Divine Name, "*O thou most High*." The Sept. and Vulg. read a different text, giving a different division of the words. Certainly 2^b seems too long and 3^a too short. In Hebrew MSS. the letters *resh* and *yod* are easily mistaken. I would therefore suggest that the word *marom* may be an old mistake for *miyom* and that we should read

*For many are devouring me,
From day to day I am in fear.*

v. 4. "*In God I give praise...*" This refrain occurs again with slight verbal change, undoubtedly due to mistake, in verses 10, 11. The refrain is, in each case, an anticipation of those 'Hallelujahs' and Services of Thanksgiving which Israel pays in *vv.* 12, 13.

"*His Word*." The general sense seems to be, 'I shall exult in God, because of His Word (promise)' or 'I shall exult in God, it is His promise.' The 'promise' to Israel was, '*I will never leave thee nor forsake thee until I have done all that I have spoken to thee of*' (Gen. xxviii. 15; cf. Deut. xxxi. 6, 8). The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews shews that this 'promise' has, in Christ, become the personal possession of the individual Christian, "For He Himself hath said, '*I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*,' so that we may make bold to say, '*The Lord is my helper, I will not fear. What can man do unto me?*'" (See also Ps. cxviii.)

v. 6. "*They band together...*" The words in the original seem to be chosen with a double meaning, as though the Psalmist had said, 'These *sojourners* who *dwell* in the city are really *bands* of wild *beasts*;—These who ought to *observe* and *preserve* my steps are only *observing* and *watching* me for evil;—These who should *wait upon* me for good are *waiting* indeed, but only for my life.'

The emphatic pronoun which we translate "*Such as these*" is used in indignant contempt, just as in Is. lvi. 11, "*And such as these are shepherds who have no knowledge or perception!*" Indeed this passage from the Second Isaiah in which the apostates are compared to savage dogs should be studied in connexion with this group of Psalms. (See Ps. lix. 6, note.)

v. 7. "*Because of iniquity*." Wellhausen adopts the correction proposed by Ewald, and changes *pallē* "*deliverance*" into "*pallē*;" (Ps. lviii. 2 (3); lxxviii. 50). This might possibly be translated, "*Because of iniquity weigh heavily upon them*": but the verb seems only to be used in the sense of *weighing* or *pondering* (Prov. iv. 26; v. 6, 21; Is. xxvi. 7).

It is better, with Baethgen, to suppose that the negative *ain* has dropped out after the similar

The victory now is mine !
 12 What I vowed Thee, O God, is now due,
 I will pay Thee Services of Thanksgiving,
 13 For Thou hast delivered my soul from death^a,
 ...my feet from stumbling,
 That I may walk before God in the light of life.

^a cf. Ps. cxvi.
8 f.

word *avn*, "iniquity," just as it probably did in the correct text of Dan. ix. 26. If, however, we accept the text as it stands we must translate "*Shall their deliverance be by iniquity?*" or "*Deliverance, for them, is by iniquity*" (cf. Is. xxviii. 15). But the parallelism of the verse is against any such rendering.

v. 8. "*My wandering.*" Whether we accept the present text or no there was undoubtedly, in the original, a play upon the words which here stand as *NODi*, "*my wandering*" and *NO(a)D'ka*, "*Thy bottle.*" To be a "*wanderer*" was the punishment of Cain (Gen. iv. 12, 14, E.V. *vagabond*). The murderer's home was "in the land of Nod" (wandering). He felt himself "hidden from God's Face" (Gen. iv. 14). So also with Israel (Ps. xlii. 2 f. notes); his "tears have been his food, day and night." But the word *nod* has also a secondary meaning. It is used of the movement of a reed "*shaken in the water*" (1. Kings xiv. 15); of the *shaking* of the head in grief; and hence, frequently of *bemoaning* or *lamenting*.

"*Oh put my tears into Thy bottle.*" The word *noad* signifies a bottle made of skins (Ps. cxix. 83). The image is excessively bold and scarcely suits the context since there is no obvious connexion between *nod*, "*wandering*" and *no(a)d*, "*a leather bottle*": moreover the Septuagint and Symmachus read a different text in which there is no reference whatever to a bottle. Thus the Sept. and Vulg. translate "*My life have I recounted to Thee; Set thou my tears in Thy presence.*" Symmachus reads, "*My innermost concerns (τὰ ἐνδον μου, Jerome interiora mea) Thou hast counted out; Set Thou my tears in Thy innermost concerns (ἐνδον σου)*"; probably reading the Hebrew word *neged* in each case. Whatever may have been the original reading the general sense is clear, 'My innermost being with all its sorrows (cf. Ps. xxxviii. 9) was framed, and is therefore known (Ps. cxxxix. 16) by Thee. Oh put my tears in Thy innermost presence, that they may be ever before Thee' (cf. Is. xlix. 16). We must not here think, primarily, of the tears of an individual but rather of 'Israel,' and therefore especially of Christ, Who as long as He had a mortal body offered up thereby "strong crying and tears" upon the altar of a perfect obedience (Heb. v. 7 f.);—tears which God has stored for ever "in His Presence."

"*Are (they) not in Thy book?*" These words read like a gloss, but in any case they express the sense. The best commentary is Ps. cxxxix. 16.

v. 13. "*That I may walk before God.*" Sept. and Vulg. "*That I may please God.*" So also we read of Enoch (Gen. v. 22, 24), and of Noah (Gen. vi. 9), and of Abraham (Gen. xvii. 1; xxiv. 40; xlviii. 15) "*walking before God,*" where, in each case, the Septuagint renders "*pleasing*" God (cf. also Heb. and Sept. in Pss. xxv. (xxvi.) 3; cxiv. (cxvi.) 9). Israel is the spiritual Enoch who walks the dedicated way before God, and in whom therefore God is well pleased. (See also notes on Ps. xlix.)

PSALM LVII.

The structure of this Psalm is very similar to that of Ps. lvi. In both we find two main divisions, each ending in a Refrain: both contain a third part in which the hoped-for deliverance is realized (See lvi. 12, 13, and lvii. 6). Indeed the structure of the two Psalms would be identical if, in Ps. lvii, we might transfer *v.* 6 to the end of the Psalm. There are also verbal points of connexion, especially the use of the strange word "*pant*" (lvi. 1, 2 and lvii. 3). The enemy in each case is a malignant treacherous foe, and is compared to savage beasts (lvi. 6; lvii. 4). In each case the Sufferer (Israel) trusts in God's promise (lvi. 4 note; lvii. 2) and is delivered by a special interposition of God (lvi. 9, 12, 13; lvii. 3, 6). What difference there is between the two Psalms may best be seen by comparing their Refrains. In Ps. lvi. thought centres rather upon the Sufferer and his trust, whereas in Ps. lvii. it centres upon God and the Glory that shall come to Him through the Sufferer's deliverance. In the Greek and Latin Churches these two Psalms are rightly read together, but our English Church has appointed Ps. lvii. as a proper Psalm for Easter Day while Ps. cviii., which repeats the last five verses of our Psalm, is appointed for Ascension Day.

Of the two Parts of the Psalm, Part I, since it depicts the perfect trust of Israel in danger, finds its ultimate expression in the Passion of Christ; while Part II, representing the extension of God's glory in the world through the deliverance of Israel, finds its ultimate expression in the triumph of Christ whether in the Resurrection, or the Ascension, or in Heaven (Rev. v. 8-14).

PSALM LVII.

PART I.

Israel, in great danger, commits himself to the safe keeping of God.

Safe in the very fire!

- 1 Be gracious unto me, O God, be gracious unto me,
For my soul hath taken refuge in Thee,
In the shadow of Thy wings will I take refuge,
Until malignity^a be overpast.
- 2 I call unto God, as Most High;
To God^b who completes^c my being.
- 3 He will send from Heaven and save me,
Though the reviler pant^d for my life;
God will send forth His Lovingkindness and Truth.
- 4 (Though) my soul is among lions,
I can lay me down amid the fiery ones;
Men whose teeth are darts and arrows,
And their tongue a sharp sword.
- 5 BE THOU EXALTED O GOD ABOVE THE HEAVENS,
THY GLORY ABOVE ALL THE EARTH!

^a or calamities
Ps. xci. 3

^b El

^c perfects that
which concerns me

^d Ps. lvi. 1, 2

^e another reading would
give flames

v. 1. "Until malignity..." The word *malignity* or *mischievous* is almost peculiar to this group of Psalms (see Ps. lii. 2 note). It denotes especially the treacherous pit-fall of a wicked tongue (Prov. xi. 6; xvii. 4; Mic. vii. 3). In every passage in the Psalms in which the word is used (with the possible exception of xci. 3) it refers to the destruction wrought through the tongue. Kay's translation 'malignity' is perhaps as good as any though no English word can be found to cover the whole meaning.

When the very existence of Jerusalem depended upon the goodwill of Babylon or of Persia the accusations brought against her by the jealousy of the surrounding petty tribes or by apostate Jews were no slight danger.

v. 2. "To God who completes my being." This terse and beautiful expression almost defies translation. The P. B. V. is merely a feeble paraphrase, "Unto the God that shall perform the cause which I have in hand." We have already seen in the preceding Psalm (lvi. 4, 11) a reference to that 'Promise,' "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee &c..."; so now Israel appeals, from the malignity of man to the all-completing Providence of God—"Maker remake, complete; I trust what Thou shalt do."

The same verb (*gmr*, "to complete") occurs again Ps. cxxxviii. 8, "YHVH will perfect (all) for me"; but, in both cases, the Septuagint have mistaken the verb *gmr*, "to complete" for *gml*, "to requite" or "deal kindly" (cf. Ps. xiii. 6).

v. 3. "He will send from Heaven." Exactly as in Ps. xviii. 16 ff. Israel is "saved by YHVH" (Deut. xxxiii. 29; Is. xlv. 17). This salvation is by a Theophany.

"God will send forth His Lovingkindness and Truth." These are the twin Angels of His Presence (cf. Ps. xlii. 8 note) 'sent forth' here 'to minister' to Israel in his afflictions but, in v. 10, seen to be exalted, in his deliverance, "above the skies." In v. 3 we may compare them with the "two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet" in the sepulchre (St John xx. 12), while in v. 10 we may think of the "cloud" of glory and of the "two men in white apparel" (Acts i. 9—11) whose message links together past and future, earth and heaven, man and God. Thus this Easter Psalm is made to speak to us of Easter joy.

v. 4. "(Though) my soul is among lions." The reading *lvaim*, "lions," is very doubtful. This form of the plural does not occur elsewhere; add to this the Targum clearly read *lvavim*, "flames," and this reading better suits the parallelism and the general sense of the Psalm since the enemies of Israel are therein represented as fighting rather with the tongue than with the sword.

"I can lay me down &c." The tense is not a simple future but *cohortative* or *optative* and therefore must not be translated "I lie &c." but "I can lie &c." i.e. 'I can boldly sleep' (see Symmachus). The sense of God's protection is uppermost just as in Ps. iv. 8 where the same word is used.

v. 5. "Be Thou exalted &c." This Refrain gives the key-note to the Psalm. God is "exalted" in the redemption of Israel (cf. Pss. xviii. 46; xxi. 13; xlvi. 10; Is. xxxiii. 10; also the suggestive combination, Ps. cviii. 5 and 6). Thus when Israel prays for redemption from his enemies he is, in so far as he fulfils his ideal, praying for God's honour in the heavens and God's "Glory" in the earth. God is "exalted" in Israel; Israel is "exalted" as the "Suffering Servant" (Is. lii. 13, "He shall be exalted, and lifted up, and be very high"). The Christian will compare Christ's use of the word "glorify" in praying for Himself and for His Father's honour, in the Gospel of St John.

v. 6. "They had prepared a net &c." The idea of the enemy preparing a "net" and a "pitfall" for Israel, and 'falling into the midst of it themselves,' is characteristic of Jeremiah and of those Psalms in which his influence can be most clearly traced. See Jer. xviii. 20, 22 with Lam. iv. 20 and compare Ps. xxxv. 7, 8 (a Psalm which manifestly quotes Jeremiah, see p. 142 f.): also Pss. ix. 15; x. 9; xxxi. 4, see marginal references to Jeremiah and note especially the favourite expression of Jeremiah *magor missaviv*, "fear on every side" (Jer. xx. 3, 10, cf. vi. 25; xlv. 5; xlix. 29). The other passages in which the same thought is found are Pss. cxix. 85; cxl. 5; cxli. 10.

v. 7. "My heart is fixed..." The word implies the *readiness* of a heart that is in tune. It is used of the good man (Ps. cxii. 7), "His heart is fixed—stayed upon YHVH." See also note on Ps. li. 10. The verb is also used in Ps. x. 17, "Thou turnest (lit. *preparest*) their heart."

"I must strike the chords." This verb, which in the E. V. is always translated "sing," "sing praises," or "praise," indicates the voice of music as distinguished from the human voice. Thus it is better, with De Witt, to translate it "strike the harp," "play," "make melody," "hymn," or "strike the chords." The worship in the Temple combined all kinds of music (Ps. xxvii. 6). When articulate speech has done its utmost there must even be 'songs without words' in the praise of God. Thus

The deliverance realized.

6 They had prepared a net for my steps,
My soul was bowed down—
They had dug a pit-fall before me,
They are fallen (themselves) in its midst!

PART II (see Ps. cviii. 1-5).

Israel, delivered by God, fills earth and Heaven with His praise.

7 My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed;
I must sing, I must strike^a the chords^a!
8 Awake, my glory, awake lute and harp,
I would waken the Dawn!
9 I will thank Thee O Lord^b among the Peoples,
I will strike the chords to^c Thee among the Nations.
10 For great—up to Heaven—is Thy Lovingkindness^d,
And—up to the skies is Thy Truth^d.
11 BE THOU EXALTED O GOD ABOVE THE HEAVENS,
THY GLORY^e ABOVE ALL THE EARTH!

^a or *hymn*

^b *Adonai*

^c v. 7

^d v. 3

^e Phil. ii. 11

(Ps. xxx. 4 and 12) "*Hymn unto YHVH, O ye Saints of His*"... "So that my soul (lit. my glory) might hymn Thee without ceasing."

v. 8. "*Awake...awake...I would waken the Dawn.*" The same verb is used three times but in the last instance it is used in the *causative voice*; consequently we must not translate, "I myself will awake right early" (P. B. V., Sept., Vulg.), but rather (with the Jewish tradition *Berakoth* 4^a, quoted by Graetz) "*I will waken the Dawn.*"

In most early languages the 'rosy-fingered Dawn' is personified; Hebrew is no exception. Thus, as Baethgen points out, we read of "*the eyelids of the Dawn*" (Job xli. 18 (10)), "*the wings of the Dawn*" (Ps. cxxxix. 9), the Morning Star is "*the son of the Dawn*" (Is. xiv. 12). Compare also Cant. vi. 10; Joel ii. 2.

The Commentators give parallel passages from the Poets, e.g. Ovid *Melamorphos.* xi. 597, "*vigil ales...evocat Auroram*" (Hengstenberg). Milton, "*cheerily rouse the slumbering morn*" (Cheyne).

"*Awake, my glory*"—i.e. *my soul* (cf. Ps. vii. 5; xvi. 9; xxx. 12 (13) &c.).

"*Awake lute and harp*"—i.e. *all voices of music* which accompany the songs of God (1 Kings x. 12; Ps. cl. 3).

"*I would waken the Dawn*"—i.e. I would rouse all Nature from its sleep to join the song.

v. 9. "*I will thank Thee...among the Peoples...among the Nations.*" These words do not necessarily mean more than that the Divine deliverance of Israel shall ring through the world (cf. Ps. xviii. 49): but when we compare them with Pss. xxii. 23-31; xl. 3 (note) we see that that deliverance was recognised as the Call of the Gentiles. There is no reason for supposing that the Writer necessarily intended by "*Peoples*" to denote the People of Israel, and by "*Nations*" the peoples of the Gentiles; but the words used lend themselves to such a meaning and are so interpreted by Aben Ezra. I suggest that such an interpretation may have been in St Paul's mind when he wrote Rom. xv. 8 f. See next note.

The work of Israel was to bring the Nations to God. Israel only came to realize this through the sufferings of the Captivity;—and even then only in part. The Christian will interpret this verse from St John xii. 32.

v. 10. "*For great—up to Heaven—is thy Lovingkindness,
And—up to the skies is Thy Truth.*"

We find almost the same words in Ps. xxxv. (xxxvi.) 5, except that *Faithfulness* there stands instead of the kindred word *Truth*, "*YHVH, up to Heaven is Thy Lovingkindness, Thy Faithfulness to the skies.*" In my note on that passage (p. 149 f.) I have shewn that God's "*Lovingkindness*" expresses His

eternal loving purpose for man and that His "*Faithfulness*" represents that same loving purpose under the promise of a Covenant: thus the former would be more applicable to the Gentiles, the latter to Israel. If (*v.* 9 note) we interpret "*the Peoples*," "*the Nations*," as *Israel* and the *Gentiles* respectively, we should expect *Lovingkindness* and *Truth* (*v.* 10) to correspond either in direct or inverted parallelism. Such an interpretation would throw light upon Rom. xv. 8, "For I say that Christ hath been made a minister of the Circumcision for the *Truth* of God (that he might confirm the promises unto the fathers), and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His *Mercy* (i.e. *Lovingkindness*); as it is written;

Therefore I will thank Thee among the Gentiles,
And sing unto Thy name."

This last quotation is from Ps. xviii. 49, but the context shews that several similar passages were in St Paul's mind and I suggest that his argument respecting the *Truth* and *Lovingkindness* of God were taken from the present Psalm.

PSALM LVIII.

The gods of the Nations are here arraigned before the judgement-seat of God exactly as in Psalm lxxxii. which should be closely compared with the present Psalm.

As to the historical groundwork the best commentary is to be found in Jeremiah xlvi. and xlix., where doom is announced upon Moab, Ammon, and Edom, and upon their gods, Chemosh (xlvi. 7, 13, 46) and Malcam (xlix. 1, 3). Also Zeph. ii. 1—iii. 13.

We must not of course assume that our Psalm necessarily belongs to the age of Jeremiah because it seems to echo his thoughts, for indeed the 'pride' and hostility of Moab, Ammon, and Edom, not only date from early days (Numb. xxi. 28 quoted by Jer. xlvi. 45: and Is. xvi. etc. also quoted, Jer. xlvi.), but were certainly much in evidence in the age of Nehemiah. But this at least we would maintain; that the Psalm could not have been written by David; that the hostility of which it complains is not personal but national; and lastly that the hostility of the races which were akin to Israel entirely meets the conditions of the case.

The historical interpretation and the Christian interpretation are blended as follows:

Historically the sense of sin came home, not only to Israel but to the Nations of the World through Divine judgements (see note on *v.* 10); consequently the 'imprecations' of Jeremiah and of our Psalmist were, from their point of view, not inconsistent with the highest charity. But when the sense of sin shall have been perfectly brought home to the world the difference between 'the righteous' (Israel) and the 'unrighteous' (the World-nations) becomes a vanishing quantity; for, to use St Paul's argument (Rom. iii.), God has included all under sin. Consequently the Christian is no longer justified in using the language of imprecation against man; though he may pray, both for himself and for the world, that God's judgements may hasten God's Kingdom (Rev. xi. 17 f.).

PSALM LVIII.

Spiritual wickedness in high places seems to have all its own way in God's Land.

1 Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O ye gods,
Do ye judge with equity the sons of men?
2 Yea, with the heart ye work wickedness in the Land,
Ye ponder over the violence of your hands.
3 The wicked are estranged from their very birth;
They go astray (even) from the womb, speaking lies.
4 A poison is theirs like the poison* of a serpent,
Like a deaf adder that stoppeth its ear,
5 That will not hearken to the voice of enchanters,
Or the charmer that charms so cunningly.

* Rom. iii. 13

v. 1. "O ye gods." The text reads *alem*, "silence" (from a root which signifies to tie the tongue), but a slight change of the vowel-points gives *alim*, "gods," a reading which is adopted even by Delitzsch. The P. B. rendering "O ye congregation" is quite indefensible and seems to have originated from the fact that *alm* is used of "binding sheaves" (Gen. xxxvii. 7, Vulg. "ligare manipulos," cf. Ps. cxxvi. 6). The false analogy of the Latin *manipulus*, 'maniple,' 'a band of soldiers' is the only justification for such a rendering.

The first line of the Psalm is here, as often, interpreted by the last. The "gods" of the Nations who, in v. 1, are filling the world with wrong (cf. Ps. lxxxii.), are, in v. 11, seen to be subject to the *Elohim* (of Israel) who alone "judgeth in the earth."

The reference to the *gods* of the Nations must be explained from the following passages all of which belong approximately to the age of Jeremiah:

Deut. iv. 19. "The sun and moon and the stars, even all the host of heaven.....which YHVH thy God hath divided unto all the Peoples under the whole heaven" (i.e. as objects of worship. See context).

Deut. xxix. 26. "They went and served other gods.....gods whom they knew not and whom He had not given (lit. divided) unto them."

Deut. xxxii. 8 f. "When the Most High gave the Nations their inheritance,
When He separated the sons of men,
He fixed the borders of the Peoples
According to the number of the Angels of God (so the Greek).
For YHVH's portion is His People;
Jacob is the lot of His inheritance."

These passages clearly imply a belief in the existence, however subordinate, of the heathen gods.

We must not, however, expect, in the transition age of Jeremiah, to find any very clearly defined views as to the exact nature of "the gods." Thus, in Jeremiah, chap. x. 11 we read, "Thus shall ye say to them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, these shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens." But in the same chapter, vv. 1—10 and 12—16, these same gods are mocked at as "falsehood," "vanity," and "delusion." It is a favourite saying amongst the Rabbinic writers that 'when God judges a Nation He first judges its Prince' (i.e. its presiding deity. Cf. Dan. x. 13). This saying may be justified from a late (post-exilic?) chapter of Isaiah, "YHVH shall punish the Host of the High-ones on high and the kings of the earth upon the earth" (xxiv. 21). Compare also Jer. li. 44, "And I will punish Bel in Babylon &c." We need not therefore be surprised when we read of a Divine judgement upon the gods in which they "shall die like men" (Ps. lxxxii. 6). Cf. Zeph. ii. 11.

vv. 1, 2. Instead of 'speaking righteousness' (v. 1^a) they 'work wickedness' (v. 2^a): instead of 'judging with equity' (v. 1^b) they 'ponder over violence' (v. 2^b). And this too 'with the heart'!

May God bring
them to swift judge-
ment.

Text uncertain.

6 O God break their teeth in their mouth,
Draw the fangs of the lions O YHVH;
7 Let them melt away like water, and get them gone;
As when one shoots arrows—so let them be cut off;
8 As a snail that melts as it goes;
As abortions that never saw the sun.
9 (As) the thorn-fire, ere your pots can feel it,
The quick as well as the charred,
Is swept away in tempest^a!

^a Job xxvii. 21

v. 3. Their perversity arises from innate depravity. Edom is pictured as hostile to his brother Israel even in the womb (Gen. xxv. 22; Hos. xii. 3 (4)).

The word which we translate 'estranged' probably hints at a 'birth in sin,' cf. Hos. v. 7 where "strange children" are those born from an unnatural union.

The word is probably related to *mamszer* which we translate somewhat feebly by "bastard"; and it is suggestive that, in Deut. xxiii. 2—4 (3—5), after laying down the law that "a bastard" shall not be admitted into the Congregation of Israel "even to the tenth generation," the passage continues, "An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of YHVH, even to the tenth generation." The reason for this is not from the story of Gen. xix. 30—37 of which the Writer shews no knowledge, but because the Ammonites and Moabites had behaved with unnatural hostility to Israel and because the latter had hired Balaam to curse them.

v. 4. Their malignity is more full of poison than a serpent's tooth. Nahash "the serpent" was an Ammonite name if not the title of the kings of Ammon (1 Sam. xi. 1 f.; 2 Sam. x. 2).

v. 5. They are beyond the reach of any charm of kindness. Israel's kind feeling towards Moab (Deut. ii. 9 &c.) met with nothing but scorn (Zeph. ii. 8—10; Neh. ii. 19 &c.).

These three verses might well depict the hostility of the three Tribes, Edom, Ammon, and Moab, who were something 'more than kin and less than kind' to Israel (see on Deut. xxiii. 2—4). If this view be correct it enables us to approximate to the date of the Psalm.

v. 7. In vv. 7—9 the text is more than doubtful. The old versions vary greatly, and though each modern commentator suggests some new view no solution has yet been found.

"As when one shoots &c." Lit. "He bends (i.e. aims) his arrows—thus they are cut off." Here the one who aims may be God, as in Ps. lxiv. 7, or the wicked man (Ps. lxiv. 4), though this view seems highly improbable. Since however the whole passage crowds together images of swift destruction I suggest that we should interpret it like Wisdom v. 12:

"Or as when an arrow is shot at a mark,
The air disparted closeth up again immediately,
So that men know not where it passed through."

v. 8. "As a snail..." The word *shavlul* is only found here. The translation *snail* or *slug* is from the Targum. The Sept., Vulg. and Syriac suggest *wax* (cf. Ps. lxxviii. 2, where however another word is used).

"As abortions." Lit. "the abortion (or untimely fruit) of a woman." The word *asheth*, "woman" is doubtful; the construct form is not needed here (instances such as Deut. xxi. 11; 1 Sam. xxviii. 7; Jer. xiii. 21 are not to the point). The Chaldee suggests, instead of "a woman," "a mole," Chald. *ashutha*:—"like an abortion, a mole, which are blind and see not the sun." This word is also found in the Mishna *Moad caton* vi. 2. See Buxtorf. This interpretation representing as it does an old tradition may have given rise to 2 Pet. i. 9 where the rare word *μωρῶδες* suggests the mole. See Suicer.

v. 9. Of the many solutions suggested for this most difficult verse the best is, perhaps, the image of a thorn-fire in the desert just kindled but swept away by a sudden wind before it has done its work. For want of anything better I have allowed this to stand but it is only fair to state the following objections:

God will vindicate Israel and justice at last. 10 Let the righteous rejoice for he hath vision^a of vengeance ; Let him bathe his steps in the blood of the wicked. 11 So that men say, Truly there is a reward^b for the righteous, Truly there is a Divinity^c that judgeth in the earth.

^a so De Witt

^b lit. *fruit*

^c Elohim
see v. 1

1. *âšdâ* signifies the *thorn* or *bramble* but not the *thorn-fire*; true the fire is said to 'come forth from the bramble,' Judg. ix. 15, but this means no more than that the bramble is a fit subject for fire.

2. *siroth*, "*pots*." The word *sir* has two plurals, *siroth* which signifies "*pots*" and *sirim* which signifies "*thorns*." The juxtaposition of *âšdâ*, "*brambles*," makes it not unreasonable, with Gesenius, to take *siroth* here as "*thorns*."

3. *ḥārôn* which we render "*charred*" always denotes *heat* (of God's anger). Thus it is quite possible that the original text gave some such picture as Jeremiah's 'heath in the desert' (Jer. xvii. 5—8). See Introduction to Ps. i. page 2 and compare Ps. lii. 7 (note).

v. 10. Throughout the whole of this group of 'Psalms of the Persecution' we are struck by that rapid alternation of tender pathos and savage denunciation which is such a striking characteristic of Jeremiah. Thus, in the prophecies against Moab, Ammon, and Edom (Chaps. xlvi. xlviii., xlix.) it might seem at one moment that the prophet's heart was well-nigh broken (xlvi. 9, 36) at the thought of the destructions that were coming on these nations while in the next verse he seems to be hounding on the destroyers to their cruel work: "Cursed be he that doeth the work of YHVH negligently, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood" (xlvi. 10). The explanation of this seeming inconsistency is found in the fact that Jeremiah saw, in those visitations, the way whereby God was recalling those Nations to Himself, "And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel their confidence" (xlvi. 13). Thus God was only dealing with them as He had dealt with Israel and in order that He might "recall" them "in the latter days" (xlvi. 47; xlix. 6, 39).

Nevertheless, when all has been said, such words are not for Christian lips.

v. 11. From the deliverance of Israel and the punishment of the surrounding Nations the world will recognise that the powers of evil which (vv. 1—5) seemed to be omnipotent were, all the while, working out unconsciously the purposes of Israel's God.

"Truly there is a reward (or fruit) for the righteous." Cf. Is. iii. 10; Jer. xvii. 10; xxxii. 19.

PSALM LIX.

Once more we find in this Psalm that reference to foes without, and traitors within, which is characteristic of the present group of Psalms. The foes without are "heathen" nations or tribes (vv. 5^c, 8). The traitors within are false prophets (vv. 2^a, 5^d, 6 f., 14 f.).

The apparent inconsistency between vv. 11 and 13 is to be explained from the fact that the Psalmist, writing in the spirit of Jeremiah, anticipates for the heathen tribes a punishment which shall work their conversion, whereas for the false prophets who mislead the people he sees only a swift destruction.

The Psalm falls into two parts each ending in the same Refrain: but the Refrain differs from any that we have hitherto considered in the fact that it is in each case interrupted, in the first case by vv. 7, 8 and in the second case by vv. 15, 16.

PSALM LIX.

Israel prays against
savage foes who come
round him like dogs
(cf. Ps. xxii.).

1 Rescue me from my enemies, O my God ;

Set me high from the reach of my foes.

2 Rescue me from workers of vanity^a ;

Save me from blood-guilty^b men.

3 For, lo, they lie in wait for my life^c ;

Savage ones band together against me :

4 Not (for) my transgression, not (for) my sin, O YHVH !

Without guilt of mine they run and prepare :

Awake Thou to meet me^d, and behold !

5 For Thou YHVH Elohim Sabaôth

(Art) the God of Israel.

Arouse Thee! to visit all the heathen^e ;

Spare not all these treacherous workers of vanity^f.

^a Ps. v. 5

^b Ps. v. 6

^c Ps. lvi. 6

^d with help

^e cf. Ps. lvi. 7

^f v. 2

v. 1. "Set me on high." See note on Ps. xx. 1.

v. 2. The "workers of vanity" and "blood-guilty men" (lit. "men of bloodshed") are identical with the "men of bloodshed and fraud" of Ps. lv. 23 and also with the sinners described in Ps. v. 5 f.

Other points of resemblance between Psalms v. and lix. may also be found by comparing Ps. v. 9 with Ps. lix. 7. The student will also note that the difficult word which signifies originally a "yawning-abys," thence "mischief," "calamity," "destruction," a word which is almost peculiar to the present group of Psalms (see Ps. lii. 2 note), is also found in Ps. v. 9.

v. 3. "Savage ones band together..." The verb is used in the same peculiar way as in Ps. lvi. 6, "They band together and lurk" (see note) where, as we have seen, there is a reference to savage beasts. Thus we are led to expect the same thought in the present Psalm. This is confirmed by the actual comparison of the enemy to wild "dogs" in vv. 6, 14. Further we note that the adjective "savage ones" is used in a remarkable passage in which the Second Isaiah characterises the false prophets as "savage dogs," E. V. "greedy," marg. "strong of appetite." For further discussion on this passage see note on v. 6.

v. 4. "Not my transgression..." Nothing can be more diametrically opposed to fact than the assertion that these words suggest David as their author and that they would be untrue upon the lips of Israel. David suffered, and knew that he suffered, in consequence of his sin (2 Sam. xvi. 10). Israel suffered, and knew that he suffered, partly in consequence of his devotion to God (Ps. xlv. 17—22): nor was this knowledge inconsistent with the deepest confession of sinfulness when, as in the Penitential Psalms, Israel stood face to face with God alone. But in the present instance Israel is thinking, not of his relation to God, but of his relation to the surrounding Nations or Tribes, and of Israelites who sided with them; he has done nothing to provoke their enmity, indeed he had treated them as friends (lv. 14, 20 &c.).

"Awake Thou." See note on Ps. xlv. 23 and compare also "Arouse Thee!" in v. 5.

v. 5. "YHVH Elohim Sabaôth." These three Divine Names occur in the Asaph and Korah Psalms, lxxx. 4, 19; lxxxiv. 8. "YHVH Sabaôth" or "YHVH of Hosts" may be taken as the national war-cry of Israel (see Ps. xlv. 7) but the name *Elohim* is quite irregular in such a context in the absolute form; unless we may assume Sabaôth to have already become a proper name. *YHVH God of Hosts* would be written as in Ps. lxxxix. 8 (9) &c.

"Spare not all these treacherous workers of vanity." There is, I think, a distinction between "the heathen" who are to be "visited" for chastisement (as in Jeremiah xii. 15) and the "treacherous workers"

The watchmen (prophets) are also "dogs" (cf. Is. lvi. 9 and Zeph. iii. 3 f.).

6 THEY RETURN AT EVENTIDE, CLAMOUR LIKE DOGS,
AND GO THE ROUNDS OF THE CITY.
7 Behold, they babble with their mouths,
While swords are in their lips,
"For who doth hear^a?"
8 But Thou, YHVH, wilt scoff^b at them;
Thou wilt mock^b at all the heathen^c.
9 O MY^d STRENGTH, UNTO THEE WOULD I SING:
FOR GOD IS HE THAT SETS ME ON HIGH^e,
10 MY MERCIFUL GOD.

^a cf. Jer. xii. 4

^b Ps. ii. 4

^c Gentiles

^d So *Sept.* and
v. 17

^e v. 1

who were helping them within the City who were to be utterly destroyed. This would explain the seeming contradiction between *vv.* 11^a and 13^a. The "treacherous workers" seem to be identical with those described in that Chapter (xii.) of Jeremiah to which we trace allusion in our note on *v.* 6. Jeremiah sees in the false prophets not merely personal but national traitors, and appeals to God, "*Wherefore are they undisturbed that all deal very treacherously?.....Thou art nigh in their mouth and far from their reins.....For they have said, He cannot see our end.*"

v. 6. "*They clamour like dogs.*" The Septuagint translates, "*they hunger*" like dogs, Vulg. "*et famem patientur ut canes.*" This translation contains an element of truth, for the Hebrew verb *hmk* signifies the *movement* or *sounding* of the bowels through any strong emotion (Is. xvi. 11; Jer. iv. 19; xxxi. 20; xlviii. 36, cf. Ps. lv. 17 (18); lxxvii. 3 (4)). Hence in the Refrain of Ps. xlii. it is used of the soul as "*moved*" within the mourner. It is true that the word is also used of the *sound*, e.g. of the sea, but even then there is the under-thought of *tumult* (cf. Ps. xlvi. 3 and 6). It is used of a *clamorous* woman (Prov. ix. 13) and of the sound made by a hungry bear (Is. lix. 11). It is applied to the *clamour* or *tumult* made by Israel's enemies in the Korah and Asaph Psalms (Ps. xlvi. 6 (7); lxxxiii. 2 (3)) and in that sense must be understood in the present passage.

The comparison of the enemies of Israel to *dogs* at once carries our minds to that prophecy in the Second Isaiah (lvi. 9 ff.) which many commentators believe to have been a quotation from some earlier work, possibly of the time of Manasseh. These words may be translated as follows:—"All ye wild beasts of the field, come to devour; all ye wild beasts of the forest! His watchmen (i.e. his prophets) are blind, they are all of them undiscerning; they are all of them dumb dogs, they cannot bark, hunting in dreams, loving to slumber. But the dogs (i.e. the enemy) are savage of appetite, they know no satiety...."

In this passage, as in our Psalm, there is an alliance between the false prophets—the sleeping dogs—and the surrounding nations—the savage dogs. Our Psalm also uses the same language; see *vv.* 3 and 15.

But there is another prophecy with which our Psalmist was undoubtedly familiar. I refer to Jer. xi. 18—xii. 17. The connexion in this prophecy may be stated thus:—Jeremiah feels most acutely the treachery of his neighbours the men of Anathoth and God shews him their coming punishment (Ch. xi. 21—23). Then (Ch. xii. 1—5) he ventures to reason with God respecting the prosperity of the enemies of Israel. He has scarcely stated his case when his own late experience gives the answer:—Must not God feel acutely the treachery of those who are seeking the very life of Israel, "*the dearly beloved of His soul*" (xii. 7 f.). He hears God speak of these (who were probably the Ammonites and Moabites) as "*My evil neighbours*" (xii. 14) with obvious reference to Jeremiah's own experience at Anathoth. He also hears God complaining thus:—

"*What! is Mine inheritance.....?
Are vultures all round her?
Go ye, assemble all the beasts of the field!
Bring them to devour!*"

Though there is some obscure allusion in the beginning of this verse, the general meaning is clear, i.e. All these surrounding Nations, God's '*evil neighbours*' are gathered round Judah, His

Israel, with fuller assurance, anticipates the end (cf. *vv.* 1-5).

God will prevent me (with help)^a ;
 Will let me see my desire^b on my foes.
 11 Slay them not, lest my people forget ;
 Make them wanderers with Thine Host,
 And bring them down O Lord^c, our Shield.
 12 (For) the sin of their mouth—the word of their lips—
 Let them be caught through their own pride ;
 Through the cursing and lying that they utter.
 13 End them in Thy wrath, end them that they be no more ;
 So shall they know that God ruleth in Jacob, to the
 bounds of the earth.

^a cf. *v.* 4

^b Ps. liv. 7

^c Adonai

inheritance, like birds and beasts of prey, to devour her. Jeremiah then sees that God is going to transport these Nations, with Judah, to Babylon, and from thence He will bring them back when they shall have learnt the lesson (xii. 14-17). This prophecy is supposed to belong to the times of Jehoiakim and to refer to the invasion of bands of Moabites, Ammonites, &c., mentioned in 2 Kings xxiv. 2 (see Ball in Expositor's Bible). Doubtless similar circumstances give rise to our Psalm.

v. 7. "Behold, they babble with their mouths." The Septuagint use the verb ἀποφθέγγεσθαι which in every other passage is used of *prophesying*, and always in a bad sense, except in Deut. xxxii. 2, and 1 Chr. xxv. 1. The other passages, which will repay study, are as follows:—

Mic. v. 12 (11) "And soothsayers shall not be found in them."

Zech. x. 2 "The *teraphim* (or *idols*) have spoken vanity."

Ezek. xiii. 9 "The prophets...that *divine* lies."

Ezek. xiii. 19 "by your *prophesying-lies* to My people who hear your *lies*."

In all these passages the word might be rendered by "*babbling*," "*babblers*," but the English reader should understand that the Hebrew verbs which signify *to babble* and *to prophesy* are closely related, indeed almost identical. Thus it is evident that the Septuagint recognised in our present Psalm an allusion to the false prophets. This confirms the interpretation we have given of verses 3 and 6.

v. 11. "Make them wanderers." The same verb (in Kal) is used in *v.* 15. They are *vagabonds* and all they are fit for is the vagabond life. They have chosen the way of Cain who became a "wanderer" (Gen. iv. 12). They are murmurers like the generation in the wilderness and, like them, must "*be made to wander*" (Nu. xxxii. 13).

"With Thine Host." If the "Host" of God here signify the Angels we may illustrate from Ps. xxxv. 5, 6. The word may, however, be translated "*Thy might*."

v. 15. "*Such as these*." Contrast *v.* 16, "*Whereas I*."

"If they be not sated then they murmur." The word we have translated "*murmur*" is often used in the Priest-Code to describe the discontent of the People either with Moses or with God (Exod. xvi. 2; Nu. xiv. 2, 27, 29, 36; xvi. 11, 41 (xvii. 6); xvii. 5 (20); Josh. ix. 18). It is rarely found in the earlier record, see however, Exod. xv. 24 (E). When the Children of Israel 'murmured' because they 'were not sated' they were not merely ungrateful but they became "*an evil congregation*" (Nu. xiv. 27, 35) incapable of any better fate than wandering in the wilderness for forty years until they were all consumed (Nu. xiv. 28-35; cf. *v.* 11 of our Psalm). It should also be noted that the spies who "*caused the congregation to murmur*" "*died by a stroke before YHVH*," Nu. xiv. 37. These men may be compared to the false prophets (Jude 16) who bring upon themselves "swift destruction" (2 Pet. ii. 1; cf. *v.* 12 of our Psalm).

The Hebrew scholar will notice that the verb *lun* is translated in the E.V. "*to murmur*" both in the Niphal, which is correct, and in the Hiphil, which should rather signify "*to cause* (others) *to murmur*." In our Psalm the form is properly Hiphil so that it would be more accurate to

The false prophets
cause murmuring.

14 THEY RETURN AT EVENTIDE, CLAMOUR LIKE DOGS,
AND GO THE ROUNDS OF THE CITY.

15 Such as these wander about to devour^a,
If they be not sated then they murmur^b.

^a for prey
Job ix. 26
^b or cause a
murmuring

The true Israel
causes God's praise
to be heard.

16 Whereas I—I sing of Thy strength,
I ring out, each morn, Thy lovingkindness;
Because Thou hast become my high-tower,
My refuge in the day of my trouble.

17 O MY STRENGTH, UNTO THEE WOULD I SING:
FOR GOD IS HE THAT SETS ME ON HIGH^c,
MY MERCIFUL GOD.

^c v. 1

translate "*they cause a murmuring*" (contrast Nu. xiv. 2 with xiv. 27, 36). If this be admitted the reference to the false prophets as misleaders of the people is still more clear.

v. 16. "*Whereas I.*" There can be no greater contrast than between those (v. 15) who make men murmur against God and those who 'Sing of His strength and make each morning to ring with His lovingkindness.'

PSALM LX.

The Psalm may be divided into three parts. In the beginning and end the speaker uses the pronoun in the plural, whereas in the middle he speaks in the first person singular (Graetz).

In the *first* part, vv. 1—4, we see God's People crushed under a cruel invasion, such as that of the "bands of Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites" (2 Kings xxiv. 2) who swept over Judah in the troubled days of Jehoiakim (c. 605 B.C.).

In the *second* part, vv. 5—9, we have a Psalm complete in itself containing a prayer for victory (v. 5), a Divine Oracle in which wide-spread dominion is promised (vv. 6—8), and a concluding verse (v. 9) in which the prayer for victory over Edom and (?) Philistia takes more definite shape.

In the *third* part (vv. 10—12) we find ourselves once more in the atmosphere of part I.; so far from conquering 'strong cities' God's People are themselves forsaken by God and at the mercy of a foreign invader.

If parts I. and III. be read consecutively they will be seen to form a complete whole just as part II. forms a complete whole. At the same time the present arrangement of the Psalm or Psalms, is evidently intentional, contrasting, as it does, God's promised victory with Israel's defeat, entirely in the spirit of Ps. xlv. (See Introduction to that Psalm p. 181.)

Doubtless, to many in Israel, failure meant total loss of faith. To others, like our Psalmist, failure led to deeper search into the meaning of God's Promise. The Christian historian, looking back, will understand that that Promise could only mean the ultimate triumph of God's Kingdom in the world.

PSALM LX.

Israel is reeling
under a crushing de-
feat.

- 1 O God Thou hast cast us off and made a breach upon us ;
Thou hast been angry (and) makest us turn back ;
- 2 Thou hast shaken the land and broken it ;
Heal the hurts thereof for it tottereth.
- 3 Thou hast let Thy People see hard times ;
Thou hast made us drink the wine of reeling ;
- 4 Thou hast (indeed) given to them that fear Thee a banner,
But it is merely for flight from before the bow !

v. 1. "O God Thou hast cast us off." The verb is practically peculiar to the *Korah* and *Asaph* Psalms. See note on Ps. xlv. 9, p. 185.

"And made a breach." The word is used in the *Asaph* Psalm lxxx. 12 (13), and in the *Korah* (?) Psalm lxxxix. 40 (41) of God making a breach in the hedges of His vineyard. It is used of God's anger in the earliest record JE (Exod. xix. 22, 24) and also in the latest (1 Chr. xiii. 11 ; xiv. 11 ; xv. 13). The word would be specially applicable to the breaking down of the City walls (Neh. i. 3 ; ii. 13, &c.), though it might also be used in a more general way. If we bear in mind the close connexion of this Psalm with the *Korah* and *Asaph* Psalms we shall feel justified in interpreting the word in the sense in which it occurs in those Psalms.

"Thou hast been angry." The only other passages in the Psalter in which this word is found are the *Asaph* Psalm lxxxix. 5, the *Korah* Psalm lxxxv. 5 (6), and, in a different sense, the late Psalm ii. 12.

"And makest us turn back." Of the two possible senses of *restoring* or *turning back* the parallelism absolutely requires the latter. All the Greek versions, with the exception of the Septuagint, favour the latter meaning, and it may be defended from Jer. l. 6, "They (the shepherds) have turned them back (i.e. made them go astray) upon the mountains." Thus the sense is identical with that of the parallel Psalm xlv. 10, "Thou makest us to turn back from the foe." The 10th verse of our Psalm is practically identical with Ps. xlv. 9.

vv. 2-4. There was no period in the reign of David to which these verses could, by any possibility, be applied.

v. 4. The verse is obscure and the translation offered is only provisional. There is evidently a play upon the substantive *nēṣ*, "a banner" or "standard" and the kindred verb *nās*, "to fly" or "flee." The banner instead of flying proudly as it should do (Zech. ix. 16 Hebrew) over God's land is fleeing ignominiously before the foe (*vv. 1, 10*); God, instead of being "YHVH nissi" ("YHVH my banner" Exod. xvii. 15) as He had sworn to Moses in the Elohist record, has now suffered another Amalek to prevail in spite of the uplifted hands of His People. Nevertheless *Vexilla Regis prodeunt*.

"From before the bow." This is the correct reading and is preserved by the Septuagint, Symmachus and Jerome. In the present Hebrew text the word for *bow* is spelt with *l* instead of *t*, which seems to have been a later form of writing the word ; the word thus written was confused with a Chaldee word signifying *truth, certainty* (Dan. ii. 47 ; iv. 37 (34) : Prov. xxii. 21).

v. 5. It is possible that the verses which follow, and which are also introduced still more abruptly in Ps. cviii., were taken from an independent source. In any case the object is to set in bold, but not irreverent contrast, God's promise with God's performance.

v. 6. "God hath promised by His holiness." The parallelism in Ps. lxxxix. is very close both in thought and language since, in *v. 34*, God swears "by His holiness" that He will not fail David, whereas *vv. 37-44* depict the disappointment and failure of the present exactly in the manner of the concluding verses of our present Psalm.

In the earliest days of Israel, God's "holy promise" was understood to mean the gift of the Land for the sake of Abraham. Amos (B.C. 760) was perhaps the first to shew that God's choice of Israel was no favouritism but a call to higher service.

(The following eight verses occur again in Ps. cviii.)

He appeals to the promises confirmed by the oath of God. Cf. Zeph. ii. 9 ff.

- 5 For the sake of Thy loved-ones being delivered
Oh save with Thy right hand and answer us!
6 "God hath promised, by His holiness^a,
"I can exult, I can divide Shechem,
"I shall mete out the valley of Succoth.
7 "Gilead^b is mine, and Manasseh is mine;
"While Ephraim is the strength of my head,
"Judah my leader's-staff;
8 "Moab^c is my wash-pot,
"Over Edom I shall cast my shoe,
"Over Philistia^d I shall triumph."
9 Who will bring me into the strong city?
Who will^e guide me into Edom?

^a Ps. lxxxix. 34, Amos iv. 2

^b cf. Mic. vii. 14

^c cf. Zeph. ii. 8

^d cf. Zeph. ii. 5 ff.

^e Sept.

Thus, very gradually, a higher thought of God's promise (Luke i. 73 ff.) has grown up: but, as the human race moves on, the horizon of fulfilment seems to move with it; for God can only lead us by illusion. Still illusion is not delusion. The progress is real.

"*Shechem*."—The word signifies "a shoulder" hence a *mountain-slope* (Gen. xlviii. 22 where E.V. badly translates "one portion"). Thus the word may have been chosen, in part, in order to contrast "*mountain-slope*" with "*valley*" in the next line. But the City, which, from its situation on the *mountain-slope* between Ebal and Gerizim bore the name of Shechem was the conquest (contrast Gen. xlviii. 22 with Gen. xxxiii. 19) of Jacob, the first Capital of the Northern Kingdom and, in later times, the home of the Samaritans (St John iv. 5 ff.).

Now it is obvious that the Oracle quoted in our Psalm, since it promises the possession of Shechem, could not have been spoken when Shechem was a part of the Northern Kingdom (say from B.C. 912—722). If therefore we decide against the Davidic authorship of the Psalm the date must be later than the fall of Samaria in B.C. 722. (See also note on v. 7.)

"*I shall mete out the valley of Succoth*." The word *Succoth* signifies "booths" made with leafy boughs. *Succoth* is mentioned in the journey of Jacob in close connexion with Shechem (Gen. xxxiv. 17—20). Doubtless the name was not uncommon; but the "*valley of Succoth*" is almost certainly to be placed east of the Jordan and is the portion which Gad received from the conquest of the Amorites (Josh. xiii. 27 (P.): 1 Kings vii. 46). Thus while *Shechem* denotes the high ground to the *West* the *valley of Succoth* signifies all the low land to the *East*.

v. 7. "*Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine*."—*Gilead* on the East of Jordan and *Manasseh* in the West are usually supposed to answer respectively to the *valley of Succoth* and to *Shechem* in verse 6: but, according to the Priest-code, Moses gave half of Gilead to the half tribe of Manasseh (Josh. xiii. 29 ff.), it is therefore quite possible that '*Gilead and Manasseh*' are intended to denote generally the whole extent of the promised land to the East of Jordan.

"*While Ephraim is the strength of my head*."—Deuteronomy (xxxiii. 17) had promised that the House of Joseph, whose emblem was the Bull, should "push the nations" with his horns "to the ends of the earth." There is an allusion to this promise in Ps. xlv. 5 (see note) which is closely parallel to the thought in this verse.

"*Judah my leader's-staff*." The word *m'hokék*, "leader" or "leader's-staff" as applied to Judah is significant of date. In the very early Song of Deborah (c. 1250 B.C.) Judah is not even mentioned.

It was not before the age of David and Solomon that Judah took the lead among the Tribes. The "Blessing of Jacob" (Gen. xlix. 1—27) which critics place in the age of Solomon (c. 950 B.C.) contains the well-known words, "*The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the leader's-staff (m'hokék) from between his feet &c.*" but from the days of Jeroboam to the deportation of the ten Tribes by Tiglath Pileser, i.e. from B.C. 933 to B.C. 734, no Psalmist could have written the 7th verse of our

He contrasts promise with fulfilment as in Ps. xlv.

- 10 Is it not THOU, O God, that hast cast us off,
And goest not forth, O God, with our hosts^a?
- 11 O give us help from the foe ;
For vain is the help of man.
- 12 Through God we shall do valiantly
And He it is that must trample our enemies.

^a Ps. xlv. 9

Psalm. Indeed the so-called "Blessing of Moses" (Deut. xxxiii.) which was written during this period (c. 798 B.C.) assigns "the portion of the leader (*m'kokék*)" not to Judah but to the warlike tribe of Gad which occupied a strong position on the East of Jordan. After the deportation of the Ten Tribes, Judah became heir to all the hopes and even to the very name of Israel. Thus, to the author of the Priest-code (c. 500 B.C.), Judah was the Tribe which even in the Wilderness had the front place on the East of the Camp and led the march of the Tribes (Numb. ii. 1—9).

In point of fact the ideal unity of the Tribes under the leadership of Judah was a thought which grew stronger with the lapse of years.

Thus we conclude that if the present Oracle cannot be placed in the age of David and Solomon it must be assigned to a date certainly later, and probably much later, than B.C. 734.

v. 8. "*Moab is my wash-pot.*" The strange readings of the Septuagint, Symmachus and Vulgate are obtained by giving to the Hebrew word for *washing* its Chaldee signification of *hope* or *confidence*. This, however, is highly improbable. Moab, possibly from its position beyond the deep basin of the Dead Sea, is pictured in Is. xxv. 10—12, as "the waters of the dunghill": so too in our Psalm it becomes a "wash-pot." The contemptuous terms in which Moab and Edom are here described suggest a later date than Deuteronomy. Contrast the kindly terms in which these 'kinsmen' of Israel are mentioned Deut. ii. 1—12, where it is distinctly stated that God will give "not so much as a foot-breadth" of their land to Israel.

"*Over Philistia I shall triumph.*" The text reads "*O Philistia triumph over me*" but the parallel text (Ps. cviii. 9) is undoubtedly correct and involves only a slight change.

The best comment on this verse is to be found in Jer. xlvii. (against the Philistines); xlviii. (against Moab); xlix. (against Ammon and Edom). This prophecy of Jeremiah (like the very similar prophecy of Zephaniah, Chap. ii.—iii. 13) was probably written B.C. 608, in the troubled times of Jehoiakim which immediately followed the death of Josiah at Megiddo (B.C. 609). Such a time would exactly suit our Psalm (see note *vv.* 2—4). Such a time would also account for the parallel Psalm xlv. (see note on Ps. xlv. 9, p. 185) and also Pss. lviii. (see p. 246) and lix. (see p. 251).

v. 9. "*Who will bring me.*" The verb *yabal* (whence *jubilee*) implies a triumphal procession (Jer. xxxi. 9; Zeph. iii. 10; Ps. xlv. 14 (15), 15 (16)). It is often used of the carrying of a present (Hos. x. 6; xii. 1 (2); Is. xviii. 7; Pss. lxviii. 29 (30); lxxvi. 11 (12)) or of the bringing of a sacrifice which was led in procession (Jer. xi. 19; Is. liii. 7 &c.).

"*Who will guide me.*" The parallelism absolutely requires that we should read a *future* here, with the Septuagint, instead of a *past* with the text. The only change needed in the Hebrew is that the verb should have the letter *yod* prefixed to it; and, with this letter the previous word ends. Most critics (Graetz, Baethgen, Cheyne, &c.) now accept this slight correction.

The verse answers to v. 5 so that *vv.* 5—9 are complete in themselves. The words might be paraphrased thus:

'Oh that God would lead me in triumph, as He certainly will, into every stronghold of the enemy. Oh that He would guide me, as He certainly will, to the conquest of that Edom which ever represents the enemy of God.'

The Christian application may be seen in Col. ii. 15; 2 Cor. ii. 14.

v. 10. "*Is it not THOU, O God...?*" This verse must not be regarded as the answer to the question proposed in v. 9. Indeed v. 10 continues the thought of v. 4: as though he had said 'Thou, YHVH, instead of being "*YHWH nissi*," art Thyself the cause of our flight! Is it not the case that Thou Thyself hast cast us off, and no longer fulfillest the promise of going forth with our hosts?'

PSALM LXI.

Psalm lxi. should be read in close connexion with Ps. lxiii. which we may call its companion Psalm. In both Psalms we note how faith in what God *will* do grows out of the soil of past mercies. Compare Ps. lxi. *vv.* 2, 3, 4, 5 with Ps. lxiii. *vv.* 2—5 and *v.* 7.

Both Psalms also refer to a "King," who is evidently identified with the Speaker in the other verses of the Psalm (Pss. lxi. 6 f., lxiii. 11).

The structure of Ps. lxi. will be seen from the marginal notes. The central thought is contained in *v.* 4, in which the Speaker expresses his certain hope of becoming God's eternal guest (cf. Pss. xv.; xxvii.; xlii., lxiii). This certainty is based on what God has already done for His People in giving them the "*heritage*" (*v.* 5). From this thought the transition is natural to the "sure mercies of David." That 'heritage' must also imply eternity (*vv.* 6, 7).

PSALM LXI.

Introduction, cf. *v.* 8. 1 O God hear my cry;
Hearken to my prayer.

(a) *I will cry.* 2 From the ends of the earth, unto Thee will I cry
While my heart is overwhelmed.

Guide me to the Rock^a that is high from my reach; ^a Ps. xxvii. 5
(b) For Thou *hast* 3 For Thou hast been a Shelter for me,
helped. A Tower^b of strength from the face of the foe. ^b Prov. xviii. 10

v. 1. "*My cry.*" The word properly denotes a *ringing cry of joy* or *singing* (Pss. xxx. 5 (6); xlii. 4 (5); xlvi. 1 (2); cv. 43; cxviii. 15; cxxvi. 2, 5, 6; also without exception in Isaiah) but occasionally, and especially when, as here, coupled with *prayer* it signifies *loud crying* in the ears of God. Jeremiah always uses it in this latter sense (Jer. vii. 16; xi. 14; xiv. 12). Compare also Pss. xvii. 1; lxxxviii. 2 (3); cvi. 44; cxix. 169. In the present Psalm the "*cry*" no doubt begins in sorrow but the first verse is to be interpreted by the last, so that the sorrow is turned into joy (cf. note on Ps. xxx. 5, p. 127).

v. 2. "*From the ends of the earth...*" The Commentators too readily assume from these words that the Psalmist was in exile. But why should the "*ends of the earth*" be taken literally, while the "*Rock*," in the latter part of the same verse, is taken figuratively? When 'the heart is overwhelmed' it seems to be crying to God from the '*ends of the earth*.' See on Ps. xlii. p. 174.

"*While my heart is overwhelmed.*" The verb that is used here, and in Is. lvii. 16, in the Kal, is used in a similar way in the Hithpael in Pss. lxxvii. 3 (4); cvii. 5; cxlii. 3 (4); cxliii. 4, and in Jonah ii. 7 (8). There is no better remedy for depression than prayer (James v. 13) which calls to mind God's mercies in the past.

- (a₁) I shall have the substance. 4 Fain would I sojourn in Thy Tent for ever^a,
Would shelter 'neath the Covert of Thy wings^b!
- (b₁) For I have already the earnest. 5 For Thou, O God, hast hearkened to my vows,
Hast given (me) the heritage of them that fear Thy Name.
- The Promise to David 6 Long life^c Thou shalt add to the life of the King^d,
His years shall be ages long^e,
has a meaning for Eternity. 7 He shall dwell before God for ever,
Lovingkindness and Truth shall preserve him.
- Conclusion, cf. v. 1. 8 So shall I hymn to Thy Name for ever,
While paying my daily vows.

^a cf. Pss. xxiii. 6, xxvii. 4
^b Ps. lvii. 1

^c lit. *days*
^d Ps. xxi. 1 ff.
^e cf. Ps. xxi. 4 f.

v. 4. "*Fain would I sojourn, &c.*" The desire to *sojourn* as God's guest must not be narrowed down to a mere longing after the services of the Temple (see Ps. xv. 1 note, p. 76). Consequently no argument should be founded on this verse as to whether the Temple was, or was not, standing at the time when the Psalm was written.

The *desire* for union with God in v. 4, leads to the *assurance* of continued life in vv. 6, 7, exactly in the same way that the same assurance is reached in Ps. xvi.

v. 5. We must not translate, "*Thou hast given an heritage to those that fear Thy name,*" but, "*Thou hast given (me) the heritage of them that fear Thy name.*"

The word we translate "*heritage*" occurs five times in Deuteronomy and three times in Joshua, always in the sense of the "*possession*" of the land which God gives either to Israel or to other nations. But when, in the Captivity, the *possession* of the Land was taken away and the Sanctuary destroyed the true meaning of both Sanctuary and possession began to be realised.

God Himself is Israel's Sanctuary (Ezek. xi. 16).

God Himself is Israel's possession (Lam. iii. 24; Ps. xvi. 5).

Having God he has all things. Such is the "*heritage of those that fear His name.*"

The connexion of thought between vv. 4 and 5 might be expressed thus: 'I am sure of the heritage of the future (v. 4), because I have the pledge of it in the present (v. 5).' Compare the argument in 2 Cor. i. 22; v. 5; Eph. i. 14 f.

v. 6. "*The King.*" The structure of the Psalm (see marginal notes) makes it evident that "the King" is identical with the speaker. There is no need to suppose that any historical King is intended. Indeed just as the unity of the Twelve Tribes became a leading thought when that unity was no longer an historical possibility so too the Prophets and Psalmists looked, all the more, for the realisation of a Davidic Kingdom as the actual Kingdom sank into obscurity (Jer. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxvii. 22, 24. See also Introduction to Ps. xxi. p. 97).

God's Promise must be larger, not smaller, than human hopes, consequently every disappointment points higher and becomes what Browning calls, "a triumph's evidence for the fulness of the days." The "age-long" life of our Psalm becomes the "*indissoluble life*" of Hebrews vii. 16.

v. 7. "*He shall dwell before God for ever.*" Thus the King realises what the speaker prays for in v. 4. "*Lovingkindness and Truth shall preserve him.*" The Hebrew text inserts the little word *mn*, "*appoint Thou.*" Thus, "*Lovingkindness and Truth, appoint Thou, they shall preserve him.*" But the Septuagint read *mi*, "*who?*" instead of *mn*, "*appoint Thou.*" Two other Greek versions read, "*Lovingkindness and Truth, from Thee, shall preserve him*" (cf. also the Targum) while Aquila and Symmachus omit the doubtful word altogether, as we have done in our translation. In Prov. xx. 28 we read "*Lovingkindness and Truth will preserve a King*"; where it might seem to imply nothing more than that 'equity preserves the throne' (see also Introduction to Ps. xxv. on vv. 8, 21 p. 27); but, in our Psalm, Lovingkindness and Truth must be almost personified as Angel guardians sent by God for the guidance of the King (cf. note on Ps. lvii. 3, p. 244).

PSALM LXII.

Psalm lxii. has much in common with Ps. xlix. The subject of both is the utter nothingness of the nations as contrasted with the life of Israel that is built on God. Both Psalms have two Parts which closely correspond (lxii. *vv.* 1—4 with *vv.* 5—9, see also Introd. to Ps. xlix. p. 210). Both are marked by a two-fold Refrain. Both use the same word *ak* (lxii. 1 note; xlix. 7 and 15 notes). Both end in an exhortation to put no trust in riches (lxii. 10 f.; xlix. 16 ff.).

But Ps. lxii. has also points in common with Ps. xxxix. not only in the two-fold Refrain but in the Title *Jeduthun* (see p. 155), and in the use of *ak hevel*, “*mere vanity*” or “*merely a breath*” (see notes on lxii. 1 and 10).

PSALM LXII.

Israel's sole trust is in God.	1 SIMPLY, UPON GOD, REST SILENT ^a , O MY SOUL! FROM HIM COMETH MY SALVATION.	^a Ps. xxxvii. 7
While the nations rage.	2 SIMPLY HE IS MY ROCK AND MY SALVATION, MY FORTRESS—I SHALL NEVER BE MOVED. 3 How long would ye throng ^b against a man? How long would ye, all of you, crush him? Like a tumbling wall, like a falling fence!	^b so Targum
The nations live on lies.	4 SIMPLY to depose from His high-calling ^c do they plan, They delight in lies, They bless (one and all) with their mouth, While they curse with their inmost heart.	^c or <i>dignity</i> , Gen. xlix. 3

v. 1. "Simply." The little word *ak*, "simply," "merely," "nay but" is characteristic of this Psalm where it occurs six times (*vv.* 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9) and of the similiar Psalm xxxix., where we have translated it four times by "mere" or "merely," and also of Ps. xlix. *vv.* 7, 15 (see p. 211). In the present Psalm we have risked some harshness in the translation in order to allow the one word "simply" to stand in each case.

"Rest silent." The Hebrew text has the letters *dumih*, "silence," in verse 1, but when the Refrain occurs again in *v.* 5 we find *dumi*, "be silent." Wellhausen is undoubtedly right in correcting *v.* 1 by *v.* 5.

"From Him cometh my salvation." The parallel text, in verse 5, reads "my hope," a reading which Wellhausen would also adopt here. Certainly the mistake could easily occur, since the next line ends with the word *Salvation*, and, on *à priori* grounds, we should have expected the Refrain to remain unchanged. Still the Versions seem to have read our present text.

v. 2. "I shall never be moved." The text reads "I shall never be moved greatly." But the word "greatly" does not occur in the parallel text in *v.* 6 and it introduces an impossible bathos. The teaching of Scripture is that it is less possible for those that trust in God to be moved than it is for the earth itself to be moved (Is. liv. 10; Pss. xvi. 8; xxi. 7; xciii. 1; xcvi. 10; civ. 5; cxii. 6; cxxv. 1). Possibly the Hebrew word "greatly" was an old mistake for the musical term *Selah*. A confusion between רבה and סלה might easily arise.

v. 3. By a slight change in the vowel points we may read either, "ye will crush," or "ye shall be crushed." The E.V. and P.B.V. adopt the latter, and render "ye shall be slain"; but the ancient versions, and the context, favour the former.

"Against a man." The *man, ish*, implies the *righteous man* (Targum) and Theodore of Mops. interpreted it as referring to the People of Israel (Baethgen).

v. 4. "His high-calling (or dignity)." The Septuagint read "my dignity"; a reading which would certainly be easier. The word *dignity* is used (Gen. xlix. 3) of birthright. We might express the meaning of the Psalmist thus: 'While *my* one thought is God, and God only, *their* one thought is only how to thrust me down from this my dignity (or from this dignity that He has conferred upon me). They think it as easy to do this as to push down a bulging wall (Is. xxx. 13). But it is they, not I, that must fall; for my trust is in God whereas their trust is in lies (compare *v.* 4 with *v.* 9).

v. 8. "Trust...all ye Congregation of the People." We follow the Septuagint which, for *Kol q̄th* "all time," read *Kol q̄th*, "all the Congregation of." The present Hebrew text is almost impossible.

- Israel's sole trust is in God (cf. *vv.* 1, 2). 5 SIMPLY, UPON GOD, REST SILENT, O MY SOUL!
FOR FROM HIM COMETH MY HOPE.
- Israel's Rock stands firm (cf. *v.* 3). 6 SIMPLY HE IS MY ROCK AND MY SALVATION,
MY FORTRESS—I SHALL NEVER BE MOVED.
7 On God (rests) my salvation and my glory;
The rock of my strength^a, my refuge, is God. ^a Jer. xvi. 19
- The nations pass away like a breath (cf. *v.* 4). 8 Trust in Him all ye Congregation of the People,
Pour out your heart before Him;
God is, for us, a Refuge,
9 SIMPLY^b a breath^b are the sons of men^c, ^b Ps. xxxix. 5 f.
The sons of men^d are but a lie: ^c lowly born, Ps. xlix. 2
Lighter altogether than a breath ^d nobly born, Ps. xlix. 2
They mount the scales.
- The moral for all. 10 Trust not ye in oppression
And be not befooled over robbery,
If wealth^e should grow ^e cf. Ps. xlix. 16
Set not your heart upon it.
11 This one thing hath God spoken,
These two things have I heard—
(a) For Israel. "That Strength is God's,
12 And Thine, O Lord^f, is Lovingkindness": ^f Adonai
(b) For the Nations. "That Thou repayest each man as his work^g." ^g cf. *Sept.* with Rom. ii. 6

v. 10. The Psalmist now turns to his own people; trust in "oppression" and "robbery" was almost a synonym for trust in Egypt, see Ezek. xxii. 29. The Hebrew scholar would do well to consider the text of Is. xxx. 12, where Isaiah is denouncing the fate of those who place their trust in Egypt; they *lean on oppression* and become like a falling wall (Is. xxx. 13). In the time of Jeremiah the same policy of trust in Egypt was advocated by the princes, the false prophets and the people. A Psalmist of the school of Jeremiah might well refer, at such a time, to the earlier prophecy respecting those who "*trusted in oppression*," especially as he had spoken in the first part of the Psalm of the fall of a *bulging wall* (*v.* 3).

"*And be not befooled over robbery.*" There is a play upon the word "*breath*" in *v.* 9, which cannot be reproduced in translation. Jeremiah (ii. 5) uses the same substantive and verb. "They went after *vanity* and *became vain*," *i.e.* they went after idols which are but "*a breath*" and they "*became*," themselves, "*breath-like*" (cf. Chap. x. 15; Rom. i. 21). So also Jeremiah cautions the people not to hearken to the false prophets "*for they make you vain*" or rather, "*they befool you*" (xxiii. 16).

The English words *vain*, *vanity*, fail to express the utter nothingness of a life built upon any other foundation than God.

“As froth on the face of the deep,
As foam on the crest of the sea,
As dreams at the waking of sleep,
As gourd of a day and a night,
As harvest that no man shall reap,
As vintage that never shall be,
Is hope if it cling not aright
O my God, unto thee.” [C. ROSSETTI.]

vv. 11, 12. It is generally assumed that “*these two things*” imply an antithesis between God’s “*Strength*” and His “*Lovingkindness*.” Thus Jerome, “*Quae sunt autem, quae duo pariter audit? Et posse Deum omnia, et in sui iudicii veritate misereri.*” However true this may be it is not the thought of the Psalmist. God’s “*strength*” is the strength He places at the disposal of His People (see *v.* 7 and cf. Pss. xxviii. 7 f.; xxix. 11; xlv. 1 (2): and generally throughout the Psalter), God’s “*Lovingkindness*” is also the Love that He shews to His People.

The real antithesis begins at *v.* 12^b. God gives His strength to those who trust in His strength, but repays in vanity those who trust in vanity. The present division into verses obscures this thought; but it is the leading thought throughout the Psalm. Jeremiah saw that this “*severity of God*” (*Rom.* xi. 22) toward the Gentiles would lead to their conversion (*Jer.* xvi. 19).

PSALM LXIII.

The introduction of Ps. lxi. might almost serve as introduction to the present Psalm.

The thought of the Psalmist may be expressed, by way of paraphrase, as follows:—
‘As the parched ground thirsts for the rain so my soul thirsts for God (*v.* 1).

‘I. *In hours of worship* I obtain some vision of Him: I see something of (*a*) His Strength, of (*b*) His Glory, and of (*c*) a Lovingkindness that is better than anything this life can shew (*vv.* 2, 3).

‘Seeing this I respond by praising Him, by blessing Him and by offering my whole being as a living sacrifice to Him (*vv.* 3^b, 4); and I obtain thereby an assurance that He will, at last, fully satisfy that hunger and thirst which He Himself created (*v.* 5 with *v.* 1).

‘But it is not only in Worship that I find God;—

‘II. *In daily life* I find Him too: (*a*₁) In the night-seasons of sorrow I find Him nigh (*v.* 6); (*b*₁) in the joy of unexpected deliverance I recognise Him as my Helper (*v.* 7); (but, (*c*₁) best of all—as I try hard to follow Him—I feel His hand grasping me and I know that I am His. Having this assurance I am persuaded that He will not only help me in the present trouble (*vv.* 9, 10), but that He will become, more and more, the all-sufficing Joy of my whole being (*v.* 11).’

PSALM LXIII.

Introduction, cf. v.
11.

*In Worship I have
seen*

(a) His Strength,
(b) His Glory,
(c) His Loving-
kindness.

Therefore I shall
see Him more and
more.

1 O God^a, Thou art my God^b, earnestly I seek Thee:
My soul thirsts^c for Thee, my flesh pines for Thee,
Like^d a land parched and weary without water.

2 As, in the Sanctuary, I have had vision of Thee,
Seeing^e Thy Strength and Thy Glory—

3 Because Thy Lovingkindness is better than life^f
My lips shall praise Thee—

4 So shall I bless Thee while life endures,
And lift up my hands in Thy Name;

5 As with marrow and fatness my soul shall be fully-fed;
And my mouth shall give praise with jubilant lips.

^a Elohim

^b Eli

^c Ps. xlii. 2

^d Syriac, cf.
Ps. cxliiii. 6

^e Ps. xxvii. 13

^f cf. Ps. xvii.
14 ff.

v. 1. "*Earnestly I seek Thee.*" The verb *shahar* implies a *diligent seeking* (Prov. vii. 15; xi. 27) and is often translated *seeking early* (Prov. i. 28; Hos. v. 15 &c.), and even *seeking in the morning* (Job vii. 21). This sense is given to the word because the substantive *shahar* signifies the *morning-dawn* (Ps. lvii. 8, note). Thus the Targum paraphrases "*I will arise at dawn before Thee,*" and, much in the same way, the Septuagint translate *πρὸς σὲ ὀρθρίσω*. Though this was not the original meaning of the Psalmist it caused the Psalm to be appointed as a *Morning Psalm* in the Christian Church even from the early times of the *Apostolic Constitutions*. Many will regard such a traditional usage as itself of the nature of inspiration, and certainly no Psalm could be better adapted for Morning use, whether for Public Worship, or for private devotion. (Compare Introd. to Ps. iii.)

"*My soul thirsts.*" See Ps. xlii. 2, notes, p. 174.

"*My flesh pines.*" The body has its work as well as the soul in the quest for God.

"Let us cry 'All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!'"

"*Like a land.*" The prefixes *כ* and *כִּי*, which signify "*in*" and "*like*" respectively, are so similar that they are frequently confused. The text here reads the former, but the context requires the latter. (See marginal reference.)

v. 2. "*As*" in v. 2 answers to "*So*" in v. 4. "*As...I have...*" "*So I shall...*"

What he *had* been able to see of God became a promise of growing insight.

"All partial beauty was a pledge
Of beauty in its plenitude."

The vision of God that the Psalmist obtained "*in the Sanctuary*" was not carnal but spiritual, and may be illustrated from the vision of Isaiah (Ch. vi.) when "he saw His Glory and spake of Him" (St John xii. 41). In Public Worship God is specially to be found; thus Milton (quoted by Kay) speaks of

"...service high and anthem clear,
As may with sweetness through mine ear
Dissolve me into extasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes."

The Psalmist feels that every such vision of God in the Sanctuary is the pledge of the Beatific Vision (see v. 5).

- In daily life I have found Him*
 (a₁) in the darkness,
 (b₁) in the light of joy.
 (c₁) in the guidance of life.
- Therefore I shall find His help, more and more.
- 6 Of a truth I have remembered Thee on my bed,
 In the night-watches I meditate on Thee.
 7 Because Thou hast^a become a Help for me,
 And under the shadow of Thy wings^b I hymn for joy:
 8 My soul cleaveth close after Thee,
 While Thy right hand upholds me,
 9 Whereas they^c, that seek my soul for destruction,
 Shall enter the depths^d of the earth.
 10 They shall be poured out to the power of the sword,
 They shall become the portion of jackals.
- ^a Ps. lxi. 3
^b Ps. lxi. 4
^c Emphatic
^d cf. Ps. lv. 24

v. 4. "*And lift up my hands.*" The words imply the uplifting of the palms of the hands to make an offering to God and receive, as it were, God's answering gift. There are only two other passages in the Psalter in which this exact expression occurs, viz. Ps. cxix. 47 (48), where the context implies a joyous acceptance of God's commandments, and Ps. cxli. 2, where the "*uplifted hands*" are compared to "*an evening sacrifice.*" The phrase also occurs in Lam. ii. 19; iii. 41, where it signifies the sacrifice of the human will to the will of God. Our Psalmist does not imply merely that he worships God, for then a different word would have been used, as in Pss. xxviii. 2; cxxxiv. 2, but that, having seen something of God's Strength, Glory and Lovingkindness, he reaches forward to, and joyfully accepts, every fresh Revelation of that Name.

v. 5. "*Marrow.*" The word is constantly used of the *fat* as the *best part* of a sacrifice. This fat was burnt upon the Altar (1 Sam. ii. 15 f.). It was God's portion (Lev. iii. 16 f.) which man must not eat.

"*Fatness*" i.e. *rich-provision*. This word is used by Jeremiah (xxxi. 14) when speaking of the joy of the coming Redemption; "And I will satiate (i.e. feed to the full) the souls of the priests with fatness." So too, with probable reference to Jeremiah, a Psalmist writes, "They are full-fed (satiated) from the fatness (rich-provision) of Thy House" (Ps. xxxvi. 8, see notes).

The Priests in the Temple were partakers of the sacrifices, guests at the Table of their God; but when our Psalmist says "*As with marrow and fatness my soul shall be fully-fed*" he seems to imply a still closer participation, to which even the priests of the Old Testament had no right. The Christian will interpret this (Hebrews xiii. 10) of Christ as the Bread of Life, for time and for eternity.

"O quam dulcis sapor iste!
 Qui te gustat, Jesu Christe,
 Tuo victus a dulcore
 Mori posset prae amore,
 Te amans unice,
 Jesu Christe." [ST BERNARD.]

"*My soul shall be fully-fed.*" See note on Ps. xxxvii. 8, p. 150. The word "*satisfy*" is far too weak. Language indeed cannot express the thought because earth does not contain the thing (Eccles. i. 8). But the food that God gives, while abundantly satisfying desire, creates a new hunger only to meet it with a still more abundant satisfaction. (Cf. St John iv. 14.)

"Replet sine fastidio
 Dans famem desiderio."

v. 8. The same double thought, of man's feeble grasp on God and God's sure grasp on him, is expressed by St Paul, "I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 12).

v. 10. "*They shall be poured out to the power of the sword.*" Literally, "*They shall pour him (i.e. each one of them) out upon the hands (i.e. power) of the sword.*" This strange pregnant idiom is found only in two other passages. The first is Jer. xviii. 21 "*And pour them out to the power*

Conclusion, cf. *v.* 1. 11 And the King shall rejoice in God;
 Everyone that sweareth by Him^a shall find joy,
 While the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

^a Ps. lxiv. 10,
 2 Chron. xv.
 14 f.

of the sword." This passage of Jeremiah is specially interesting from the fact that it has many parallels with Ps. xxxv. (See Introduction to that Psalm, p. 142.) The other passage is Ezek. xxxv. 5, where the denunciation is against Edom, "Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast poured out the Children of Israel to the power of the sword in the time of their calamity..."

If we study these two passages we shall understand the meaning of the Psalmist. Jeremiah's indignation against his "evil neighbours" who sought his life was transferred to God's "evil neighbours" (the surrounding nations, Edom, Ammon &c.) who sought with treachery the life of Israel (see note on Ps. lix. 6), so that it is, at times, impossible to tell whether the prophet is thinking of his own wrongs or of those of his Nation.

PSALM LXIV.

It will be evident, from the marginal references, that Psalm lxiv. must belong to that group of Psalms which we have termed Psalms of the Persecution (Introduction to Ps. lii., p. 227), and in which the influence of Jeremiah is plainly seen. If we consider the Psalm by itself, it contains no indication of date. The seeming prosperity of the godless (*vv.* 3-6), followed by the sudden recoil of violence upon their own heads (*vv.* 7-9), has ever been a fruitful theme for prophet and poet (cf. Ps. vii. 14-16). But if we connect the Psalm with the group in which we have traced the hostility of the surrounding petty Nations (Pss. lviii., lix., lx. &c.), then the special type of hostility suggested by our Psalm is essentially that of Edom. Edom, like his forefather Esau, is "profane" (Heb. xii. 16). Strong in his mountain fastnesses (Obad. 3 f.), strong in his world-wide reputation for wisdom (Jer. xlix. 7; Obad. 8), he feels no need of God.

"It is the race which has given to history only the Herods—clever, scheming, ruthless statesmen, as able as they were false and bitter, as shrewd in policy as they were destitute of ideals" (Dr G. A. Smith, on Obad. 1-21).

The prophecy of Jeremiah (Ch. xlix. 7-22) against Edom, together with the parallel prophecy in Obadiah, should be carefully studied in connexion with this Psalm. The Psalm may, of course, be much later; but the invasion of Judah by the surrounding Nations, at the instigation of Nebuchadnezzar, would at least offer an historical connexion which, if not true to date, would be true to thought.

PSALM LXIV.

- 1 Hear my voice, O God, in my plaint^a;
Guard my life from the terror^b of the foe.
- 2 Hide me from the secret fellowship^c of sinners,
From the public throng of the workers of vanity^d
- 3 Who have whet their tongue like a sword^e,
Have aimed^f their arrow—a poisoned word!
- 4 To shoot^g, in hiding, at the Perfect^h,
Suddenly they shoot him, and fearⁱ nothing.
- 5 They harden themselves in wrong,
They count on laying snares,
Their thought^j is, 'Who can see them?'
- 6 They devise wickedness^k—
They perfect a well-devised device!
Surely man's inmost being and heart^l is deep!

Their violence and perfidy succeed against us; as though there were no God in the world (but see *vv.* 7—9).

- ^a Ps. lv. 2
^b i.e. *the terrible foe*
^c Ps. lv. 14
^d Pss. liii. 4, lix. 2
^e cf. Ps. lv. 21, lvii. 4, lix. 7
^f Ps. lviii. 7
^g Ps. xi. 2
^h Ps. xxxvii. 37
ⁱ Ps. lv. 19
^j cf. Ps. x. 4, 11
^k *pl.* as in Ps. lviii. 2
^l Jer. xvii. 9

v. 2. "*Hide me...*" Four times in the Psalter this word is used for the *refuge* that man must find in God:—(a) Ps. xvii. 8 "*Hide me under the covert of Thy wings*"; (b) Ps. xxvii. 5 "*He would hide* (i.e. cover) *me in the covert of His tent*"; (c) Ps. xxxi. 20 (21) "*Thou hidest* (coverest) *them in the covert of Thy Presence from the conspiracies of mighty-men*"; and, lastly, in the present passage, (d) "*Hide me from the secret fellowship of sinners &c.*" The cognate substantive, *hiding-place* or *covert*, is used, of God, in Pss. xxxii. 7; lxi. 4 (5); xci. 1; cxix. 114. In all these passages the thought is the same: the Psalmist knows that the only hiding-place from the unrest of earth is the bosom of God (cf. Col. iii. 3).

"*Secret fellowship...public throng.*" The two words are found together in Ps. lv. 14 (15) where we have translated them "*sweet fellowship*," "*festal throng.*" The first word *sod* is, in the E.V., sometimes translated "*secret*" (Prov. iii. 32; xi. 13; Gen. xlix. 6, &c.), but more often "*assembly*" or even "*counsel*" (Jer. xxiii. 18). It properly signifies the *divan* or small gathering of intimate friends for *counsel* (Job xix. 19 marg. &c.). Thus "*the secret of YHVH*" is properly "*the intimate fellowship of YHVH*" (Ps. xxv. 14, cf. Job xxix. 4). The second word is only found, as a substantive, in this passage and in Ps. lv. 14 (15), while, as a verb, it only occurs in Ps. ii. 1, and in Dan. vi. 6 (7), 11 (12), 15 (16), where it signifies the *tumultuous gathering* of men together.

v. 3. "*A poisoned word.*" Each arrow is a *bitter* (or rather *poisoned*) *word*. The Hebrew word, which signifies *bitter*, is used for *poison* in the later form of the language; the context here requires this sense and the Targum so translates it.

"*Have aimed their arrow.*" The usual term for *bending* (lit. *treading*) the bow is here strangely applied to the *arrow* as in Ps. lviii. 7 (8). So Jeremiah (using the verb in another voice) speaks of those who "*have bent their tongue (as) their bow for falsehood, &c.*" We see the wicked *bending* their bow in Pss. xi. 2; xxxvii. 14 and there, as here, the mischief recoils upon themselves. In Ps. vii. 12 it is probably God who *bends* the bow.

v. 6. "*They perfect &c.*" The verb may either be explained as the *first person* or the *third person plural*. If we accept the former we should, somewhat harshly, introduce the wicked as boasting, "*We have perfected a well-devised device.*" The other rendering is, however, more probable.

"*Surely man's inmost being and heart is deep.*" It is "*deep*," i.e. difficult to fathom (Eccles. vii. 24; Prov. xviii. 4; xx. 5) because, as Jeremiah says (xvii. 9) "*The heart is twisted (acob whence Jacob) above all things and desperately sick; who can know it?*" True, the human heart, which has

Suddenly their violence recoils upon themselves. They become to the world an object-lesson of God's justice (cf. *vv.* 3—6).

- 7 Then God, with an arrow, has shot them,
 Suddenly their own wounds are come!
 8 And they are made to stumble—their own tongues (turned)
 against them,
 All that see them wag the head^a.
 9 So all men shall fear^b and tell it as God's work
 And shall thoughtfully consider His doing.
 10 The Righteous shall rejoice^c in YHVH
 And trust in Him,
 And all the Upright in heart shall exult^d.

^a Jer. xlviii. 27

^b Ps. lii. 6

^c Pss. lviii. 10,
 lxiii. 11

^d Ps. lxiii. 11

so much of the *Jacob* in it, has also a capacity for *Israel*, but, in our Psalm, the thought is of those who trust in their own wisdom and feel no need for God. Not the Jacobs but the Esaus.

The word which we translate "*inmost-being*" may be illustrated from its use in the following Psalms which have much in common:—

Ps. v. 9 "Their *inner-being* is a yawning-abys."

Ps. xxxvi. 1 "Transgression is pleasant to the wicked in his *inmost-heart*."

Ps. lv. 15 "For wickedness is...in their *very hearts*."

Ps. lxii. 4 "While they curse with their *inmost-heart*."

vv. 7—9. The past tenses (in *vv.* 7, 8) vividly picture the retribution as though it were already come.

The reference to *vv.* 3—6 may be expressed thus:—

They shot Israel with the arrow of poisoned speech (*v.* 3).

God has shot them with His arrow of conviction (*v.* 7).

They shot *suddenly* and *in secret* (*v.* 4).

God has shot *suddenly* and *openly* (*v.* 7).

They made their tongue like a sharp sword (*v.* 3), and now (*v.* 8^a) that sharp sword is the cause of their own fall! They acted as though there were no retribution, and no God in the world (cf. Ps. x. 3—6; 11—13), but the retribution that has fallen on them has become to the whole world an object-lesson of the ways of God with man (*vv.* 8^b, 9).

v. 8. "*All that see them wag the head*." The surrounding Nations (Moab, Ammon, &c.) had ever shewn a bitter hostility to Israel. Thus, in denouncing the fate of Moab, Jeremiah says, "*For was not Israel a derision unto thee?...for as often as thou speakest of him thou waggst the head*" (xlvi. 27). The tables are now turned. The reader will note that this reference is taken from that prophecy of Jeremiah against the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites and Edomites, to which we have referred in our study of Ps. lviii., pp. 246—249; compare also on Ps. lix. 6, note, p. 251 f. and on Ps. lx., p. 255 f. Indeed, the prophecy of Jeremiah against the surrounding Nations, together with the contemporary prophecy of Zephaniah (Chap. II., III.), affords the best comment on the historical significance of this group of Psalms. If these Psalms were not actually written in the age of Jeremiah they must have been composed at a time when similar historical conditions once more brought to mind his words.

v. 9. "*And shall thoughtfully consider...*" The verb implies that they will *be wise* with that form of wisdom which comes from intelligent perception (cf. Ps. ii. 10; xxxvi. 3 (4); cvi. 7; Is. xli. 20; xlv. 18).

PSALM LXV.

It is impossible to mistake the three main divisions of this Psalm. In Part I. (*vv.* 1—4) God is addressed as the Covenant God of Israel; in Part II. (*vv.* 5—8) He is seen as the God whose power is manifested in history in the redemption of His People; while in Part III. (*vv.* 9—13) He appears as the bountiful Giver of the rain and fruitful seasons.

Thus, without anticipating the doctrine of the Trinity, we might say that in Part I. we have God as *YHVH* (the Sanctifier); in Part II. as *Elohim* (the Redeemer); in Part III. as *Shaddai*¹ (the Creator or Giver of Life).

It will now be necessary to consider each of these three Parts at greater length.

Part I. (*vv.* 1—4). Here we find three leading thoughts which are indeed closely connected. *First*, we see all Israel, and therefore at last "*all flesh*," coming unto God (*v.* 2). *Secondly*, God Himself atones for Israel's sin (*v.* 3). *Thirdly*, Israel, forgiven and restored, is seen rejoicing before God as a "Nation of Priests" (*v.* 4).

Now these three thoughts are exactly the thoughts which were associated with the Seventh Month. The Seventh Month was, *first*, the month of the "General Assembly" of Israel (*v.* 2, note); *secondly*, it contained the great Day of Atonement (*v.* 3, note); *thirdly*, the Nation, when forgiven, rejoiced before God in the Feast of Tabernacles (*v.* 4, note).

Since the leading thoughts of the Seventh Month exactly account for, and best explain, the first Part of our Psalm, there is, at least, a strong presumption that the Psalm was written for that season. To this we shall return when we consider Part III.

Part II. (*vv.* 5—8). The leading thought in these verses will best be understood by reading verses 5 and 8 consecutively, and regarding *vv.* 6, 7 as a parenthesis. God has wrought a great deliverance for His People in redeeming them from Babylon (*v.* 5). The fame of this is spreading the knowledge of Israel's God to the Persians in the East, and to the Greeks in the far-off "isles" of the Western Sea. The thought of God's world-wide sway leads the poet to honour Him as the Creator and Ruler of Earth (*vv.* 6, 7), but, in so doing, he never loses sight of his main purpose; the God who "*stilleth oceans' din*" has just shewn His power by stilling the proud tumult of the Nations (*v.* 7). Thus *v.* 8 completes the thought of *v.* 5:—all that inhabit God's earth must, at last, be led to Him (cf. *v.* 2), and as He makes the portals of sunrise and sunset to sing with the joy of light, so will He, Himself the Light, make all that dwell in distant East and West "*to ring with joy*." Thus Part II. like Part I. reminds us of the universalism of the Second Isaiah.

¹ The Divine Name *Shaddai* is unfortunately translated *Almighty* in the E. V. The Name denotes the earliest Revelation of God as the *Giver of temporal blessings* (Exod. vi. 3). It is always used in this sense in the Book of Genesis (Gen. xvii. 1; xxviii. 3; xxxv. 11; xliii. 14; xlviii. 3; xlix. 25).

Part III. (vv. 9—13). In these verses God's goodness is pictured through the rolling seasons of the whole year, all being traced to His gift of Rain (*vv. 9, 10*).

In Palestine the fruitfulness of the earth depended upon the "early rain" in Autumn; consequently the rain was regarded as the type, sign, and pledge of all God's best gifts (Deut. xxviii. 12). In somewhat later times the Water-drawing Festival of the Seventh Month became a promise of the Giver of Life, as in Nature so in Grace (see Introd. to Psalm xxix. p. 120f., and compare the Prayers in the Jewish Prayer Book for *Hoshannah Rabba*). This being so, we are not merely justified but compelled to interpret Part III. like Part I. with reference to the ever-growing thoughts which gathered round the Festivals of the Seventh Month. In other words the reference which the Christian finds to the Holy Spirit is not an artificial adaptation but the necessary outcome of historical exegesis.

PSALM LXV.

The General Assembly of Israel implies the unity, the forgiveness, the universal priesthood, of man.

1 To Thee belongeth^a Praise, O God, in Zion
And to Thee shall the Vow be paid.

^a or *silence is*

2 O Thou Hearer of Prayer,
Unto Thee shall all flesh come.

3 Manifold iniquities are, for us^b, too strong:
Our transgressions Thou Thyself wilt atone.

^b *Sept.*

4 O the happiness of (Israel whom) Thou choolest^c and^e drawest near,

^c cf. Ps. xxxiii.
^e 12

That he may dwell in Thy Courts!

We would fain be satisfied^d with the plenty^e of Thy^d House,

^d *fully fed*
^e *goodness*

The holiness^f of Thy Palace-temple^f.

^f *holy food*
^g Ps. xxix. 9

v. 1. "To Thee belongeth Praise." If we accept the punctuation of the Hebrew text we should translate "To Thee *silence is Praise*." This beautiful thought recalls the "omnis voluntas loquitur" in the opening Collect of our Communion Service, and may be defended from Ps. lxii. 1, 5, where the whole duty of man is summed up as an attitude of *silent waiting* upon God. The title of God (v. 2) as the "Hearer of Prayer" would fitly harmonize with this interpretation, since "prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed." Compare also Ps. xxxvii. 7.

Grünwald quotes the first Strophe of the Latin Hymn *Lauda Zion*, which is perhaps a paraphrase of this verse of our Psalm:

"Quantum potes, tantum aude
quia major omni laude
nec laudare sufficis."

The other interpretation, "To Thee *belongeth Praise*," though it gives a far less beautiful thought, has the authority of the Septuagint and of other early versions; while the parallelism of the verse suggests a *verb* (or *participle*) rather than a *substantive*. But here again there is a difficulty, for,

though probable, it is by no means certain that the verb has the meaning which the old versions would assign to it.

v. 2. "*Unto Thee shall all flesh come.*" The "General Assembly" of Israel in the Seventh Month tended not only to enforce the thought of the Church's unity but also of its world-wide mission to embrace all created things (Eph. iv. 13; Rom. viii. 19 ff.). Thus a Jewish prayer for New Year's Day runs as follows:—"And therefore extend Thy fear, O YHVH, our God, over all Thy works, and Thy dread over all things that Thou hast created; that all things that are made may fear Thee; that all creatures may bow before Thee, and may all of them become one band to perform Thy will with a perfect heart."

Though this thought expressed Israel's mission from the very first, it was not realized until Israel had been brought into contact with the religion of Persia.

"*All flesh*" properly denotes all living creatures upon earth (Gen. vi. 12, 13, 17, 19; vii. 15 f. &c.). Sometimes it is restricted to mankind (Deut. v. 26 (23); Is. lxvi. 23; Jer. xxxii. 27 &c.). It is possible that, in the thought of Joel, the promise, "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh" (ii. 28 (iii. 1)), was even restricted to *Israel*: it is probable that St Peter also quoted the words (Acts ii. 17) with this mental reservation;—but he was afterwards led to see that God's promises mean more, and not less, than they seem to say.

We are then justified in interpreting this verse by similar hints in the New Testament (Eph. i. 10; 1 Cor. xv. 28; Rom. viii. 18 ff.) and in trusting that God's interpretation will go beyond our widest hope. (See Bp Westcott's *Christus Consummator, The Incarnation and Nature.*) It would be an interesting study to consider how far such thoughts were developed by the yearly "*gathering together*" of Israel at the season of the "*ingathering*" of the fruits of the year. (See Heb. אָדָנָה, Gk. ἀνάγειν, ἐπισυνάγειν.)

v. 3. The verb which we translate "*are too strong*" (E.V. "*prevail against*") is used four times of the waters of the Flood (Gen. vii. 18—24).

But though iniquity abounds grace does yet more abound. "*Our transgressions Thou Thyself wilt atone.*" The weakness of man claims the very strength of God (cf. Ps. li.). "*Thou.*" The pronoun is emphatic. God Himself must *atone*, for it passes the strength of man (cf. 1 John ii. 2).

Is there any allusion in this verse to the Day of Atonement? I think there is. It is true that the developed ritual of the Day of Atonement dates from the Priest Code; but the idea was earlier. Indeed, Ezekiel provides for two days of Atonement, one at the Vernal Equinox, to prepare for Passover, the other after the Autumnal Equinox, to prepare for Tabernacles (Ezek. xlv.). Thus the connexion of a Day of Atonement with the sanctification of Israel in the Seventh Month was certainly earlier than the Persian period to which we assign the present Psalm.

v. 4. "*O the happiness &c.*" The context clearly shows that the ellipsis must be supplied by "*Israel,*" or "*the People,*" who are here thought of as the Priestly Nation, "*chosen*" by God (see Deut. vii. 6, with Driver's note), "*near*" unto Him (cf. Ps. cxlviii. 14).

"*That he may dwell in Thy Courts.*"—Not merely enter into God's Courts as a worshipper (Pss. xcvi. 8; c. 4 &c.) but *dwell* there as in a home (cf. Pss. xxiii. 6; xxxvi. 7 f.; xcii. 13 &c.).

The same word which denotes "*Courts*" also denotes the "*villages*" which cluster round a city. This may have tended to keep in mind the thought of God's "*House*" as the ideal home of His People. The real origin of the Feast of Tabernacles is not easy to trace: probably the custom of dwelling in "*booths*" or "*tabernacles*" was a witness to the fact that Israel was God's guest dependent wholly on His gifts (Neh. viii. 13—18 and, for a somewhat later thought, Lev. xxiii. 40—43). The final meaning is seen in Rev. vii. 9 f.

v. 5. "*With terrible (deeds).*" The word is often used for the wonders that God wrought for the deliverance of His People at the Red Sea (Ps. cvi. 22), and in the Wilderness (Deut. x. 21; 2 Sam. vii. 23); indeed, the wonders of the future are ever pictured in the colours of that past deliverance; the "*Song of the Lamb*" re-echoes the "*Song of Moses*" (Pss. xlv. 4 (5); lxvi. 3—6; Rev. xv. 3).

"*In righteousness.*" The word is here used, as in the Second Isaiah, in the sense, almost, of *victory*; the *righteousness* of God being the *justification* of all His dealings with Israel in the presence of the world.

As in the Second Isaiah, so here, the deeds that God has wrought for Israel are a witness and a call to all the earth. There is no better comment on the whole verse than Rev. xv. 3 f. "And

God, by His new deliverance of Israel, is claiming as His own and calling to Himself the whole earth (cf. Jer. x. 1-16; Rev. xv. 1-4).

5 With terrible (deeds) in righteousness Thou answerest us,
O God of our salvation;
Thou Hope of all the bounds of earth,
And of the far-off isles—

6 That planteth the mountains by Thy^a power,
That art girded with strength,

7 That stilleth oceans' din,
The din of their waves, and the turmoil of the peoples—

8 So they that inhabit the bounds (of the earth) fear^b at Thy tokens^c,
While Thou makest the gates of morn and eve to ring^d with joy^d.

^a Sept.

^b Is. xli. 5
Jer. x. 10

^c Jer. x. 2

^d Deut. xxxii. 43

they sing the Song of Moses the servant of God, and the Song of the Lamb, saying, Great and terrible are Thy works, O Lord, God, Almighty: righteous and true are Thy ways, O King of the ages. Who can but fear and glorify Thy Name?.....for all the Nations shall come and worship before Thee (cf. v. 2 of Psalm), for Thy righteous acts have been made manifest."

"*Thou Hope...*" In Part I. God was seen to be the final Goal of "*all flesh*" because He was the Goal of Israel, so here, in Part II., He is seen to become the Hope (i.e. *ground of confidence*) of the Gentiles because He has shewn Himself, before the whole world, to be the "Hope" of Israel (Ps. xl. 4 note; lxvi. 5 ff). Israel had, by much affliction, been weaned from making Egypt or Assyria its "*Hope*" (Jer. ii. 37; Ezek. xxix. 16), so too the Gentiles must be weaned; "*and Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Beth-el their Hope*" (Jer. xlvi. 13).

v. 9. "*Thou hast visited the earth.*" Even heathen poets have been forced to hear, in the rolling seasons, the footsteps of the Coming God.

"Te fugiunt venti, te nubila coeli,
Adventumque tuum: tibi suaves daedala tellus
Submittit flores; tibi rident aequora ponti,
Placatumque nitet diffuso lumine coelum."

[Lucret. i. 6, quoted by Neale.]

"*The water-full stream of God.*" Lit. "*The stream (peleg) of God (that is) full of water.*" The word *peleg* (from a root which signifies *to divide*) properly denotes the artificial *watercourse*, for irrigation, which would be common both in Egypt and in Babylonia. It is used in Ps. i. 3 of the "*watercourses*" that feed the roots of the good tree, and in Ps. xlvi. 4 of the "*streams*" that make glad the City of God. In the present Psalm the poet applies the word to that rain-stream of God which is never dry, and which, being the cause of all fertility in Nature, is a type of the Holy Spirit as "the Giver of Life."

"*Thou preparest their corn...*" This line is by no means clear. Probably we ought, with Symmachus, to read, "*Thou preparest her corn.*" The general sense seems to be that it is only by the slow gentle action of rain that God prepares the earth and so, in due time, prepares the corn. The eye of faith sees the harvest in the cheerless winter rain (cf. Ps. cxxvi. 6). Such a thought would have been seasonable in the Seventh Month when the winter rains were beginning.

v. 10. "*Rain-drops.*" The beautiful word *r'vveveem*, "*showers*" (Deut. xxxii. 2; Ps. lxxii. 6; Jer. iii. 3; xiv. 22; Mic. v. 7 (6)) pictures by its very sound the myriad *rain-drops* of the Spring when, as Chaucer says:

"I stood to hear—I love it well,
The rain's continuous sound,

God, in His typical
gift of rain, manifests
Himself as the Giver
of Life and Joy.

- 9 Thou hast visited the earth and saturated her,
Abundantly enriching her (with) the water-full stream of ^a Ps. xlvi. 4
God :
- Thou providest their corn when Thou hast thus provided her,
10 Watering her furrows, levelling her ridges,
Thou mellowest her with rain-drops,
Thou blessest her outspring.
- 11 Thou hast crowned the year of Thy goodness,
And Thy tracks drop with plenty^b. ^b fatness
- 12 They drop (upon) the pastures of the wilderness,
And the hills are girdled with joy.
- 13 The meadows are clad with sheep,
And the valleys are draped with corn ;
They triumph^c, yea, they sing. ^c Ps. cviii. 9
(10) cf. Is.
lv. 12

Small drops, but thick and fast they fell,
Down straight into the ground.
For leafy thickness is not yet
Earth's naked breast to screen,
Though every dripping branch is set
With shoots of tender green."

v. 11. "*Thou hast crowned...*" The poet's thought has traced God's goodness through the year ; he sees it to have been, from beginning to end, "*a year (a cycle) of goodness*"; upon this cycle God, in Autumn, has *set a crown*. This crown is the joy of harvest, which is pictured in the verses which follow.

"*And Thy tracks.*" Properly the tracks made by wheels, e.g. of a cart. The heavy-laden wagon of God's "*Harvest home*" drops its full sheaves as it goes and scatters blessings on the very wilderness. Even the dullest mind can scarcely fail to recognise that Autumn is a parable.

"O Thou, whose silent bounty flows
To bless the sower's art,
With gifts that ever claim from us
The harvests of the heart—
If thus Thy goodness crown the year,
What shall the glory be,
When all Thy harvest, whitening here,
Is gather'd home to Thee!"

PSALM LXVI.

Here again, as in the preceding Psalm, we find an appeal to the Gentiles to recognise God through the acts of mercy which He has recently shewn to Israel. Indeed, we might almost say that Psalm lxvi. was a development of Psalm lxv. 5—8. Both Psalms are full of the thoughts of the Seventh Month; but, whereas Ps. lxv. is chiefly concerned with the Kingship of God in Nature, Ps. lxvi. regards His Kingship as manifested in History through His dealings with His Chosen People.

Our Psalm rings with joy and good-will to men. The fiery trial of the Captivity is over and has yielded a fruit for which Israel can be thankful (*vv.* 10—12). When all was darkest, Israel had never ceased to thank God (*v.* 17 note); but now, God has, as it were, raised him from the dead. The Psalm is actually called in the Septuagint "*a Psalm of the Resurrection.*" The thank-offering of Israel for all those mercies is the Call of the Gentiles. The Psalm should be studied with the Korah Psalm (xlvii. see p. 200 ff.) and with the group of Psalms (xcv—xcix.) in which the Kingship of God, as manifested in Nature and in History, is the leading thought.

PSALM LXVI.

Israel calls the Nations, and all created things, to recognise God as King.

- 1 Shout ye unto God, all the whole earth ;
 2 Hymn ye the glory of His Name ;
 Ascribe ye 'Glory' as His praise.
 3 Say ye unto God, "How terrible* are Thy works !
 Through Thy great might Thy foes yield submission^b to^b Thee.
 4 All (through) the earth (they) shall worship Thee ;
 They shall hymn to Thee ;
 They shall hymn Thy Name."

* Ps. lxxv. 5
^b Pss. xviii. 44.
 lxxxi. 15 ;
 Deut. xxxiii.
 29

vv. 1, 2. "*Shout ye unto God.*" The verb does not merely imply the shout of joy but more especially the shout that welcomes the advent of a King. (See Ps. xlvii. *vv.* 1 and 5 notes.) In the last verse of the preceding Psalm all Nature has raised this shout at the footsteps of its God.

Verses 1 and 2 correspond exactly with *v.* 4.

In both "*the whole earth,*" construed with the plural verb, expresses the unity and solidarity of that homage which earth must offer through man.

The connexion between these verses may be expressed thus :—

v. 1. *Shout ye to God, all the whole earth ;*
v. 2^a. *Hymn ye the glory of His Name ;*
v. 2^b. *Ascribe ye 'Glory' as His praise.*

v. 4^a. *All (through) the earth (they) shall worship Thee ;*
v. 4^b. *They shall hymn to Thee ;*
v. 4^c. *They shall hymn Thy Name.*

Israel's history, in its wonders of past and present redemption, is a testimony to the world (cf. Ps. lxxv. 5 ff.).

- 5 Come^a and see the doings^a of God;
 Terrible^b in His deeds toward the sons of men!
 6 He turneth the sea into dry land,
 They pass through the river^c on foot—
 There we may rejoice in Him.
 7 He ruleth, with His power, for ever^d;
 His eyes keep watch over the nations^e:
 Let not the rebels^f vaunt themselves.

^a Ps. xlvi. 8

^b v. 3

^c flood

^d Ps. xxix. 10,
 Jer. x. 10

^e Jer. x. 10

^f Ps. lxxviii. 6

In each case the *imperative* is answered by a *future*. The duty of homage becomes the joy of worship.

The verb "to hymn" or "to strike the harp" will be best explained from Ps. xlvii. 6 (7), 7 (8) where also it is used in connexion with the "shout" that welcomes God as King.

"Ascribe ye 'Glory' as His praise." The fourfold "Glory" in Ps. xxix. (vv. 1, 2, 3, 9 note, p. 125) is the homage of all created things, "Throughout His Palace-temple it all proclaimeth 'GLORY'."

The relation between God's *Glory* (v. 2^b) and His *Name* (v. 4^c) is suggestive (cf. St John i. 14).

vv. 1—4. The Midrash on these words points out that the true Service of God, which the Nations of the world are called to pay, is not Sacrifice but the reasonable Service of heart-felt Prayer and Praise. Thus:—

'This it is which the Scripture saith, "For then I will turn unto the Nations a pure language so that they all of them call upon the Name of YHVH and serve Him with one consent" (Zeph. iii. 9). What means (this) *servicing Him*? It means *Prayer*: for thus Moses saith, "And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love YHVH your God, and to *serve* Him with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut. xi. 13). And what is the "*Service*" which man pays...? It is *Prayer*; as it is written, "*Serve* YHVH with joy &c." (Ps. c. 2). And it also says, "O come, let us sing unto YHVH &c." (Ps. xc. 1). And so Darius says to Daniel, "Thy God whom thou *servest* continually" (Dan. vi. 16); and what was that "*Service*"? It was *Prayer*: as it is said, "He kneeled upon his knees three times a day, &c." (Dan. vi. 10).'

v. 3. "*How terrible &c.*" The thought is exactly that of Ps. lxxv. 5 (see note, p. 270). The Kingship of God was necessarily revealed first in His works of power; but these, being wrought for Israel, were also a revelation of His Truth. The Midrash has well expressed the meaning of this Psalm. Thus:—

"*How terrible are thy Works.*" Just as they said of Him at the (Red) Sea, "Who is like Thee, YHVH, among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness? *Terrible* in Praise-songs" (Exod. xv. 11). So now I say, "*How terrible are Thy works.*" Thus, too, Isaiah says; "And it shall come to pass, from moon to moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, that all flesh shall come to worship before me, saith YHVH" (Is. lxvi. 23); and "All the Nations which Thou hast made shall come and worship" (Ps. lxxxvi. 9, see context). And not only "all the Nations" but "*All (through) the earth (they) shall worship Thee*" (i.e. every created thing). Why? Because there is no (real) dominion for flesh and blood (i.e. the true King must be Divine). Thus the sons of Korah say, "All ye Peoples clap your hands." Why? Because "YHVH, the Most High, is held in reverence, As a Great King over all the earth" (Ps. xlvii. 1 f., see context). In that hour "YHVH becomes King over all the earth; in that day YHVH becomes One and His Name One" (Zech. xiv. 9).'

v. 17. "*I cried.....While high praise was under my tongue.*" The "*cry*" was out of the sharp distress of the Captivity: but, even then, the "*high praise*," which recognised a loving purpose, was ready to break forth in song.

The Psalm of Jonah, if rightly interpreted, represents this "*high praise*" out of the depths of the Captivity: but the best illustration is the *cry* "Father save me from this hour" followed by the *high praise* "but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name" (St John xii. 27 f.).

For Israel, as for Christ, the sorrow was necessary for the Call of the Gentiles.

Israel's resurrection from the Captivity is a Jonah-sign to the Gentiles (cf. *vv.* 16-20).

8 Bless our God, O ye peoples,
 And make the voice of His praise to be heard ;
 9 Who preserveth our soul for life,
 And hath not suffered our feet to stumble.
 10 Of a truth Thou didst prove us, O God !
 Thou didst try us as silver^a is tried ;
 11 Thou broughtest us into the snare^b,
 Thou didst lay heavy-burden upon our loins,
 12 Thou didst cause men^c to ride over our heads^d.
 We are come through fire^e and through water^e,
 And Thou hast brought us out to a haven of comfort^f !

^a Is. xlviii. 10,
 1 Pet. i. 7
^b Ezek. xii. 13,
 xvii. 20
^c mortal man
^d cf. Is. li. 23
^e Is. xliii. 2
^f cf. Pss. xviii.
 19, xxxi. 8

Israel's thank-offering (contrast Ps. xl. 6 f.). The speaker, who has hitherto used the plural, now uses the singular.

13 I will come into Thy House with burnt-offerings,
 I will pay unto Thee my vows,
 14 Such as my lips had uttered,
 And my mouth had spoken in my distress.
 15 Burnt-offerings of fatlings will I offer to Thee,
 With incense of rams ;
 I will sacrifice bullocks and goats.

Israel's resurrection from the Captivity is a Jonah-sign to believers (cf. *vv.* 8-12).

16 Come and hear, all ye that fear God,
 And let me tell what He did for my soul.
 17 I cried unto Him with my mouth
 While high praise was under my tongue.
 18 If, in my heart, I were to regard wickedness
 The Lord^g would not hear me^h.
 19 But truly God did hear,
 He listened to the voiceⁱ of my prayer.
 20 Blessed^k be God,
 Who hath not turned away my prayer,
 Nor His lovingkindness from being mine !

^g Adonai
^h cf. Is. i. 15
ⁱ Ps. v. 2
^k Pss. xxviii. 6,
 xxxi. 21 f.

vv. 18-20. On this claim, as it might seem, to sinlessness compare Pss. xviii. 20 ff.; xlv. 18, note, p. 187.

Marson (*The Psalms at Work*) quotes a delightful passage from Fuller, thus:—'Lord, I find David making a syllogism; in mood and figure, two propositions be perfected. "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. But verily God hath heard me, He hath attended to the voice of my prayer." Now, I expected that David should have concluded thus: "Therefore I regard not wickedness in my heart." But, far otherwise, he concludes: "Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me." Thus David hath deceived, but not wronged me. I looked that he should have clapped the crown on his own, and he puts it on God's head. I will learn this excellent logic; for I like David's better than Aristotle's syllogisms, that, whatsoever the premises be, I make God's glory the conclusion.'

PSALM LXVII.

From the Midrash onwards all Commentators have seen in this Psalm an allusion to the threefold Priestly Blessing (Numb. vi. 24—26). But all have not understood that Blessing. The words run thus:—

- (a) "YHVH bless thee, and guard thee :
- (b) YHVH make His Face (i.e. Presence) to shine unto thee, and be gracious unto thee :
- (c) YHVH lift up His Face unto thee, and give thee Peace."

Thus the first blessing, (a), implies the Guardian-care of God (cf. Ps. cxxi. 3—8); the second, (b), the manifestation of His Presence with Israel (cf. Exod. xxxiii. 14 f.); the third, (c), the actual delight (cf. Job xxii. 26) that God will take in His People when they are One even as He is One.

It need scarcely be said that "*Peace*," according to Old Testament thought, is not the mere negative absence of unrest but the positive fulness of completion (Pss. xxix. 11 note, cxxii. 6—8). Thus, in the Blessing, there is a growing thought: for God might guard His People without His Presence being realised among them; or, again, His Presence might be among them without that Presence finding Its satisfaction and joy in them. We would not unduly press the analogy, but we may compare the threefold Blessing with (a) "*The Love of God*," (b) "*The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*," (c) "*The Fellowship of the Holy Ghost*."

Let us now suppose the season to have been the Seventh Month when the thought of the Kingship of God in the world was uppermost in Israel:

The Priestly Blessing has been given in the Temple:

The 'Levitical' Singers respond to it with this Psalm as an 'Amen'; and extend that Blessing to the whole world (see marginal notes).

The Psalm is closely connected in thought with Pss. lxxv. and lxxvi. and, like them, doubtless belongs to the early Persian period. It should be compared with the group of Psalms xcvi—xcix, especially with Ps. xcvi. (see marginal references).

It is a singular coincidence that, while Ps. lxxv. (*Deus misereatur*) is used as an alternative Cantic for the *Nunc dimittis*, Ps. xcvi. (*Cantate Domino*) is appointed as a substitute for the *Magnificat*.

PSALM LXVII.

<p>May the Priestly Blessing be ours!</p>	<p>1 May God be gracious unto us and bless us^a. May He make His Face^b to shine among^c us;</p>	<p>^a Numb. vi. 24 f. ^b Presence ^c with us</p>
<p>Not ours only but the world's!</p>	<p>2 That Thy way may be known in the earth, Thy salvation^d among all the heathen. 3 MAY THE PEOPLES THANK THEE, O GOD; MAY THE PEOPLES, ALL OF THEM, THANK THEE.</p>	<p>^d Ps. xcvi. 2 f.</p>
<p>May His Kingdom embrace all!</p>	<p>4 May the Nations rejoice and sing for joy, Because Thou judgest^e the Peoples with equity^e And guidest the Nations on earth. 5 MAY THE PEOPLES THANK THEE, O GOD; MAY THE PEOPLES, ALL OF THEM, THANK THEE.</p>	<p>^e Ps. xcvi. 9</p>
<p>Yes. The Blessing is ours!</p>	<p>6 The earth hath yielded her increase^f. God, our own God, will bless us. 7 God will bless us, And all the bounds^g of earth will pay Him reverence^h.</p>	<p>^f cf. Ezek. xxxiv. 27, Ps. lxxxv. 11 f. ^g Ps. xcvi. 3 ^h Jer. xxxiii. 9.</p>
<p>And it is for the whole world! (Cf. Eph. iii. 6.)</p>		

v. 1. "May He make His Face to shine among us." In the Priestly Blessing (Numb. vi. 25) the preposition used is different. There it signifies "unto us," whereas here it is, literally, "with us." The thought is the same, but the Psalm brings home more closely the conception of that Divine Presence tabernacling with men as the Light of men (cf. St John i. 4 ff.). See also Ps. lxxx. 3, 7, 19.

v. 6. "The earth hath yielded her increase." The E.V. and P.B.V., following Symmachus, have translated the past tense as if it were a future. To do this is to lose much of the meaning of the Psalm. The season was the season of the Ingathering. The actual fruits of the earth had been gathered in (Ps. lxxv. 11). These fruits were, in themselves, a witness that God was well-pleased with His People (Lev. xxv. 19; xxvi. 4; Deut. xxviii. 2 ff. &c.). But further, these fruits of the earth had become an outward sign and pledge of all the blessings which Israel associated with the Messiah; so that, at last, "the Branch" (*tsemaḥ*, properly *the outspring* of the earth) became a title of the Messiah himself. This may be traced in the order of the following passages in which *tsemaḥ* is used: Is. iv. 2; lxi. 11; xlv. 8; Jer. xxxiii. 15; Ps. lxxxv. 11 (12); Jer. xxiii. 5; Zech. iii. 8; vi. 12.

To some this will appear mystical: nevertheless it represents the historical development of an important thought among that People whom we believe to have been under the special guidance of God. Thus St Jerome is justified when he says:—"Vultis scire quid sit iste fructus? Virgo de virgine, Dominus de ancilla, Deus ex homine, filius ex matre, fructus ex terra. Videte quid dicat ipse fructus, 'Nisi granum tritici ceciderit in terram et mortuum fuerit, non potest facere fructus multos.' Terra dedit fructum suum, dedit granum frumenti: quod granum frumenti cecidit in terram et mortuum est, et ideo multos fructus adfert. Multiplicatum est in spica: quod unum ceciderat, cum multis resurrexit. Cecidit enim granum tritici in terram, et seges copiosa surrexit."

PSALM LXVIII.

It will be well first to consider the *Documents quoted or alluded to in Ps. lxviii.*

The earliest of these is the 'Song of Deborah' (Jud. v.) which may date from B.C. 1250.

We give only those verses which have a direct bearing upon our Psalm.

- (a) 4 "YHVH when Thou wentest forth from Seir,
When Thou marchedst from the field of Edom,
Earth trembled, yea heavens dissolved;
Yea (as) clouds dissolved in water
5 (So) the mountains flowed down at the Presence of YHVH,
Such was Sinai (? Sinai trembled) at the Presence of YHVH, the God of Israel."

With this passage compare *vv.* 7, 8 of our Psalm.

(b) *v.* 9 ".....Bless ye YHVH."

Compare Ps. lxviii. 26.

(c) *v.* 12 ".....Lead captive thy band of captives."

Compare Ps. lxviii. 18, note.

(d) *v.* 13 "YHVH came down for me among the mighty-ones."

This translation is not certain but, in *v.* 23, we read

"To the help of YHVH among the mighty-ones."

And again, in *v.* 20,

"They fought from heaven;
The stars in their courses fought against Sisera."

The 'stars,' or host of heaven, would naturally become, in later times, a host of Angels: as, indeed, we find in the next document (Deut. xxxiii.), and in our Psalm. But we return to the Song of Deborah.

(e) *v.* 16 "Why didst thou dwell among the sheepfolds?"

Compare Ps. lxviii. 13, note.

(f) *v.* 18 "Zebulun was a people spurning life to the death,
And also Naphtali, upon the high places of the field."

See Ps. lxviii. 27, where Zebulun and Naphtali are coupled together.

The next document, in point of date, is the, so-called, "Blessing of Moses" (Deut. xxxiii.). This belongs either to the early days of Jeroboam I. (c. B.C. 933) or, more probably, to the victorious age of Jeroboam II. (c. B.C. 780). In this Ephraimite Song, Judah, which had not been mentioned by Deborah, is regarded with kindly compassion (*v.* 7): but, though this verse implies a separation between Israel and Judah, yet, the whole Blessing recognises, most fully, the higher unity which binds all the Tribes in one. This, indeed, is its leading thought.

The following verses have special interest for our Psalm.

- (a) v. 2 " *YHVH came from Sinai,
He rose (as light) from Seir for them ;
He shone forth from mount Paran,
And came from the myriads of holy-ones (lit. holiness)
From His right hand there were streams for them.*"

Here we see the influence of the Song of Deborah; the dissolving heavens and clouds of Judg. v. 4f. have become streams of blessing from God's right hand. Compare Ps. lxviii. vv. 7—10.

- (β) v. 5 " *And He became King in Jeshurun,
Through the gathering together of the chiefs of the People ;
The Tribes of Israel—all in one !*"

We feel, in these words, the longing of a loyal heart for the restored unity of Israel. God, too, becomes King only through the unity of His People. Compare note on Ps. lxviii. 26.

- (γ) v. 12 Benjamin is connected with
" *The Beloved of YHVH.*"

Compare the leading place that Benjamin takes in Ps. lxviii.

- (δ) v. 26 " *There is none like God, O Jeshurun,
That rideth (upon) the heavens to thy help,
And, in His majesty, (upon) the skies.*"
27 " *The everlasting God is thy dwelling,
And beneath are the arms of Eternity.*"

Compare notes on Ps. lxviii. 4, 33, 35; and v. 24.

- (ε) v. 28 " *The fount of Jacob.*"

Compare Ps. lxviii. 26.

- (ζ) v. 29 " *Who is like unto thee, a People saved by YHVH ?*"

The thought is the same in vv. 19 ff. of our Psalm.

- (η) v. 29 " *And thine enemies shall pay homage unto thee.*"

The nations also bring their tribute to Jerusalem in Ps. lxviii. 29 f.

There are other Scriptures, especially the "*Psalm of Habakkuk*" (Hab. iii.) with which our Psalm has striking points of similarity, but since the date of Habakkuk's "Psalm" is much disputed it will be sufficient to draw attention to the parallels in the marginal references and notes. The same may be said of the parallels with the Second Isaiah.

But there is a passage in Numb. x. 35 (JE) which must be regarded as the very foundation of our Psalm. Thus :—

- " *And it came to pass that, when the Ark set forward, Moses said,
' Arise, YHVH, and let Thine enemies be scattered,
And let them that hate Thee, flee before Thee.'*
*And, when it rested, he said,
' Return, YHVH, unto the myriads of the thousands of Israel.'*"

Our Psalmist commences by quoting the words with which Moses began each day's march. But now, it is not a question of a day's march, but, of God's march through the ages, from the Exodus up to what we may call the Covenant of Zion. And, though the Psalmist does not actually quote the words with which Moses closed the march, "*Return, YHVH, unto the myriads of the thousands of Israel,*" yet, he evidently alludes to them, when he brings the march to its close upon Zion (*vv. 15—18*), where, "*The chariots of God are myriads and myriads, thousands upon thousands*¹."

The first half of the Psalm ends with *v. 18*.

The royal progress of the Shechinah (or Divine Presence) has been traced, in power and bounty, through the age of the Wilderness (*vv. 7—10*); through the age of Joshua and the Judges (*vv. 11—14*); and now, at last, that Presence rests in Its chosen home on Zion (*vv. 15—18*).

The second half of the Psalm (*vv. 19—35*) corresponds closely with the first half (see marginal notes) and applies the lesson of the past to the hopes of the future.

The homage of the world-mountains to Zion and Zion's God, with which Part I. closes, becomes, at the close of Part II., the homage of the world-powers to Jerusalem and her Divine King (*vv. 28—31*), in short, we reach the fulfilment of Is. ii. 2 f. for, out of Zion has come forth a new Law, the Covenant of Sinai has become the Covenant of the Spirit.

The Christian, following the lines of the Psalmist, will endeavour to trace the further progress of the Shechinah (I) from Zion up to Its 'rest' in the Person of Christ and in the triumph of His Ascension; (II) from the Ascension to the completion of the Holy Spirit's ministry, "till all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God,...unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13).

Thus the Psalm is well suited for Whitsunday for which it is used throughout the Western Church.

¹ The Sifré, the oldest Midrash on Numbers, connects these two passages thus;—"Just as the Shechinah only rests above (i.e. in Heaven) with thousands and myriads (quoting our Psalm), so too the Shechinah can only rest below (i.e. on Earth) with thousands and myriads (quoting Numb. vi. 35^b)."

PSALM LXVIII.

*The first half (vv. 1—18) pictures God's march through the ages,
from Egypt to Zion.*

God's Presence is safety to His People, destruction to His enemies (cf. Ps. v. 11 note).

Let Israel confess that God alone is their strength (cf. v. 32 ff.).

He has proved this in His merciful dealings with Israel (cf. v. 34 f.).

- 1 "God ariseth, His enemies are scattered :
Those that hate Him flee from before Him^a!"
- 2 Thou drivest them as smoke is driven,
As wax melteth at the presence of fire,
The wicked perish at the Presence of God.
- 3 While the righteous are glad and exult in the Presence of
God :
And rejoice^b in (their) gladness.
- 4 Sing unto God, hymn (unto) His Name!
"Make the highway^c" to the Rider through deserts^d
Yah is His Name! exult ye in His Presence.
- 5 Father of orphans, Defender of widows,
Is God in His holy habitation.
- 6 God bringeth back (His) only-ones to a home,
He bringeth out bondsmen into freedom,
Mere rebels, that dwelt in a barren (land).

^a Numb. x. 35

^b Is. lxi. 10,
lxvi. 14

^c Is. lvii. 14,
lxii. 10

^d Is. xl. 3,
Zech. xiv.
10, or Deut.
xxxiii. 26,
heavens

v. 1. These words are an adaptation from Numb. x. 35 "And it came to pass when the ark set forward, that Moses said—

'Arise, YHVH, and let Thine enemies be scattered,
And let them that hate Thee flee before Thee.'

And when it rested, he said—

'Return, YHVH (to) the myriads of the thousands of Israel.'

The *imperative* is changed into an *imperfect*, since what, in Moses, was a request, has, in the Psalmist's vision, become a realization.

vv. 2, 3. The wicked perish "at" the Presence while the righteous rejoice "in" that Presence.

v. 4. "Sing...hymn...Make the highway..." The context proves that to 'make a highway' was an act of worship. I have already suggested (Ps. xlviii. 12 ff. notes) that the use of the *highway*, which ran round the Babylonian Temples to the Sanctuary on the top, for religious processions, had also its counterpart in the religion of the Jews (see Pss. xxvi. 6, note, p. 113; xxvii. 6, p. 117). This 'highway,' representing, as it does, the way from earth to Heaven, may be regarded either as the emblem of man's pilgrimage to God (Is. lvii. 14; lxii. 10) or of God's descent to man (Is. xl. 3). In our Psalm the highway is for a pilgrimage of the heart made for God's honour. "Make the highway to (not for) the Rider through deserts"; i.e. 'Let your hearts go up to meet Him.' Compare note on v. 33.

The rendering of the E.V. and P.B.V., "extol him," "magnify him," is nothing more than a paraphrase.

"The Rider through deserts." The word here rendered "deserts" is, by the Targum and by Aben

In the Wilderness.

God moved Heaven
and earth for the help
of His People.

God's bountiful care
for Israel. Compare
vv. 19-23.

7 O God, when Thou wentest forth^a before Thy People,
When Thou marchedst^a through the wilderness^b,
8 Earth quaked^c, yea heavens dissolved^c, at the Presence of^b
God:
Sinai^d trembled at the Presence of God, the God of Israel!
9 A rain of freewill offerings Thou offerest, O God;
Thine inheritance^e—and that a weary one!—THOU^f didst
confirm!
10 Thy Flock dwelt therein;
Thou, with Thy goodness, providest for (Thy) Poor-one^g,
O God.

^a Judg. v. 4;
Hab. iii. 3,
12

^b Deut. xxxii.
10

^c Judg. v. 4;
Hab. iii. 6

^d Judg. v. 5;
Hab. iii. 6

^e Deut. xxxii.
9

^f Emphatic

^g Hab. iii. 14

Ezra, translated "*the heavens*," whence E.V. and P.B.V., "*that rideth upon the heavens*." This translation must not be hastily rejected.

In Deut. xxxiii. 26 we read, "*There is none like God, O Jeshurun, Who rideth upon the heavens to thy help*." Compare also Ps. xviii. 10; Is. xix. 1; Hab. iii. 8, and especially *vv.* 7, 33 of the present Psalm.

v. 5. "*His holy habitation*." Lit. "*The habitation of His holiness*." God's "*habitation*" is Zion, (Ps. xxvi. 8; 1 Sam. ii. 29, 32; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15); but when the word is coupled with "*His holiness*" it denotes Heaven (Deut. xxvi. 15; Jer. xxv. 30; Zech. ii. 13 (17); 2 Chron. xxx. 27).

The reader should note that the word, here translated "*holiness*," also signifies "*the sanctuary*," and that it is thus translated in two other passages of this Psalm (*vv.* 17, 24). Undoubtedly there is a connexion between these three passages. Verse 5 shows God's essential nature in His Sanctuary of Heaven; verse 17 shows the historical transference of His Sanctuary from Sinai to Zion; while verse 24 implies that the religious processions to the earthly Sanctuary were types of 'that far off divine event to which the whole creation moves.'

v. 6. "*God bringeth back...*" This is undoubtedly the true reading (with de Lagarde, Cheyne &c.). "*(His) only-ones*." In every other passage in which the word occurs it denotes either "*an only (son)*" or a "*darling*." The exception, if it be an exception, is Ps. xxv. 16, "*For lonely and poor am I*," but there, as here, the word implies that the *lonely-one* is God's *only-one*.

The P.B.V., "*God who maketh men to be of one mind in an house*," seems to be an imitation of the Vulgate, "*Deus qui inhabitare facit unius moris in domo*," which itself missed the meaning of the Septuagint.

v. 6. "*Mere rebels &c.*" i.e. 'though they were nothing more nor less than rebels.'

The usual translation is, "*But the rebellious dwell in a parched land*" (R.V.). To this I object,

(1) that, if the adversative *but* had been required, the Hebrew would not have used *ak*;

(2) that such a translation excludes '*rebels*' from the mercy of God, whereas in *v.* 18 (where the same word is used) '*rebels*' are expressly included;

(3) that unnecessary violence is done to the Hebrew by taking the verb, which is in a *past* tense, as if it were a future; i.e. by reading "*dwelt*" or "*will dwell*" instead of "*dwelt*" or "*have dwelt*."

The thought of the whole passage may be thus expressed:—God is in His essential character the God of the oppressed (*v.* 5) Israel has found Him so. Israel was a homeless wanderer (in Egypt and in Babylon) but God brought him home (*v.* 6^a).

Israel was then like a prisoner in fetters, but God brought him out into freedom and prosperity (*v.* 6^b). And this, too, not for any merit on Israel's part, for they were "*mere rebels*," suffering the just punishment of their sin (*v.* 6^c).

It is worthy of note that God's love to Israel is pictured in Ps. cvii. under the same three figures and in the same order; for, in *vv.* 4-7, God's People are as *wanderers* brought home; in *vv.* 10-16, as *prisoners* released; in *vv.* 17-20, as *sinner*s delivered from the consequences of their own sins.

v. 8. "*Sinai trembled*." The text reads "*This Sinai*," and is a quotation from Judg. v. 5, but I adopt the suggestion of Graetz and read (in both places) *za*, "*trembled*," instead of *ze*, "*this*."

In the Conquest of Canaan.

God, and God only,
won those victories.
His was the fight;
His People merely
gather spoil (cf. *vv.*
24-27).

- 11 The Lord^a gives the Word^b:
Great is the host (of women) announcing the tidings.
12 Kings of hosts are fled—are fled—
And the very housewife shares the spoil^c!
13 Truly ye dwell among sheepfolds^d—
Wings of the dove that shimmers with silver,
And her pinions with sheen of gold—
14 When Shaddai scatters kings over her,
As when Zalmon whitens with snow.

- ^a Adonai
^b Hab. iii. 9,
Promise, or
Summons
^c cf. Judg. v. 30
^d Judg. v. 16

v. 9. "A rain of freewill offerings Thou offerest, O God." Two sacrificial words are here used.

The substantive properly denotes the *freewill offering*, though once or twice it is used in the general sense of "freely" (Hos. xiv. 4 (5)). The verb which we translate "offerest" is constantly used of the *lifting up of the wave-offering*, though it, too, may have a more general meaning.

By the use of these words the Psalmist gives us a picture of the various gifts whereby God sustained His People in the Wilderness, as though they formed a continuous rain of offerings, given from His heart.

The verbs "offerest" (*v. 9^a*), "providest" (*v. 10^b*) are in the imperfect, since God's gifts are still going on; but the verbs "didst confirm" (*v. 9^b*), "dwell" (*v. 10^a*) are in the past tense, since they indicate past instances of that continuous mercy.

Upon these words the Talmud founds a legend that, at the giving of the Law, God commanded the clouds of glory to sprinkle their dew upon His People (Tosifta, Erubin 1¹⁰).

"Thine Inheritance." The word "Inheritance" may denote either the *Land* or the *People*. But God's Inheritance is properly *His People* (Deut. iv. 20; ix. 26, 29; Pss. xxviii. 9; xxxiii. 12; lxxviii. 62, 71 &c.). It is therefore in this sense that we interpret the present passage.

"And that a weary one!" The word is never applied to things but only to persons. It denotes *faintness* (Job iv. 5), *weariness* and even *loathing* (Exod. vii. 18). The Psalmist uses it to depict the weakness, and perhaps the unworthiness, of the People in the Wilderness.

v. 10. "Thy Flock." Lit. "Thy living Creature." The verb in the plural shows that the noun is here a noun of multitude. The words "Flock" and "Poor-one" both refer to Israel and are both found together in the same sense in Ps. lxxiv. 19. The provision which God made for His People in the Wilderness was a type of the Bread of Life (St John vi. 50). The word "therein" may refer to the Wilderness, or we might translate it "thereby," in which case it would refer to God's "goodness." The parallelism points to the latter meaning.

v. 11. "The Lord gives the Word."—He does but speak, and it is a *Summons*, not to fight, but to reap the rewards of victory (cf. Exod. xiv. 14). As in the 'Song of Moses' (JE), when "Miriam the prophetess...took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dances" (Exod. xv. 20). Compare Judg. v. 1; 1 Sam. xviii. 6 f.

v. 12. "And the very housewife..." Lit. "And the stay-at-home." The word is *feminine*, we have therefore translated it by "housewife." Possibly the Psalmist uses it merely as a picture of Israel in peace, for whom God, and God alone, had won the victory.

v. 13. "Truly ye dwell among sheepfolds." 'To dwell among the sheepfolds' would seem to have been a proverbial expression for a life of peace (Gen. xlix. 14; Judg. v. 16). In the Song of Deborah the proverb is used in a slightly different form, as a taunt against the Tribe of Reuben, because the time was not a time for peace; but in the present passage there is no taunt; God has fought for Israel. They have nothing to do now but to enjoy the peace and plenty of the conquered Land.

"Wings of the dove &c." God, who gives to the peace-loving dove its burnished silver and gold, has given to Israel, His Dove (Hos. vii. 11; xi. 11; Ps. lv. 6 (7); cf. Ps. lxxiv. 19), the spoil and splendour of the world. The deeper meaning is seen in *vv. 29-31* where the Nations of the World bring their tribute to Israel's God.

v. 14. "When Shaddai scatters kings over her"—Shaddai is the *All-bountiful* rather than the *Almighty* (see note p. 268). Here He is pictured as snowing the spoil of kings upon Zion till she, that before was

In the choice of Zion.

God's choice of Zion implies the fulfilment of Is. ii. 2 f. and the submission of the Gentiles to His rule (cf. *vv.* 28-31).

- 15 A mountain of God^a is mount Bashan ;
 A mountain of peaks is mount Bashan.
- 16 Why, O ye mountains of peaks, should ye view askance
 THE Mountain God hath desired for his abode?
 Yea, YHVH will dwell (there) for ever^b.
- 17 The chariots of God are myriads^c and myriads, thousands
 upon thousands ;
 The Lord^d is come from Sinai into the Sanctuary.
- 18 Thou hast gone up on high, Thou hast led away captives^e :
 Thou hast received gifts among men—even though rebels—
 That Yah, God, might have His dwelling.

^a i.e. *mighty mountain*

^b cf. Ps. cxxxii. 13 f.
^c Deut. xxxiii. 2

^d Adonai

^e Judg. v. 12

dark (Zalmon), has become snow-white. Chaucer, in describing the abundance in the house of his Franklin, says, "It snowed in his house of meat and drink."

v. 15. "*A mountain of God.*" The idiom merely implies *size*, not sanctity; See Ps. xxxvi. 6 (7).

vv. 15, 16. "*Peaks.*" The actual word only occurs here but another form of it is used for a "*hunchback*" (Lev. xxi. 20). It is therefore possible that the Psalmist has chosen the word to imply a moral deformity in those "*hunchbacked mountains*" which look with envy upon Zion.

The very ancient prophecy, quoted in Is. ii. 2 f., tells that, in the latter days, the Mountain of the House of YHVH will be exalted above all the mountains of the world. And that all nations will flow unto it (cf. note on *v.* 29).

v. 17. "*The Lord is come from Sinai into the Sanctuary.*" This reading is adopted by the best scholars (Kautzsch, Driver, Cheyne &c.). It involves little more than a redivision of the Hebrew words which the English reader may understand, as follows :

Hebrew text—Adonai bam sinai baqodesh, i.e. "*The Lord is among them, Sinai in the Sanctuary.*"

Hebrew text suggested—Adonai ba misinai baqodesh, i.e. "*The Lord is come from Sinai into the Sanctuary.*"

Thus the words became a quotation from the Ephraimite poem, commonly called the *Blessing of Moses* (Deut. xxxiii.).

v. 18. "*Thou hast gone up on high.*" God is said to '*go up on high*' when He is exalted in judgement (Ps. vii. 7) but especially when He is regarded as taking His Throne over the kingdoms of earth. Compare Ps. xlvii. *vv.* 5, 9 notes, p. 202 f. It should be observed that Ps. xlvii. is founded upon Numb. x. 8-10 (P), just as Ps. lxviii. is founded upon Numb. x. 35 (JE); and that in both Psalms the '*exaltation*' of God is directly connected with the call of the Gentiles.

"*Thou hast led away captives.*" Lit. "*Thou hast led captive a captivity.*" The picture is that of a Conqueror (Judg. v. 12) leading in his train a host of captives. But, in this case, the Conqueror is the Shechinah, or Divine Presence, now "established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills" (Is. ii. 2); and the "*captives*" are "all the Nations" who are "*flowing*," as it were, in one long procession, up to it (cf. *v.* 29).

The Christian will say, with St Paul, "*Thanks be to God, which always leadeth us in triumph in Christ*" (2 Cor. ii. 14).

"*Thou hast received gifts among men.*" The "*gifts*" are the tribute (cf. *v.* 29), paid to the Conqueror: but, in this case, the gifts are "*in men*," i.e. consisting of men.

The Targum and Midrash applied the whole passage, not to God, but, to Moses: Moses had '*gone up on high*' to receive the Law (Exod. xix. 3) and he had given this Law as a gift to men. St Paul, in applying the passage to Christ (Eph. iv. 8), quotes the words in the form in which they had been moulded by tradition as though he would say '*That verse of the Psalm was not fulfilled, as the Jews suppose, in the giving of the Law, but, in the giving of the Spirit.*' But St Paul's argument is not affected by the form of his quotation. His words (Eph. iv. 4-16), considered as a whole, might be freely paraphrased thus:—

'The Christian Body has, in its conception, a unity corresponding with the Unity of God

The second half (vv. 19—35) forecasts the future on the basis of the past as pictured in the first half (compare marginal notes).

As God bore with us in the Wilderness, so He bears now (cf. vv. 9, 10).

As God, and God only, moved Heaven and earth for their help then, so He will now (cf. vv. 7, 8).

The Dedication processions are a type of God's victory and of His People's triumph, as of old (cf. vv. 11—14).

(vv. 4—6). To this unity man will, at length, arrive (vv. 15, 16). Meanwhile we men must remember that we are only parts (v. 7; cf. v. 11 ff.) and therefore uncomplete. And, even in the Divine Nature there is a something which corresponds to this: For, whereas God, in His essential Being, is "over all and through all, and in all" (v. 6) yet, in order to receive His Kingdom in Earth, He descends to fill every depth and He ascends to conquer every height (v. 10), and only in so doing can He receive those "gifts" of human hearts which constitute His Kingdom, and which may almost be said to constitute His Unity (Zech. xiv. 9).'

v. 22. It is evident, from the next verse, that those who are brought back are, not God's People (as in E.V. and P.B.V.) brought back from Captivity, but, their enemies, brought back for destruction. The mountain heights of Bashan, on the East, and the depths of the Sea on the West, are chosen to represent the impossibility of any hiding-place from the wrath of God. In many respects there is a close parallel in Amos ix. 1—4. Contrast Rom. viii. 38, 39.

v. 24. "Men have seen." Lit. "They have seen."

"Thy processions." This rare word is only applied to God in one other passage, and that is in the closely parallel Psalm of Habakkuk (Hab. iii. 6), where it seems to denote the *procession* or *solemn course* of God's triumphant march through time and space for the help of His People. Thus:—

"He stood, and shook the earth,
He (but) looked and drove asunder the Nations,
The everlasting mountains were scattered—
The eternal hills bowed low—
The *solemn courses* of eternity are His."

If the whole context be studied it will be seen that, in Habakkuk, as in our Psalm, the historical manifestations, at the Red Sea, Sinai, and in the times of the Judges, are regarded only as parts of God's progress through the ages; for "the processions (solemn courses) of eternity are His." Thus past deliverance becomes a pledge of future help, and men who "have seen God's processions"—His triumphant march—through the *past* will look with expectation to the *future*.

I suggest therefore that, while our Psalm alludes to actual Processions, like those of Nehemiah, round the walls and up to the Sanctuary, it regards those Processions merely as a figure, or acted

19 Blessed be the Lord^a, who beareth with us daily,
The God^b who is our salvation^c.

20 The God^b who is ours—a God of great salvation!
And unto YHVH the Lord^d pertain deliverances from death.

21 God^e alone smiteth the head^f of His enemies,
The hoary crown of him who goeth on in his trespass.

22 The Lord^g saith, "From Bashan I will bring (them) back,
I will bring (them) back from the depths of the sea":

23 So that thou mayest wade^h in bloodⁱ:—
The tongue of thy dogs shall have its portion from the foe.

24 Men have seen Thy processions^k, O God^l:
The processions^k of my God, my King, into the Sanctuary^m.

25 Singersⁿ went in front,
After came the minstrels,
In the midst of damsels, beating the timbrels.

^a Adonai
^b El
^c Hab. iii. 13
^d Adonai
^e Elohim
^f Hab. iii. 13,
Gen. iii. 15,
Ps. cx. 6
^g Adonai
^h *strike thy foot*
ⁱ cf. Rev. xiv. 20, xix. 15
^k *courses*
Hab. iii. 6
^l Elohim
^m Ps. lxxvii. 13,
or *in holiness*
ⁿ Sept. reads *Princes*;
cf. v. 27

- 26 In full-congregation^a bless ye God,
 Even the Lord^b from the Fountain of Israel.
- 27 There is little Benjamin.....
 Princes of Judah.....
 Princes of Zebulun, Princes of Naphtali.

^a Ps. xxvi. 12^b Adonai

parable, of the solemn dedicated Way wherein God was ever coming to the help of His People (cf. Ps. lxxvii. 13 note).

"*The processions of my God, my King, into the Sanctuary.*" Religious processions formed an important part of the Religion of Babylonia. The stages, in the terraced Temples, represented the succession of the various heavens or spheres, the Sanctuary being at the top. The winding way, up through these various terraces, was used for sacred Processions, and denoted, in a figure, man's pilgrimage to God. The Babylonians, on certain festivals, especially New Year's Day, carried their gods in procession in sacred arks or ships (see Jastrow, *Relig. of Babylonia*, pp. 654 f., 678—681); the original intention, doubtless, being to represent the course of God through the heavens or through the year. Jastrow (p. 681) has shewn that the Jewish and Babylonian festivals of New Year have much in common. We may, I think, also assert that the Jewish *Processions of Dedication* (e.g. Neh. xii. 27—43) were, in their origin, identical with those of Babylonia (see notes on Ps. xlvi. 12—14).

v. 25. "*Singers went in front.*" The Septuagint read "*Princes*" instead of "*Singers*." Also the Vulgate, "*Praeueniunt principes.*" This reading which is used by St Jerome (see *Anecdota Maredsolana*, Vol. III. pars 1. p. 56) is not lightly to be discarded. In unpointed Hebrew there is no difference between *Sarim*, "*princes*" and *Sharim*, "*singers*."

As a matter of fact, in the one really ancient Procession, of which we have any details, the *Princes*, not the *Singers*, went in front; for Nehemiah (Chap. xii.) tells us that when he had brought up "*the Princes of Judah*" upon the wall, he appointed half of them, to lead each one of the Processions. "*And half of the Princes of Judah* (here follow names), *and certain of the Priests' sons with trumpets...the son of Asaph...with the musical instruments of David the man of God.*" This Procession was led by Ezra. The other, which met it, was led by Nehemiah himself. The order again was the same: "*And I, and the half of the rulers* (i.e. the other half of the Princes of Judah) *with me: and the Priests* (names follow) *with trumpets; and* (more names) *And the singers sang loud, with Jezeiah their overseer.*" From this chapter it is evident that the order in the Procession was Princes, Priests, Singers with musical instruments.

The actual mention of "*Princes of Judah,*" "*Princes of Zebulun, Princes of Naphtali*" in the 27th verse of our Psalm bears out this view.

"*In the midst of damsels...*" No doubt women did minister in the First Temple, and, possibly, in the Second (Edersheim, *The Temple*, p. 56), but the question here is not of ministration in the Temple but of a Procession to the Temple.

"*The timbrels,*" or "*tabrets,*" represent especially the music of joy and triumph (Is. xxx. 32; cf. xxiv. 8; Jer. xxxi. 4; Pss. lxxxi. 2 (3); cxlix. 3; cl. 4). They were used by women welcoming a conqueror (Exod. xv. 20; Judg. xi. 34; 1 Sam. xviii. 6).

v. 26. "*In full-congregation.*" This word is only found here, in the *fem. pl.*, and in Ps. xxvi. 12, in the *masc. pl.* In both passages it marks the chorus of praise going up from the whole congregation. If we might imagine two Processions, meeting one another, as in Neh. xii. 40—43, and breaking forth into one song of praise, then the plural form of the word would attain a new significance; hinting indeed at that unity in diversity which is expressed in the words which follow.

"*From the Fountain of Israel.*" The word here translated "*Fountain*" is, in the Psalter, only found again in Ps. xxxvi. 9 (10), where the "*Fountain of life*" is said to be with God; but another word for "*fountain*" or "*well-spring*" is found in the parallel passage Deut. xxxiii. 28 "*And Israel dwelleth in safety, The Fount of Jacob secure, In a land of corn and wine.*" Compare also Ps. lxxxvii. 7.

Thus it would seem that "*the Fountain of Israel*" (or "*of Jacob*") denotes the whole People regarded as a unity, sprung from one Fountain head. Compare Is. xlvi. 1; li. 1.

The highest Service that Humanity (Israel) can pay to God is not the dead level of Conformity

God, in again choosing Zion, is fulfilling Is. ii. 2 f., and is drawing the Gentiles into His kingdom (cf. vv. 15-18).

28 Give a charge, O God, to thy strength:
 Strengthen, O God, this that Thou hast wrought for us.
 29 Because of Thy Palace^a above Jerusalem
 Kings shall lead up their tribute unto Thee.
 30 Rebuke the wild beast of the reed,
 the troops of bulls, with the calves of the Peoples;

 Scatter the Peoples that delight in war!
 31 shall come out of Egypt;
 Ethiopia shall stream forth his hands unto God.

^a or *Temple*

Let the Gentiles confess that God alone is their strength (cf. v. 4 ff.).

32 O ye kingdoms of the earth, sing ye unto God:
 Hymn ye unto the Lord^b;
 33 To the Rider^c on the heaven of heavens of old;
 Lo! He uttereth His voice—a voice of strength!
 34 Ascribe ye strength unto God;
 Over Israel is His majesty,
 And His strength is in the skies.
 35 Terrible is God from out thy sanctuaries,
 the God of Israel;
 He it is that giveth strength,
 and power to the People.
 Blessed be God.

^b Adonai

^c v. 4, Deut. xxxiii. 26; cf. Hab. iii. 8

Let them recognise this through His dealings with Israel (cf. v. 6).

but the harmonious union of perfected individualities (Tribes), meeting, and becoming One, on the Dedicated Way to Heaven. (Cf. Ps. cxxii. 3 f.; St John xvii. 21.)

v. 28. "Give a charge," or, "command." Almost all the Versions read the word here as an imperative and not (as the vowel points) as 3 sing. *past tense*.

The same remark applies to the word "scatter" in v. 30. Just as God 'gives a charge to His lovingkindness' (Ps. xlii. 8) so here He is asked to 'give a charge' to His 'strength,' and thereby to confirm and finish that age-long work whereby He would bring the Gentile world into subjection to Israel and to Himself.

v. 30. "The wild beast of the reed" is Egypt.

The line which follows is quite impossible to translate and the text is probably corrupt.

"The Peoples that delight in war." These are not the words of Israel in the warrior-age of a David, but, rather, in an age of weakness and oppression.

v. 33. "To the Rider &c." The thought returns to v. 4: but now, not Israel alone, but, the whole world takes up the song. God is "the Rider upon the heavens" (Deut. xxxiii. 26) or, "upon a swift cloud" (Is. xix. 1), or, "on the Cherub" and "Wings of the wind" (Ps. xviii. 10).

But in every case where God is said 'to ride' it is for the salvation of His People (cf. Hab. iii. 8). In Zech. ix. 9 the "King" is seen "riding upon an ass," as though all were peace, but the verses which follow (13-17) picture God, as in our Psalm, fighting for His People. So, too, with the Rider on the white horse (Rev. vi. 2; xix. 11 ff., with Ps. xlv. 2-5). Thus God rides through the ages, 'conquering and to conquer,' but the 'garment dipt in blood' implies the cost.

PSALM LXIX.

Even Delitzsch follows Hitzig in ascribing this Psalm to Jeremiah. Certainly we must admit that it is closely parallel with those Psalms (xxxv., xxxviii., xl.) in which the influence of Jeremiah is most plainly traced; though it by no means follows, from this fact, that Jeremiah was the author, we are justified in maintaining that the author had Jeremiah's life of martyrdom in his mind, that he wrote in times when Israel's foes were those of his own household, and that he read the fate of Israel, the suffering Servant, in the light of that Prophet's life, exactly in the same way as the unknown author of Lamentations Chap. iii. has done.

Our Psalm thus becomes the voice of the true Israel, bearing the 'reproach' for God, hated, mocked, deserted, by his own people!

The Psalm naturally finds its expression in the Passion of Christ and is, in our Church, appointed for Good Friday.

PSALM LXIX.

A Jonah-cry from
the depths of sorrow.

- 1 Save me, O God;
For the waters are come—soul deep!
- 2 I sink in the mire^a of the Abyss,
and bottom there is none!
- I am come into deep waters,
and the floods^b overwhelm^b me.
- 3 I am weary^c with crying, my throat is dried,
Mine eyes are worn with waiting^d for my God.

^a only here and
Ps. xl. 2

^b v. 15; cf.
cxxiv. 4; Is.
xliii. 2

^c Jer. xlv. 3

^d See *Sept.*

v. 1. "Soul deep." Lit. "up to the soul" i.e. endangering the very life. The same idiom is found in Jer. iv. 10.

v. 2. "I sink..." The image of "the mire" (Ps. xl. 2), "the waters" (Pss. xviii. 16; lxix. 1, 2, 14, 15; lxxxviii. 17; cxxiv. 4, 5; cxliv. 7), the "overwhelming" flood, "the abyss" (or "depths" of the sea, Pss. lxix. 2, 15; lxxxviii. 6 cf. Jonah ii. 3), is so constantly used in Scripture to depict the affliction of Israel that it is indeed strange to find Commentators maintaining that our Psalm was written by Jeremiah to describe his own sufferings when he 'sank in the mud' of his prison (Jer. xxxviii. 6). Jeremiah was, however, the representative of Israel, and his sufferings, perhaps even in their details, were typical. If he were the author of the Psalm he must have been thinking, not of himself, but, of Israel (cf. note on Pss. lv. 6—8, p. 237; lix. 6, p. 251). In point of fact the words of vv. 1, 2 are more

The strength and wanton malice of the foe (cf. Ps. xxii. 12 f.).

The innocence of the Sufferer (cf. Ps. xxii. 14 f.).

- 4 More than the hairs of my head are my wanton^a foes,
 Outnumbering^b my hairs are my causeless^c enemies.
 That which I took with no robbery^d I must restore.
- 5 O God, THOU knowest my foolishness,
 My trespasses could not be hidden from Thee.
- 6 Let not them that wait for Thee be shamed through me,
 O Lord^e, God of Hosts:
 Let not those that seek Thee be confounded through me,
 O God of Israel.

^a Ps. xxxv. 7, 19; Lam. iii. 52

^b Ps. xl. 12

^c Ps. xxxv. 19; xxxviii. 19

^d Ps. xxxv. 10

^e Adonai

suited to the experience of a Jonah than of a Jeremiah. Compare Lam. iii. 54 f. with the Psalm of Jonah (Chap. III.) and see note on Ps. xl. 2, p. 161.

v. 4. "*My wanton foes...my causeless enemies.*" The nature of this enmity may be further seen from the parallel Psalm (xxxv. vv. 11 ff.; 19 ff.). Israel, just in so far as he fulfilled his vocation as the righteous Man, was set up as the mark for the world's malignity (Wisdom ii. 12—20): Plato saw that the sincerity of the ideal righteous man must be tested to the uttermost, "Without being guilty of one unjust act, let him have the worst reputation for injustice, so that his virtue may be thoroughly tested, and shewn to be proof against infamy and all its consequences; and let him go on till the day of his death, steadfast in his justice, but with a lifelong reputation for injustice..... They will say that in such a situation the just man will be scourged, racked, fettered, and will have his eyes burnt out, and at last, after suffering every kind of torture, will be crucified" (*Repub.* Bk. II., p. 44, Vaughan's translation).

The man whose life most nearly fulfilled these conditions, in the Old Testament, was Jeremiah, the representative Prophet of Israel:—The Man whose life entirely fulfilled those conditions was Jesus Christ.

The hatred wherewith He was hated was not merely "*without a cause,*" it was "*gratuitous*" (St John xv. 25, Greek).

"*Outnumbering my hairs.*" The text reads, "*They are numerous (or mighty), my destroyers.*" The Syriac, instead of "*my destroyers,*" read, "*more than my bones*"; but it is far better to read מְרֹבֵי שְׂעָרַי "*more than my locks,*" or "*more than my hairs.*"

"*That which I took with no robbery.*" The literal translation, "*That which I did not rob (or take as a spoil)*" is not strong enough. The words suggest that it was the very reverse of robbery. There seems to be an allusion to the Priest Code, Lev. vi. 4 (Hebrew v. 33), where the penalty is laid down for a man who deals falsely with God and his neighbour by taking anything with violence and denying the robbery: "*then it shall be, if he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took by robbery, &c.*" Compare Ezek. xxxiii. 15. In the Psalter the verb only occurs in one other passage, viz. Ps. xxxv. 10, where we have translated the participle, "*his spoiler*" i.e. "*the one that robbed him.*" It is suggestive that the words which, there, immediately follow, "*There rise up wrongful witnesses, Who question me of what I know nothing,*" would seem to refer to some charge brought against the Jews by those who should have been their friends, perhaps before the Court of Babylon or of Persia (See Ezra iv. 4 ff.).

The "*accusation*" (Ezra iv. 6) then written, was, that the Jews sought to found a Kingdom. The "*accusation*" written, at a later time, upon the Cross, contained the same mixture of truth and falsehood:—"*This is Jesus the King of the Jews*" (Matt. xxvii. 37). That which He then '*took by no robbery*' (cf. Phil. ii. 6 ff.) He '*restored*' in death.

v. 5. "*My trespasses.*" A word belonging to the Priest Code. It is twice used in the passage (Lev. vi. 5, 7) to which we have just referred, thus:—"*in the day of his trespass*" (marg. and R.V. "*in the day of his being found guilty,*") "*...in trespassing thereby*" (R.V. "*so as to be guilty thereby*"). If the context in Leviticus be studied it will be seen that the characteristic of the sin under consideration was not the 'violence' or 'robbery' but the attempt to hide it from God. Thus, in our Psalm, the words must not be taken as a confession of guilt, but as calling God to witness to integrity (cf. Ps. vii. 3).

The Sufferer is bearing all for God's sake (cf. Ps. xlv. 22).

- 7 Surely for Thy sake^a I have suffered reproach,
 Confusion hath covered my face;
 8 I became a stranger unto my brethren,
 An alien unto my (own) mother's children.
 9 Surely zeal^b for Thy House consumed me^b,
 And the reproaches of those that reproached Thee fell on me.
 10 When I afflicted^c my soul with fasting^d,
 Then it became (more) reproaches for me.
 11 When I made sackcloth my clothing,
 Then I became to them a by-word^e.
 12 Those that sit in the gate talk about me,
 And (I am become) the music^f of drunkards.

^a Ps. xlv. 22;
 Jer. xv. 15

^b St John ii. 17

^c Lev. xvi. 31

^d Ps. xxxv. 13

^e Ps. xlv. 13 ff.

^f Lam. iii. 14,
 63

v. 7. "*Surely for Thy sake.*" Exactly as in Ps. xlv. 22, where see note (p. 187). Compare also the strong assertion of innocence in the 21st verse of that Psalm with the 5th verse of our present Psalm. Probably both these Psalms have been influenced by Jer. xv. 15 where the Prophet says to God, "*Take knowledge that for Thy sake I suffer reproach.*"

v. 8. "*I became a stranger unto my brethren.*" The true Israel, i.e. the pious remnant, feels, with pain, that he is estranged from his own people. This is part of the "*reproach*" that he bears for the sake of his God. This reproach, in all its bitterness, was borne by Christ.

v. 9. "*Surely zeal for Thy House....*" By a strange irony of fate it was the lot of Jeremiah to maintain the sanctity of God's House by prophesying its destruction, while the Rulers of the Temple, who confidently supposed it to be inviolable, by that very confidence changed it into a mere "*den of robbers*" (Jer. vii. 11; cf. Matt. xxi. 13, R.V.).

The whole passage (Jer. vii. 1—16) should be carefully studied and compared with the similar "*zeal*" of Christ for the true sanctity of that Temple whose destruction He also foretold. Unfortunately the rendering of the E.V., "*ye have made it a den of thieves,*" has obscured the reference to Jer. vii. 11, and centred the thought rather upon the petty larceny of the traders than on the high-handed trust of robbers in their stronghold den—that den being actually, in this case, the Temple God intended for the World!

St John tells us that the Disciples who witnessed the act of Christ, in the Cleansing of the Temple, "remembered that it was written, *The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up*" (John ii. 17).

"*And the reproaches of those that reproached Thee....*" The word "*reproach*" occurs five times in this Psalm (vv. 7, 9, 19, 20). See also note on Ps. xlv. 16 p. 186 where "*the reviler*" is "*the one who reproaches.*" The root (*hrph*) denotes a sharp cutting speech or taunt which blasts like winter (*hrph*). It is constantly used by Jeremiah. There was no man in the Old Testament who could so truly have said, "*For Thy sake have I suffered reproach*" (Jer. xv. 15), "*The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on me.*" Jeremiah lived in the days of apostasy which followed the death of Josiah; when the seven devils had entered in to dwell in the swept and garnished house. His mission was to proclaim the speedy fall of Judah and of the Temple that he loved. Prayer was useless (Jer. xiv. 8—11). The Prophets (xiv. 13), the whole nation (xviii. 18), his nearest friends (xx. 10), even his own kinsmen at Anathoth, all were against him and sought his life. He was tried for blasphemy (xxvi. 8—11); condemned as a traitor (xxxviii. 4—6)! All these persecutions fell upon him for doing what he knew to be right, and that, too, at a fearful cost of inward struggle. Jeremiah did not please himself, neither did he please his People, but he saved them, and he pleased God. "*The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on me.*"

But St Paul (Rom. xv. 3) quotes these words as applying to Christ:—"For Christ also pleased not himself; but, as it is written, *The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on me.*"

St Paul implies that, in the sufferings of Christ, we have the supreme fulfilment of a universal law that "*the strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak*" (Rom. xv. 1 ff. compare also Acts iii. 18).

v. 10. "*I afflicted my soul with fasting.*" The Hebrew text reads, "*And I wept, with fasting, my soul*;" but the Sept. and Syriac read "*I humbled (or afflicted)*" my soul. This reading involves only a

Seven verses closely
parallel with Lam. iii.
55-63.

- 13 But, as for me^a, my prayer is unto Thee, O YHVH,
(in) an acceptable time^b;
O God, in the abundance of Thy lovingkindness,
Answer me in the truth of Thy salvation. ^a v. 29; Pss. xxxv. 13; xl. 17
^b Is. xlix. 8; cf. lxi. 2
- 14 Deliver me from the mud^c and let me not sink;
Let me be delivered from my foes and from the deep waters. ^c Jer. xxxviii. 6
- 15 Let not the floods^d overwhelm^d me,
Let not the Abyss^e devour me,
And let not the Pit close her mouth upon me. ^d v. 2
^e v. 2
- 16 Answer me, O YHVH, for good is Thy lovingkindness!
Turn unto me according to Thine abounding compassion;
17 And hide not Thy Face from Thy servant,
For I am distressed, answer me speedily.
- 18 Draw Thou near to my soul, redeem it!
Because of mine enemies ransom me!
- 19 THOU knowest^f my reproach^f, and my shame, and ^f Jer. xv. 15
my confusion:
- Open before Thee are all mine adversaries.
- 20 Reproach hath broken^g my heart and it is very grievous^h;
I looked for pity, but it was not;
For comforters, but I found none. ^g Jer. xxiii. 9
^h Jer. xv. 18
- 21 They gave me gall for food;
And, for my thirst, they made me to drink vinegarⁱ. ⁱ John xix. 28f.

slight change and is adopted by Olhausen, Wellhausen &c. The passage is then exactly parallel with Ps. xxxv. 13, a Psalm which has so many points in common with our present Psalm and with Jeremiah.

v. 21. "They gave me gall for food..." The same thought is expressed in Lam. iii. 15, 19, "He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood"... "Remember mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall."

The word *rosk* signifies "poison" (Deut. xxix. 18; xxxii. 33; Job xx. 16) and also "gall" (Lam. iii. 5, 19). Jeremiah uses it three times and, in every case, of "the water of gall" which God makes His People drink because of their sins (Jer. viii. 14; ix. 15; xxiii. 15).

"And, for my thirst, they made me to drink vinegar." "Vinegar" (*hometz*) simply implies *fermentation*. So, in Numb. vi. 3, we read that the Nazarite is not to drink "vinegar of wine or vinegar of strong drink," i.e. wine or drink that has undergone *fermentation*. It was used also as a relish (Ruth ii. 14). Thus, as far as these two passages are concerned, there would seem to be no more unkindness in the gift of *vinegar* than in the gift of *wine*. There are however two other passages, and only two, in which the word is found (Prov. x. 26; xxv. 20) and in both cases it has an unfavourable meaning. But from the context in our Psalm it is evident that the "gall" and "vinegar" represent the very climax of mockery and cruelty.

If we regard the words as the voice of Israel then the "thirst" is "for the Living God" (Pss. xlii. 2; lxiii. 1) and the "gall" and "vinegar," are the "reproach" of his enemies, "Where is thy God?" (Ps. xlii. 10).

If now we compare the Gospel records we find that, at the beginning of the Crucifixion, Christ was offered "wine mingled with myrrh" (Mark xv. 23) or, as St Matthew calls it, "vinegar mingled with gall" (Matt. xxvii. 34). This was offered in cruel mercy and was declined. During the hours of the

Let their deeds recoil upon themselves
(cf. Lam. iii. 64-66).

- 22 Let their table there before them become a snare
And a trap to them in (their) security^a. ^a or as a recompense
- 23 Let their eyes be darkened that they see not,
And let their loins tremble continually.
- 24 Pour out upon them Thy fury^b, ^b Jer. x. 25
And let the heat of Thine anger o'ertake them.
- 25 Let their encampment be desolate^c, ^c Jer. x. 25
And, in their tents, not one to dwell!
- 26 For THOU—when Thou hast smitten they persecute,
And they add^d to the pain of those that are wounded
by Thee. ^d So Sept. &c.
- 27 Add iniquity^e to their iniquity^e, ^e or punishment
And let them not come into Thy righteousness;
- 28 Let them be blotted out from the book of the living,
And not enrolled^f among the righteous. ^f Ezek. xiii. 9

Crucifixion it was offered again and again (Luke xxiii. 36) with mockery that calls to mind the taunt "Where is thy God?" At "the ninth hour" (Mark xv. 34) Jesus cried "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Ps. xxii. 1); and, immediately afterwards, "I thirst" (John xix. 28). What that thirst was may be gathered from Ps. xlii. 2 (note p. 174). For this thirst all that men offered was a little vinegar in a sponge! (Joh. xix. 29 f.; cf. Matt. xxvii. 47 f.; Mark xv. 36).

v. 22. Instead of the word which we translated "in their security" the Septuagint, by a change merely of the vowel points, read, "for a recompense" or "retribution." This reading is adopted by St Paul (Rom. xi. 8-10): "According as it is written, God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this very day. And David saith,

Let their table be made a snare, and a trap,
And a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them:
Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see,
And bow Thou down their back away."

St Paul's argument assumes, what we hold to be the truth, that our Psalm is directed against apostate Jews, in which case the Speaker is, of course, the pious 'remnant.' He had been made, by them, to feed, as it were, upon "gall" and "vinegar" (v. 21), and now, as their "recompense," God gives them to drink "a wine of reeling" (Ps. lx. 3), "a spirit of stupor," which numbs them from the power of thought, and darkens their eyes, so that the truth they have rejected is, for a time, hidden from them.

St Paul uses the 'imprecation,' not as a curse, but, as the expression of the consequences that naturally follow from the sin.

v. 25. "Let their encampment be desolate." Though the word "encampment" or "palace" is an unusual one, the general meaning is identical with that of Jer. xlix. 20, where it is foretold that God will make the habitations of Edom to be desolate (cf. Jer. l. 45).

"And, in their tents, not one to dwell." St Jerome explains these words by Matt. xxiii. 38 (Luke xiii. 33), "Your house is left unto you desolate": since the departure of Christ meant the departure of all good.

St Paul, while quoting this very imprecation against the Jews (see note on v. 22), declares that they did not 'stumble that they might fall'; nay, that "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. xi. 11, 25). May we not then read some hope into the painful passage, Acts i. 20, where the words of this verse are applied to Judas?

- 29 But as for me^a, the poor-one, the pained-one^b!
Thy salvation, O God, shall set me on high. ^a Pss. xxxv. 13;
xl. 17
^b cf. Jer. xv. 18
- 30 I would praise the name of God with a song,
And magnify Him with thanksgiving:
- 31 And it shall please^c YHVH better than an ox,
Than a bullock horned and hooped! ^c cf. Ps. xl. 6
- Closely parallel
with Ps. xxii. 23-26. 32 The poor-ones^d when they see it will be glad.
Ye seekers^d after God, let your heart revive^d. ^d Ps. xxii. 26
- 33 For YHVH hearkeneth^e to the needy,
And despiseth^e not His prisoners. ^e Ps. xxii. 24
- 34 Let heaven and earth praise^f Him,
The seas and all that moves therein. ^f Ps. xxii. 23
- 35 For God will save Zion,
And will build the cities of Judah,
That they may abide there and possess her,
- 36 And that the seed of His servants may inherit her,
And that those that love His Name may dwell in her.

v. 27. "Add iniquity to their iniquity." In early times *iniquity* was realized through its *punishment*; so that the same word serves for both (see Gen. iv. 13 text and margin).

The present verse might therefore merely signify "add punishment to their punishment." But, when we compare the other Psalm of imprecation (Ps. cix. 14), "Let the iniquity of his fathers be held in memory by God &c." we are forced to conclude that God is asked, not of course, to make them sin, but, to let them fill up the measure of their fathers (Matt. xxiii. 32).

v. 28. "Let them be blotted out..." We must not interpret "the book of living," or "the book of life" by the later development of the thought in the New Testament (Rev. iii. 5; xiii. 8 &c.), but rather from such passages as Ezek. xiii. 9, "Neither shall they (the false prophets) be written in the writing of the house of Israel &c."

vv. 35, 36. There is a growing sense of security in the verbs "possess her," "inherit her," "dwell in her." The first word (*yrsh*) implies *possession by conquest*, the second (*nhl*), the *dividing of the land as an inheritance*, the third (*shkn*, whence *Shekinah*), the *tabernacling*, or *peaceful dwelling* in the land. This last word points to the Divine Indwelling. God has chosen to dwell in Zion (Ps. lxxviii. 16, 18; lxxiv. 2; cxxxv. 21; cf. Is. viii. 18) therefore also "those that love His Name (Pss. v. 11; cxix. 132) may dwell in her" (cf. Ps. lxxv. 4).

PSALM LXX.

This Psalm has already been considered in Part I. (p. 165) where it occurs as *vv.* 13—17 of Ps. xl., the only variations being due, either to mistakes in spelling, or to changes in the name of God. The reader will not fail to note the interesting relationship between Pss. xxxv. xxxviii.—xli. and Pss. lxix.—lxxi., i.e. between the close of Book I. and the close of Book II. This, however, belongs to the large and difficult question of parallel groups, a question which can be more profitably discussed at a later period of our investigations.

PSALM LXX.

A more correct text of this Psalm occurs as vv. 13—17 of Ps. xl.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 ".....O God^a, to deliver me ;
O YHVH, speed to my help.</p> | <p>^a YHVH in parallel text</p> |
| <p>2 Let them be shamed^b and confounded
That are seeking my soul ;</p> | <p>^b Ps. xxxv. 26</p> |
| <p>3 Let them be turned backward and disgraced
That find pleasure in my misfortune^c.
Let them [be turned]^d to their shame
That say "Aha, Aha!"</p> | <p>^c Ps. xxxv. 26
^d <i>dumb-founded</i> in the parallel text</p> |
| <p>4 Let all that seek Thee be joyful and glad in Thee ;
Let them that love Thy salvation ever say,
"God^e be magnified^e."</p> | <p>^e Ps. xxxv. 21, 25
^f or YHVH</p> |
| <p>5 As for me^h—poor and needy—
Godⁱ [speed Thee] for me.
My Helper, my Deliverer Thou art :
O YHVH^k, do not delay!"</p> | <p>^g Ps. xxxv. 27
^h Ps. xxxv. 13
ⁱ <i>The Lord taketh thought</i> in parallel text
^k <i>My God</i> in parallel text</p> |

v. 4. "God (or YHVH) be magnified." These familiar words only occur in the two texts of this Psalm and in Ps. xxxv. 27.

PSALM LXXI.

We have here little more than a compilation or adaptation of earlier Psalms; but the Psalms, thus adapted, all belong to that class of fast-day Psalms in which the influence of Jeremiah is most clearly traced, viz. Pss. xxii., xxxi., xxxv., xxxviii., xl.

Without assuming the historical accuracy of the Book of Esther, or of the derivation of Purim which is there given, we may, at least, infer, from that Book, what thoughts were uppermost on the Jewish fast-days. A fast turned into a feast was a feature in all early natural religions: but the Jew realized that Nature is completed in Man; consequently festivals, which among his Semitic neighbours were mere expressions of the physical struggle between light and darkness, became, to him, the natural exponents of the moral struggle between good and evil, or, what to him was the same thing, between Israel and the World. Thus the great days which had been turning-points in the seasons of the year, became inseparably linked with the great events which had been turning-points in the history of Israel.

If then we consider the fast-feast of Purim, which, as the last full moon in the year, doubtless had a Nature-origin¹, we may learn from the Book of Esther how such "fasts" would be observed. The fast (on the 13th) would represent the obscuration of Israel (compare *vv.* 4, 10 f. of our Psalm), beset by enemies and false accusations; the feast (on the 14th) would represent the certain end of that sorrow turned into the full light of joy (compare the closing words of the Psalm). The fierce vindictiveness of the Book of Esther may be set aside as an accident of the time, but the spiritual lesson remains for all time:—the Man of God is despised and acquainted with grief; his enemies exult; but suddenly, God acts, and raises him to great honour.

We know from Zechariah (viii. 19) that fasts, similar to that of Purim in the 12th month, were observed in the 4th, 5th, 7th, and 10th months: I would therefore suggest that Pss. xxii., xxxi., xxxv., xxxviii.—xl., lxxi., which have so much in common, may have been written for one or more of these fasts. If this be admitted it will go far to explain the relationship between the Psalms which close Book I. (xxxv., xxxviii.—xli) and those which close Book II. (lxix—lxxi), to which we have alluded in our Introduction to Ps. lxx.

The English reader will naturally suppose that this Psalm, at least, cannot refer to Israel since the speaker alludes to "*my birth*," "*the womb of my mother*" (*v.* 6), "*the time of age*" (*v.* 9), "*age and old (grey hairs)*" (*v.* 18). If this be so, let him turn to Hos. xi. 1, which speaks of Israel's "*childhood*," and to Hos. vii. 9, where it is said of the Nation, "*grey hairs are here and there upon him*"; and above all, to Is. xlvi. 3 f., "*O House of Jacob, and all the remnant of the House of Israel, which have been borne (by Me) from the belly, which have been carried from the womb: and even to old age I am He, and even to grey hairs I will carry (you).*"

¹ The 15th of Adar was a festival of the Sun-god at Sippar (Hommel, *Babylonia* in Hastings' Dictionary).

PSALM LXXI.

A movable Preface
which occurs also in
the beginning of Ps.
xxxii.

- 1 "In Thee, YHVH, I have taken refuge,
Never can I come to shame!
2 In Thy righteousness [rescue me and] deliver me;
Incline Thine ear to me,
[and help me].
3 Be Thou to me a rock-[dwelling]^a
[for continual resort]
[Thou hast given a charge] to save me;
For my rock and my fortress Thou art."

^a or *refuge-rock*
as in Ps. xxxii.
2. See Sept.

An adaptation of
Ps. xxii. 9, 10.

- 4 O my God deliver me from the hand of the wicked;
From the grasp of the unrighteous and cruel^b man.
5 For Thou art my hope, O Lord^c YHVH;
"My trust"^d from my youth up.
6 On Thee have I been stayed^e from my birth;
From the womb of my mother THOU wert [He that
took me];
In Thee hath been my hope^f continuously.
7 I became "as a wonder"^g unto many;
Yet Thou art my strong Refuge^h.
8 My mouth is filled with Thy praise;
All the day long with Thy glory.

^b only here

^c *Adonai*, cf. v.
16

^d Ps. xl. 4

^e Is. xlvi. 2

^f so Sym., cf.
Ps. xxxix. 7

^g Deut. xxviii.
46

^h Ps. lxii. 7 f.

v. 3. The words in square brackets are obviously due to a corruption of the text, as Baethgen has well shewn; for, if the Hebrew words be written continuously (*scriptio defectiva*), as in early mss., they would stand thus:—

In Ps. xxxii. לְבֵית־מְצוּדוֹת "a fortress-home" (lit. "a house of defence").

In Ps. lxxi. לְבוֹת־מְצוּדוֹת "for continual resort Thou hast given a charge" (lit. "to enter continually Thou hast commanded").

For, as Baethgen notes, לָבוֹא "to enter" was sometimes written לָבוּ; see 1 Kings xxi. 29; Mic. i. 15.

The reader will see at once how easy it was for the mistake to occur. The Septuagint had a correct text as in Ps. xxxii.

v. 5. "my hope." God's people are "prisoners of hope" (Zech. ix. 12). They understand that the Covenant must imply "hope in (their) latter end" (Jer. xxix. 11, see context and cf. Jer. xxxi. 17). Meanwhile the *expectation* involves pain; "the valley of Achor (is the) door of hope" (Hos. ii. 15). But it will not always be so; "The expectation (hope) of the poor will not perish for ever" (Ps. ix. 18).

"My trust," i.e. *My ground of confidence*. In the Psalter the word only occurs in two other passages, viz. Ps. xl. 4, where we have translated it by "trust," and Ps. lxxv. 5, where it has been rendered by "hope." See notes on both these passages and observe the reference to Jer. xvii. 7.

The prayer of Israel's old age.

9 Cast me not away in the time of age ;
 As my strength leaves me do not Thou forsake me ;
 10 For mine enemies talk against me,
 And those that watch for my life take counsel together,
 11 Saying, " God hath forsaken him ;
 Pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver."
 12 " O God, be not far from me^a ;
 " My God, speed to my help^b."

An adaptation of Ps. xxxv. 4, 26 (cf. xl. 14; lxx. 2).

13 " LET THEM BE PUT TO SHAME [AND CONSUMED]^c
 THAT ARE ADVERSARIES TO MY SOUL ;
 LET THEM BE COVERED WITH REPROACH AND SCORN
 THAT ARE SEEKING EVIL FOR ME^d."

^a Pss. xxii. 11, 19; xxxv. 22; xxxviii. 21

^b Pss. xl. 13 (lxx. 1); xxxviii. 22

^c Syr. *and confounded*

^d v. 24

The truth expressed in vv. 5-8 is here (vv. 14 ff.) applied to practice.

14 But, as for me, I hope on continuously^e,
 And add to all Thy praise^f.
 15 My mouth^f recounts Thy righteousness,
 Thy saving-acts all the day long^f.
 For I know not how to number (them)^g!

^e cf. v. 6

^f cf. v. 8

^g cf. Ps. xl. 5

16 I come with the mighty-deeds of the Lord^h YHVH ;
 And celebrate Thy righteousness, Thine alone !

^h *Adonai*, cf. v. 5

17 O God, Thou didst teach me from my youth ;
 And up till now I tell of Thy wondrous worksⁱ.

ⁱ Pss. xxvi. 7; xl. 5

Israel returns to the prayer of vv. 9 ff. but with the assurance learnt from history.

18 And so, to age and eld^k, O God, forsake me not ;
 Until I shall tell Thy power^l to posterity^m ;
 And, to all that shall come, Thy might and Thy righteousnessⁿ.

^k *grey hairs*

^l *arm*

^m cf. Ps. xxii. 30 f.

ⁿ Sept.

19 O God, up to the height are the great things Thou hast done !

O God, who is like unto Thee ?

Did not God bring us back from Captivity ?

20 Thou didst let us see sorrows great and sore ;
 Thou turnest and revivest us ;
 Thou turnest and bringest us up from the depths of the earth.

v. 7. " *As a wonder.*" The word properly denotes a *miracle*, rather as a *wonder* than as a *sign*: but Ezekiel uses it four times (xii. 6, 11; xxiv. 24, 27) of himself as a *sign*, or *warning type*, of that which should befall his People (cf. Zech. iii. 8).

There is, however, one passage, and one only, in which the word is used exactly in the sense of our Psalm, viz. Deut. xxviii. 46, " *And they* (i.e. the curses) *shall be upon thee for a sign and FOR A WONDER.*"

Our Psalmist implies that this threat has been fulfilled, Israel had become " a spectacle unto the world " (1 Cor. iv. 9) in his sorrows, yet his Refuge-rock, in God, remains unshaken.

v. 16. " *I will come with the mighty deeds...*" The translation of the E.V., " *I will go in the strength of the Lord God,*" though it gives a beautiful meaning, is not accurate. The Psalmist, who

God, who worked
then, is working now.

- 21 Increase my greatness^a,
And, turning, comfort me.
- 22 I too shall thank Thee on the harp^b—
Thy truth, O my God!
I shall hymn to Thee with the lyre,
O Holy One of Israel.
- 23 My lips will ring with song when I
shall hymn to Thee,
And my soul, which Thou hast redeemed.
- 24 My tongue also, all the day long, shall
meditate Thy righteousness :

^a Esther vi. 3:
x. 2

^b 1 Chr. xvi. 5

FOR THEY ARE SHAMED, FOR THEY ARE CONFOUNDED
THAT ARE SEEKING EVIL FOR ME^c.

^c v. 13

in v. 5, had said, "*Thou art my hope, O Lord, YHVH,*" had stayed his faith in what God *would* do upon the certainty of what God *had already done* for Israel: so now, in v. 16, he comes before God, not with his own merits, but, with God's past mercies; "*I come with the mighty-deeds of the Lord YHVH.*"

v. 17. "*And up till now.*" Israel can look back to God's mercies to him "*when he was a child*" (Hos. xi. 1) in Egypt, and throughout his whole after-life, up to the present, he can see nothing but marvels of mercy.

v. 18 ff. "*And so to age and old.*" Israel learnt, from God's dealings with the Nation, what could never have been learnt from the experiences of any individual life. But the lesson, once learnt, became the abiding possession of the individual believer. Thus, the Fatherhood of God was first inferred from His relation to the Nation; and the Resurrection of the dead became a pious hope for the individual through the Resurrection of Israel from the death of the Captivity. The life of Christ transformed these pious hopes into certainties. Thus the Christian is entitled to apply to the individual life words which were originally intended to refer to the Community (Ps. lxxi. is used in the Visitation of the Sick); but the Christian, also, will best strengthen his faith in God's loving purposes for himself, by looking back through the history of God's wonderful dealings with His Church. No other study will bring home, so forcibly, the truth that

"The best is yet to be
The last of life, for which the first was made."

Compare also note on Ps. lxxviii. 24.

Nicolaus Selnecker composed a Prayer for the Church from vv. 9, 18 of our Psalm, coupled with Is. xlvi. 3, 4 (Wackernagel iv. pp. 278 f., quoted by Grünwald).

PSALM LXXII.

The "King," in this Psalm, is the ideal Ruler of men, just as in Pss. xxi. and xlv., but, whereas in those Psalms the King is seen as a Conquering Hero, in Ps. lxxii. he is essentially the "Prince of Peace."

The Psalm opens with a prayer for the Advent of this King (*vv.* 1, 2). Next there follows a summary of Messianic prophecy, consisting of twelve verses of two lines each (*vv.* 3-14), in which the effect of his beneficent rule is traced, (*a*) in a new glory on the Earth, (*b*) in an all-extending empire, and (*c*) in the redemption of the poor and needy.

The Psalm closes with what we may call a threefold Amen, consisting of three verses (15-17), each having three lines. The marginal notes will show how each of these Amens sets its seal to one of the three promises which we have marked (*a*), (*b*), (*c*).

Verses 18, 19 must be ascribed to the Editor who divided the Psalms in five Books. The threefold Blessing may well have been suggested by the threefold Amen.

PSALM LXXII.

Israel, in oppression, cries for the promised King.

- 1 O God, give Thy judgements unto the King ;
And Thy righteousness unto the King's son.
2 May he vindicate^a Thy People with right ;
And Thy Poor-ones with judgement !

^a Ps. vii. 8 :
ix. 8 : xcvi.
10 : cxxxv.
14

v. 1. The "King's son" merely denotes "the King" as being himself of royal birth.

vv. 1, 2. "Thy judgements..." "Thy righteousness..." "right"... "judgement." May God inspire the King with the very spirit of the Law, so that his judgements on earth may be a reflex of the judgements of God in heaven (cf. Deut. xxxiii. 10, 21). For this technical use of "judgements," "righteousness," see Introduction to Ps. cxix. p. 50 f.

v. 3. "The mountains will yield peace." There is a sense in which the mountains may stand as the natural emblem of the Divine protection (Ps. cxxi. 1 ; cxxv. 1, 2). But this is not the meaning here. It is better to interpret the words in the light of Ezekiel's prophecy to the mountains of Israel, (Chap. xxxvi. 8 ff.), "But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to My people Israel; for they are at hand to come. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown (cf. *v.* 16 of our Psalm): and I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited," &c. See the whole context, and compare *v.* 16 of our Psalm. The thought is essentially Messianic. Compare Ps. lxxxv. 9-13 :

"Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,
Orb'd in a rainbow ; and, like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen,
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering ;
And Heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall."

A meditation on the blessings foretold in prophecy [e.g. Joel iii. 18: Is. ix. 6 f.; xi.: Mic. v. 4-7: Zech. ix. 10].

- 3 The mountains will yield peace^a to the People,
And the hills, righteousness^a.
- 4 He will judge the poor-ones of the People,
Save the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor.
- 5 He will lengthen^b out (days) with the sun,
And with the moon, throughout all generations.
- 6 He will come down like rain^c on the grass^d;
As the rain-drops^e that drip on the earth.
- 7 Righteousness^f will bud^g forth in his days;
And abundance of peace^h, so long as the moon exists.
- 8 And he will ruleⁱ "from sea to sea,
And from the River to the bounds of the earth!"
- 9 Before him foes will bow down;
And his enemies will lick the dust.
- 10 The kings of Tarshish and the Isles will pay tribute;
The kings of Sheba and Seba will bring presents^j.
- 11 All kings will pay him worship;
All nations will do him service.
- 12 For he delivers the needy when he crieth^k;
The afflicted also, that hath no helper^k.
- 13 He is pitiful over the poor and needy;
And the souls of the needy he saveth.
- 14 From violence and wrong he redeemeth their soul;
And precious is their blood in his sight.

v. 7

^b cf. Sept.^c cf. 2 Sam. xxiii. 4^d *movings*, Amos vii. 1^e Ps. lxxv. 10^f cf. Sept.^g Is. xxxv. 2^h v. 3ⁱ Zech. ix. 10^j Ezek. xxvii. 15^k cf. Job xxix. 12

The tenses may be taken, either as *futures*, or, as *historic presents*.

v. 5. "He will lengthen out (days)." The Sept. seems to have read the Hebrew letters ךָיִן "he shall prolong" instead of ךָיִן "they shall fear thee." This reading is undoubtedly correct, since it agrees with the parallelism in the second member of the verse, and also with v. 17. Compare also Is. liiii. 10 and Ps. lxxxix. 36, 37.

Baethgen quotes Ovid, *Amor.* i. 16, "Cum sole et luna semper Aratus erit."

v. 6. "As the raindrops." See note on Ps. lxxv. 10. The lines there quoted from Chaucer will best explain the thought of this verse.

v. 7. We must read, with the Sept., *tsedek*, "righteousness," not *tsadik*, "the righteous."

"Righteousness...And abundance of peace." The "Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. iv. 2) will make righteousness to spring forth like flowers (Ps. lxxxv. 10 f. 13; Is. xxxii. 16 f.; xlv. 8: lxi. 11). The "Prince of Peace" (Is. ix. 6) will give "peace on earth" (cf. Heb. vii. 2). The same prophecy which tells of the "outspring (E.V. Branch) of righteousness" also tells of "abundance of peace and truth," (Jer. xxxiii. 6, 15).

v. 9. The text reads בְּיַד , "the desert-tribes," i.e. the wild beasts (Ps. lxxiv. 14; Is. xiii. 21; xxxiv. 14; Jer. l. 39). But, in manuscript, a mistake between the letters *yod* and *resh* is not uncommon; it is better therefore (with Olhausen, etc.) to read בְּיַד , "foes."

v. 16. The word (הַפְּרֵשׁ), which we have translated "outspread," is not found elsewhere in Biblical Hebrew, consequently there are many translations which are little more than guesses (E.V. "a handful," R.V. "an abundance," P.B.V. "a heap").

But, in the Talmud and Midrash, the word is found in the sense of "extension" (see Buxtorf). The Midrash Rabba, on Gen. ii., actually uses the word of the "tree of life," which is supposed to

An *Amen* to vv. 8-11. May he have the promised Empire!

15 May he live! and may there be given him of Sheba's gold;
 May prayer be made for him continuously;
 All the day long may they bless him.

An *Amen* to vv. 3-7. May all Nature feel his Advent!

16 May there be an outspread of golden-grain^a in the Land; ^a Sept. differs
 In the top of the mountains may its fruit stir like Lebanon;
 And may they blossom^b forth from the City like the herbage ^b Is. xxvii. 6
 of the Earth.

be so called because it is "a tree which *extends* (or *spreads*) over the face of all living." In the discussion, which follows, the question is asked, "What was that tree?"; and the answer is given that it was *wheat*. The objector replies that it is called "a tree," but is told that they (i.e. the stalks of wheat) will be "higher than the palms, and like the cedars of Lebanon." Finally the Midrash quotes this verse of our Psalm, "*There shall be an outspread of corn in the Land.*" I claim that this passage justifies my translation. But may we also take it as a guide to the interpretation of verse? I think we may. The *tree*, or rather, *trees of life* (for the noun is a noun of multitude) is found in all early religions. Eridu had its sacred tree of Paradise, "The pure abode, which stretches out its shade like a grove" (WAI IV. 15 52 ff. See *Babylonia* in Hastings' *Dictionary*). Concerning this "tree" there is an old bilingual hymn which Sayce (*Hibbert Lectures*, p. 238) thus translates:—

- 1 "(In) Eridu a stalk grew over-shadowing; in a holy place did it become green :
- 2 its root was of white crystal which stretched towards the deep ;
- 3 (before) Ea was its course in Eridu, teeming with fertility,
- 4 its seat was the (central) place of the earth ;
- 5 its foliage (?) was the couch of Zikum (the primaeval) mother.
- 6 Into the heart of its holy house, which spread its shade like a forest, hath no man entered" etc.

According to Biblical thought the "trees of life" are to be restored, by the removal of the 'curse,' and all Nature is to become once more a Paradise in the days of the Messiah (Ezek. xlvii. 1-12; Is. xxxii. 15; lv. 13 etc.). Our Psalm expresses this hope. "*May there be an outspread of golden-grain in the Land.*"

"*In the top of the mountains.*" Corn does not grow by Nature "in the top of the mountains." But the words may possibly imply that the corn itself is mountain-high. In either case we have to do with the work, not of Nature but, of Grace.

"*May its fruit stir like Lebanon.*" The Hebrew word *rāqsh* (cf. English *crash*) denotes sound as well as motion. It is generally translated "*shake*" or "*tremble*," especially of the *earthquake*, but also of "the sound of a great *rushing*" (Ezek. iii. 12, 13). In the present passage we must picture the rushing sound in a forest of cedars, as they toss their heads in the wind, and then we must transfer the thought, by a bold figure, to the rustle and stir in the mountain-fields of corn. Compare Virgil's "*Silvanique sonantem*" (*Georg.* i. 76), which Rhoades translates,

"And lupin sour, whose brittle stalks arise
A hurtling forest."

Keble's rendering, though far too timid, has, in part, caught the meaning:—

"Like Lebanon by soft winds fann'd,
 Rustles the golden harvest far and wide."

If the Psalm were written for use at the Passover, this verse would acquire a new meaning in the gift of the true Bread from Heaven.

"*And may they blossom forth from the city...*" In vv. 3, 7 we have a lovely picture of righteousness and peace budding forth, like flowers, from what, before, was barren hill and mountain; but in this verse the thought is transferred to "*the City*," and the "blossoms," now, are men (cf. Is. xlv. 4).

An *Amen* to vv. 17 May his name endure for ever ;
 12-14. May his name be increasing with the sun ;
 May all nations be blessed^a in him, and pronounce him^a happy.
^a Gen. xxii. 18 ; xxvi. 4

The Ascription to 18 BLESSED BE YHVH, GOD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL, WHO
 Book II. A three- ONLY DOETH WONDROUS THINGS :
 fold Blessing. 19 AND BLESSED BE HIS GLORIOUS NAME FOR EVER :
 AND MAY "THE WHOLE EARTH BE FILLED WITH HIS
 GLORY^b."

AMEN AND AMEN.

^b Numb. xiv. 21 ; cf. Is. vi. 3

20 *The Prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended^c.*

^c Cf. Job xxxi. 40

v. 17. "*May his name be increasing...*" The verb *yinnun* (or *yanin*) which only occurs here, seems to be formed from the substantive *nin*, "*offspring*." The word therefore suggests the picture of a tree, like the olive, which is ever sending forth young trees from its root. But there is a close connexion, in Biblical thought, between the outspring of vegetation from the earth, and the outspring of light from the sun (cf. Heb. *tsemach*, Gk. *ἀναβολή*): when therefore we read, "*May his name be increasing (or putting forth shoots) with the sun*" we must not suppose that there is a mixture of metaphors, but, rather, that two closely related thoughts are suggested to the mind. As the earth, feeling the growing light of the sun, is ever putting forth new life, so may his name grow with the growing Light, "*From age to age more glorious, all-blessing and all-blest.*"

v. 20. These words, which close Book II., are due to an Editor, and are here out of place. We may have to consider them later, when we speak of the general arrangement of the Psalter.

PSALM LXXIII.

The standpoint of the 'Asaph' Psalm LXXIII. is exactly that of 'Malachi' (c. 460 B.C.) A great reaction had followed upon the high hopes of Zechariah, Haggai, and Zerubbabel. Persia had not yet begun to persecute, but Israel was in danger of total apostasy. Many causes tended to this: such as intermarriage with the heathen (Mal. ii. 10—16), the influence of the wealthy Samaritans, the prosperity of the Nations of the World. All these causes led men to say, "Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of YHVH, and He delighteth in them: or else, Where is the God of judgement?" (Mal. ii. 17). "It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept His charge, and that we have walked in mourning garb before YHVH of Hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are built up; yea, they that tempt God are delivered" (Mal. iii. 14 f.). At such a time, our Psalmist, speaking on behalf of the pious remnant of the Nation (Mal. iii. 16), gives voice to the hopes and trials of his day. We may paraphrase his words as follows:—

'Yes; the Creed of Deuteronomy is right, but it needs a new setting; Israel is God's "Peculiar People"; but I must understand, by 'Israel,' not the Nation but, "*the pure in heart*" (v. 1). It is union with God that is Israel's all-in-all (vv. 23—28). Other nations may have wealth and power; Israel has God. But it is not easy to realize this (v. 2). I look around me, I see the wicked prosper, they carry all before them, they scoff at the religion of their fathers, nothing, in Heaven or on Earth is sacred in their eyes (vv. 3—9); many timid believers, seeing their prosperity, are being led to think that it is vain to serve God (vv. 10—14); sometimes I am half tempted to say the same:—but if I did, I feel that I should be a traitor to that little band of faithful ones (Mal. iii. 16) who still represent the Israel of God (v. 15). Then I begin to enter into the sanctuaries of God's thought and to understand His purposes in Creation (v. 17): I see the utter nothingness of what the world calls prosperity (vv. 18—20).

'I now look back with wonder and compassion on the brutish ignorance into which I had almost fallen, for I now understand that "*with Thee*" must comprehend every joy that is possible for man, in this life or in any other; for this end, like Enoch, I was created, to walk with God, to be "taken" by God, and to be so joined unto Him as to become "one spirit." This "nearness to God" is the only satisfying good. And it is mine! So shall I ever be with the Lord (vv. 21—end).'

To save needless repetition I must refer the reader to my notes on Ps. XLIX. That Psalm is the last of the Elohist Korah Psalms, while our present Psalm is the first of a group of Asaph Psalms. The two Psalms are closely parallel in thought and must be studied together.

PSALM LXXIII.

1 Surely God is goodness (itself) unto Israel^a,
Even unto the pure of heart.

^a Cf. Mal. i. 2

The prosperity of the wicked is inexplicable from the world's standpoint (cf. Job xxi.).

2 But as for me—my feet had well nigh gone;
My steps had all but slipped.

3 For I was jealous^b at the mad-boasters^c;
I beheld the prosperity of the wicked^d.

^b Ps. xxxvii. 1

^c Ps. v. 5: lxxv.

4

^d Cf. Mal. ii.

17: iii. 14 f.

v. 1. "*Surely.*" The little word *ak!* "*surely,*" "*nay but*" occurs three (possibly four) times in this Psalm (vv. 1, 13, 18 and 19?). It is also characteristic of the Korah Psalm, xlix., and of Ps. lxii. (See notes, pp. 211, 260.) Both these Psalms have much in common with our present Psalm.

"*God is goodness (itself) unto Israel,*" i.e. He is good, and nothing but good, in spite of all that may seem. "*To Israel God is only good*" (Keble).

The truth which is held, in spite of all that seems, in v. 1, is realized with joy in the last verse of the Psalm.

v. 2. "*But as for me.*" This expression also occurs four times (vv. 2, 22, 23, 28). The first two instances refer to man in his natural weakness, the second two to man in the Divine strength.

v. 3. "*I was jealous at the mad-boasters.*" He was not jealous of them, as wishing to imitate them, but zealous and jealous for God's justice, which the life of the wicked seemed to mock and

- 4 For no pangs^a are theirs;
 Sound and robust is their health^b.
 5 The toil of mortal-man is not for them;
 Nor are they stricken like as other men.

^a or *bands*, Is. lviii. 6
^b or *their might*, 2 Kings xxiv. 16

Instead of being "clothed with humility" (1 Pet. v. 5) these are clothed with pride!

- 6 Therefore pride bedecks their necks;
 Violence enrobes them as their very garment.
 7 Their iniquity^c goes forth in grossness^d;
 The devices of (their) heart overflow.

^c Sept.
^d *fat*

- 8 They mock while they wickedly speak;
 They loftily speak of oppression.
 9 They have set their mouth against Heaven;
 And their tongue traverseth the Earth.

Even God's people are tempted to think that "*it is vain to serve God*" (Mal. iii. 14).

- 10 Therefore His people turn thither,
 And abundant waters are sucked in by them.
 11 And they say, "How can God^e know?
 "And is there perception in the Most High?
 12 "Lo these are the wicked,
 "Yet, ever restful, they attained to power!
 13 "Surely in vain did I cleanse my heart,
 "And wash mine hands in innocency,
 14 "Merely to be plagued all the day,
 "And chastened^f every morning."

^e *El*

^f lit. "*my chastisement*"

to disprove. The attitude of the Psalmist was identical with that of Habakkuk (chap. i.—ii. 4), or of Job. He was tempted to become a sceptic through his very zeal for God. For

"virtue in distress, and vice in triumph,
 Make atheists of mankind."

v. 4. The reading of the text, *l'mothâm*, "*to their deaths*" or "*in their deaths*," is now almost universally rejected by scholars, in favour of the reading given in our translation, which requires no further change than to divide the word *l'mothâm* into two, reading *lamo*, "*to them*," at the end of the line, and *thâm*, "*sound*," at the beginning of the next line.

v. 7. "*Their iniquity*." The text has עֵינָם, "*their eye*," but the Sept. read עֵינָם, "*their iniquity*," and this reading is adopted by most scholars.

"*The devices* (lit. "*pictures*") *of (their) heart overflow*." (Cf. Matt. xv. 18 ff.) Or, possibly, "*They exceed all that heart can picture*," or, as E.V. and R.V., "*They have more than heart could wish*." Ezekiel uses the same word when speaking of the sinners of Israel, "Every man in the chambers of his imagery" (Ezek. viii. 12).

Perhaps the closest parallel is found in Jer. v. 28, "*They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked...yet they prosper*." The reader will observe that, in this passage also, the sinners are not of the heathen but of Israel (v. 26).

The whole context in the Psalm should be compared with Ps. xlix. 13, note, p. 212.

v. 9. The Targum paraphrases thus:—"They have set their mouth against the holy ones of heaven and their tongue flameth against the holy ones of earth" (cf. James iii. 5 f.; 2 Pet. ii. 10 f.; Jude 8—10).

I must not cowardly
desert the communion
of saints (cf. Hebrews
x. 25; Mal. iii. 16f.).

God's purpose in
creation explains all.

Losing sight of
God's Sabbath pur-
pose, I put myself on
the level of the beast
(see Ps. xlix.).

15 If I had said, "I will speak like these,"
Lo, then I had been false to the generation of Thy children.

16 Yet, when I ponder to understand this,
It is grievous in mine eyes;

17 Until I come to the Sanctuaries^a of God^b
(Until) I consider their latter-end^c.

18 Surely mid delusions^d Thou wilt place them;
Thou castest them down to utter destruction.

19 How, in a moment, are they turned to desolation!
Ended and gone with very terror!

20 As a dream, when one awaketh!
So Thou, Lord^e, when roused, wilt spurn their image.

21 When my heart was embittered,
And my reins were disturbed,

22 Then, as for me, I was brutish and could not know;
Merely beast-like^f I became "with Thee!"

^a Cf. Ps. lxxvii.

13

^b *El*

^c Deut. xxxii.

29

^d *flatteries*

^e Adonai

^f 2 Pet. ii. 12

v. 10. The text is somewhat doubtful, but the sense seems to be that the prosperity of the sinners of Israel is a temptation to the feeble ones of God's people to fall away and become apostates.

v. 11. "*And they say.*" The words which follow, to the end of v. 14, are to be taken as the words of these timid believers. They are not the words of the Psalmist, though he too (v. 15) has felt the temptation to adopt them. Neale well compares Mrs E. B. Browning's *Cry of the Children*,

"For God's possible is taught by His world's loving—
And the children doubt of each."

v. 17. "*Until I come to the Sanctuaries of God.*" The "*Sanctuaries*" of God must not be limited to the Temple which was, indeed, only one expression of a much wider thought. The *Sanctuary* is the end and aim of God in His work of Creation (see Lecture I. in my *Asaph Psalms*). The Seventh '*Day*' is one expression of this aim. The Seventh *Month* was felt, from the very earliest times, to be another expression of the same thought, and was called, both by Babylonians and by Jews, "*The Sanctuary*"; even the Akkadians called it "*the holy Mountain.*" The Temples or *Zikkurats*, rising, as they often did, in seven stages, were but a visible representation of the spheres or stages between earth and heaven. Unfortunately, for us, the *Sanctuary* has become so entirely identified with the Jewish Temple that the "pattern in the Mount" has been quite forgotten.

The "*Sanctuaries of God*" were, to our Psalmist, those final purposes of God of which both Sabbath and Temple were but types. It was there that he saw "the end" of the wicked. Israel is saved from apostasy by seeing the end both of evil (vv. 18—20) and of good (vv. 23—25).

So Beatrice tells the Angels that nothing could avail to turn Dante from his brutish course short of the sight of heaven and of hell.

"His steps were turn'd into deceitful ways,
Following false images of good, that make
No promise perfect.....

.....
Such depth he fell, that all device was short
Of his preserving, save that he should view
The children of perdition."

(*Purg.* xxx. 132 ff. Cary's transl.)

Yet God made me
for Himself. He has
been my Guide, and
will be my Home.

23 Yet, as for me, I am ever "with Thee!"
Thou holdest me by the right hand.
24 Thou guidest me with Thy counsel,
And, after, wilt "take me" to glory.
25 Who else is mine in the Heavens?
And, "with Thee" I measure no joy on earth.
26 My flesh may fail, and my heart,
But the Rock of my heart, and my Portion for ever, is—God.

To be far from God
is death.

27 For lo! Thy far-ones must perish:
Each one that goes whoring from Thee Thou destroyest.

To be "joined unto
the Lord" is life.

28 But as for me—the nearness of God is my good:
In the Lord YHVH have I set my refuge.
[To recount all Thy doings].

"(Until) I consider their latter end." So, speaking of Israel, it is said (Deut. xxxii. 29) "If they were wise they would understand this, they would consider their latter end."

v. 20. "As a dream, when one awaketh." Thus Shakespeare makes King Harry say of Falstaff,

"I have long dream'd of such a kind of man,
So surfeit-swell'd, so old and so profane;
But, being awaked, I do despise my dream."

"So Thou, Lord, when roused...." The Sept. translates, "Thou, O Lord, in Thy City, wilt spurn their image"; whence P.B.V., "So shalt Thou make their image to vanish out of the city." But it is better, with Targum, E.V., R.V. (text), and most moderns, to take the word, not as the substantive, "city," but, as the infinitive of the verb which signifies "to awake," i.e. "in the awaking," when God awakes to judgement.

v. 22. "Then, as for me, I was brutish...." When a man selfishly isolates himself from the Communion of Saints he does his best to uncreate himself, and to become no

"better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain."

Yet the responsibility for the Divine image and likeness remains. This is expressed, with terrible force, by the little word "with Thee!"

v. 24. "Thou guidest me...." The word is often used of God's guidance of Israel (Exod. xiii. 21, xv. 13; Deut. xxxii. 12; Is. lvii. 18, lviii. 11; and in many passages in the Psalms). It is, as we might expect, a favourite word in the Asaph Psalms, since they are full of the Shepherd-care of God for His People (cf. Pss. lxxvii. 20 (21), lxxviii. 14, 53, 72).

"And, after,...to glory." The Hebrew is strange, and closely parallel with Zech. ii. 8 (12), which should, perhaps, be translated, "And, afterwards, He hath gloriously sent me," &c.

"And, after, wilt take me." The reference to Enoch here, as in Ps. xlix. 15, is unmistakable. In the Korah Psalm, xlix., and the Asaph Psalm, lxxiii., the thought is closely parallel.—Man has no pre-eminence over the beasts except he lead the Enoch-life. Enoch was the type of Israel, the man after the Spirit.

The first man, Adam, is the work of the sixth day, and, like the beasts, of the earth earthy. The second man, Enoch (Israel), is "the seventh from Adam," and walks "with God," his Guide, to God, his Home (see notes on Ps. xlix. 15).

v. 27. "Thy far-ones." Not exactly "those that are far from Thee," as the heathen might be, but, "those that are estranged from Thee" (cf. Ps. cxix. 150). The union between Israel and God is likened to that of marriage. To break this union is spiritual adultery.

v. 28. "*But as for me—the nearness of God is my good.*" The word for "nearness" is suggestive. In Is. lviii. 2 it is translated, "they take delight in approaching to God." No doubt the verb is often used of *drawing near* to God in public worship, but it also lends itself to the deeper thought of the mystical union, since it is used of the relation between man and wife. The Septuagint translates, "*to be joined unto the Lord.*" Probably St Paul had this verse in his mind when, using almost the identical words, he said, "He that is *joined unto the Lord* is one spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 17). See the context, and Kay's note.

"*To recount all Thy doings.*" I suggest that these words, which break the structure of the verse, and spoil the sense, have crept into the text, possibly from the heading of another Psalm. The Septuagint adds, "*In the gates of the daughter of Zion*"; and these words are adopted in the P.B.V., though there is nothing to correspond with them in the Hebrew.

Possibly the words may be due to a recollection of Ps. ix. 14, where the Psalmist gives thanks for being uplifted "*from the gates of death, That I may tell of Thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion.*"

PSALM LXXIV.

Our present Psalm has been confidently assigned by critics to the Maccabean times, chiefly through the mistranslation of a word in v. 8, which, contrary to the whole use of the language, has been rendered "*houses of God,*" i.e. "*synagogues*" (v. 8, note).

It is also asserted that the words of v. 9 imply the total cessation of prophecy, though they are closely paralleled by Lam. ii. 9.

The following facts, which tell in favour of an earlier date, should be fairly considered:—

First. The Psalm, in language and thought, is closely united with the other 'Asaph' Psalms (see notes vv. 1, 2, 3, 18). It is difficult to believe that a Maccabean Psalmist could have so completely caught the spirit of a group of Psalms written 300 years before his own time.

Secondly. The words of v. 7 imply *a total destruction of the Sanctuary by fire* (see note), whereas Antiochus did not do more than burn the gates of the Temple.

Thirdly. There is a period, and that, too, the one to which we have assigned the groups of Asaph and Korah Psalms, which entirely suits all the conditions of the present Psalm. We refer to the destruction of Jerusalem (c. 450 B.C.) of which we have no other record than the news, brought to Nehemiah in Babylon (B.C. 446), that, "the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire" (Neh. i. 3; cf. note on Ps. xlv. 22, p. 188).

It may possibly be objected that our Psalm (v. 7) speaks of the burning of the "Sanctuary," and that there is no evidence for the destruction of Zerubbabel's Temple, so that the argument which is fatal to the Maccabean age is fatal also to the age of Nehemiah. To this we reply, that in the whole period from Isaiah to Jeremiah the City, rather than the Temple, is the Sanctuary of YHVH (Is. iv. 5; xxxiii. 20; Jer. iii. 17; &c.).

It is the City that is the Bride of God, in the Korah Psalm, xlv., and in the Second Isaiah (Chaps. lxi., lxii.).

It is the City, not the Temple, that is "*the Sanctuary-home of the Most High*" in the Korah Psalm, xlvi.

It is the "*City of our God,*" "*the City of the great King,*" that is the Home of God upon earth in the Korah Psalm, xlviii.

Thus, if our Psalm were written in the age to which we have assigned it, the burning of the Sanctuary need not imply more than the destruction of the City (see note on v. 7).

Another argument for the earlier date of the Psalm is to be found in vv. 12—18, where the Covenant of Creation is entirely after the thought of Jeremiah. (See note, v. 17.)

The semi-mythical allusions, in vv. 13, 14, would have been strangely out of place in the age of the Maccabees.

If the Psalm had been written after the recognition of the Priest-code (B.C. 444) we should have expected an allusion to the Six (or Seven) Days of Creation (Gen. i.), whereas we have Four Days of Creation, as also in Ps. civ.

The Asaph guild was, in a very special way, connected with the promise of a Divine deliverance at the sound of the priestly trumpets (Numb. x. 9). The Priest-code assigns this function to "the sons of Aaron, the priests" (Numb. x. 8), but, in earlier times it was undoubtedly the office of the "sons of Asaph" to blow with the trumpets (see *Introduction to Korah and Asaph Psalms*). Thus, the seven "*Thous,*" which (vv. 13—17) remind us of the Seven Trumpets of Judgement, have a special significance in this Asaph Psalm.

PSALM LXXIV.

Is it not *Thy* cause
O God? (cf. v. 22).

- 1 Why, O God, hast Thou utterly^a cast us off?
Why should Thine anger fume against the Flock^b of Thy
pasture?
- 2 Remember Thy Congregation which Thou didst purchase
of old,
The Tribe Thou didst redeem for Thy possession,
This Mount Zion, wherein Thou hast dwelt.
- 3 Speedily come^c for (their) utter destruction^d!
Every wrong hath the enemy wrought in the holy things.
- 4 Thine adversaries roar^e in the midst of Thy Feast^f;
They shew their signs as the Signs^f.
- 5 They seem as if swaying axes aloft,
In the thicket of a wood,

^a or *for ever*,
Ps. xiii. 1

^b cf. Ps. lxxix.
13

^c lit. "*lift up
Thy feet*"

^d Only here and
Ps. lxxiii. 18

^e cf. Lam. ii. 7

^f v. 8

- 6 What time they pound her carved-work^a
With hammer and sledge.
- 7 They have set on fire Thy Sanctuary^b;
They have profaned the Dwelling-place of Thy Name, to
the very ground!
- 8 They have said in their heart, "We shall exterminate them
altogether^c."
The Feasts^d of God have ceased^d in the Land;
- 9 We see not our Signs^e;
There is, no longer, a prophet^f;
Nor is there, with us, one that knoweth [how long].
- 10 How long^g, O God, shall the adversary revile^h?
Shall the enemy blaspheme Thy name for everⁱ?
- 11 Why withholdest Thou Thine hand?
And Thy right-hand from out of Thy bosom?

^a or
"her gates"

^b Lam. ii. 7

^c text doubtful

^d See *Sept.*

^e v. 4

^f Lam. ii. 9

^g Ps. lxxix. 5

^h *reproach vv.*
18-22; Ps.
lxxix. 4, 12

ⁱ or "utterly"
v. 1

v. 1. On the special use of the verb "to cast off," in the Asaph and Korah Psalms, see note on Ps. xlv. 9, p. 185. The Psalmist, like St Paul (Rom. xi. 2), knows that God has not "cast off His People which He foreknew."

"*The Flock of Thy pasture.*" Here again we have a characteristic of the 'Asaph' Psalms, in which God is regarded as the good Shepherd of Israel (see Pss. lxxviii. 52, 71 f.; lxxix. 13; lxxx. 1, cf. also Pss. xcv. 7; c. 3, these latter belonging to a group of Psalms which have much in common with the 'Korah' Psalms).

The Hebrew has two words for "*pasture*," viz. *mirgh*, which signifies the pasture as a *feeding place*, and *marith*, used here, which denotes *pasturing* or *shepherd-care*. Thus Ezek. xxxiv. 31, "And ye My sheep, the sheep of My *pasturing* (E.V. *pasture*), are men..." Jer. xxiii. 1, "Woe unto the shepherds that destroy and scatter the sheep of My *pasturing* (E.V. *pasture*)." So, too, in Pss. lxxix. 13; xcv. 7; c. 3. If, for the sake of old associations, we retain the word *pasture*, we must remember that it is, not the *field*, but, the *shepherd-care* of God, on which our thoughts must be fixed.

In this one verse we have found two striking characteristics of the 'Asaph' Psalms. If, as some suppose, the Psalm had been written in Maccabaeian times and inserted in the group of 'Asaph' Psalms, is it not remarkable that so late a writer should have caught the spirit and used the language of that special group of Psalms?

v. 3. "*Speedily come for their utter destruction.*" Other renderings are possible, but this which has the authority of the Targum is best. The rare word translated *destruction* is another link connecting this Psalm with the Asaph Psalms. See marginal reference.

The word here translated "*holy things*," lit. "*holiness*," or "*holy thing*," is constantly used of *holy food* (Lev. xxii. 10, 14, &c), or *holy days* (Neh. x. 33 (34)), or *holy places*. It may therefore be translated *the Sanctuary*, but, since another word is used for the Sanctuary in v. 7, and since the context refers to holy seasons, it is better to preserve the ambiguity of the original.

v. 4. "*Thine adversaries roar.*" So it is said of the enemy, in Lam. ii. 7, "They have uttered a shout in the House of YHVH, as in the day of a Feast."

Instead of "one shout of one worshipping throng," it is the distracted roar of the enemy. On the words "*Feasts*," "*Signs*," see note on vv. 8, 9.

v. 5. The text is very difficult and possibly corrupt. The translation given is only provisional. Jeremiah says of Egypt, "*they shall come against her with axes as hewers of wood*" (Jer. xlvi. 22).

v. 6. The text reads "*her carved work*," but Sept., Sym., Syr. read "*her gates*" (Baethgen). This reading involves only a change in the vowel points, and is not to be lightly discarded. The reader

must choose between the picture of an enemy breaking down the gates of the city or demolishing the carvings of the Temple.

v. 7. They have set on fire... The phrase is used in Judg. i. 8, "And they smote it with the edge of the sword, and they set the city on fire" (cf. Judg. xx. 48; 2 Kings viii. 12). It suggests a complete destruction by fire.

"*Thy Sanctuary.*" From the date of the Priest-code onwards the word "*Sanctuary*" would signify the Temple at Jerusalem. If, therefore, the Psalm were written in Maccabean times this verse would imply that the Temple had been destroyed by fire. But, though Antiochus defiled the Temple, he did not burn it, though he may have set fire to its gates (1 Macc. iv. 38; 2 Macc. viii. 33). But, in an earlier stage of the language, the word "*Sanctuary*" was sometimes applied, not to the Temple, but, to the God-chosen home of the Nation, e.g. Exod. xv. 17 (JE), "*Thou bringest them in, Thou plantest them in the Mountain of Thine inheritance, the place, O YHVH, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, the Sanctuary, O YHVH, which Thy hands have established.*" Probably, also, in Is. lx. 13; lxiii. 18, the Sanctuary refers to the whole City (see context).

If then our Psalm belonged to the period in which we have placed others of the Asaph and Korah Psalms, viz. B.C. 500—446, we should be justified in referring the words, "*They have set on fire Thy Sanctuary,*" to that destruction of Jerusalem which caused such sorrow to Nehemiah in the year B.C. 446 (see note on Ps. xlv. 22, p. 188).

"*The Dwelling-place of Thy Name.*" The word *mishkan*, "*Tabernacle,*" or "*Dwelling-place,*" is used, especially in the Korah and Asaph Psalms, of the City as the "*Sanctuary-home*" of God, Ps. xlv. 4, note, p. 198).

Thus we are confirmed in our belief that the present Psalm complains, not of the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus, but of the sack of the Holy City (c. 446 B.C. Compare Introduction to Ps. xlv., p. 181).

v. 8. "The Feasts." The word *mo'ed*, which occurs here and in *v. 4*, demands careful consideration.

(i) Literally it signifies a *fixed time*, or *season*. Thus, Jer. viii. 7, "Even the stork knoweth her seasons" (cf. also Gen. xvii. 21; xviii. 14; xxi. 2).

(ii) But since, for Israel, the *Seasons* and the *Feasts* were identical, the word *mo'ed* constantly denotes the *Feasts* as ruled by the seasons of the year: thus, Ps. civ. 19, "He made the moon for the seasons," cf. Gen. i. 14, "for signs and for seasons." In both these passages there is a reference to the Festivals.

The Passover is to be kept "in *its season* from year to year" (Exod. xiii. 10); we also read of "the *mo'ed* of the month Abib" (Exod. xxiii. 15; xxxiv. 18). In Lev. xxiii. 2, 4, 37, 44 the word is translated "*the set Feasts*" (R.V.) Compare Ezek. xxxvi. 38, "*solemn feasts*" (E.V.).

(iii) But *mo'ed* is not only used for the *time* of the Assembly but also, sometimes, for the *Assembly* itself (Is. xiv. 4; Lam. i. 15).

(iv) Two passages in Lamentations must be quoted as throwing light upon our Psalm.

Lam. i. 4, "The ways of Zion do mourn because none come to the *mo'ed*" (i.e. men are no longer able to come up to the Feasts); Lam. ii. 6, "He has done violence to His tabernacle as if it were a garden; He hath destroyed His *mo'ed* (i.e. His Feasts): YHVH hath caused *mo'ed* and sabbath to be forgotten in Zion."

In this last passage E.V. and R.V. translate *mo'ed*, the first time by "*place*" (or *places*) of Assembly, and, the second time, by "*solemn feasts*" (or *solemn assembly*). For this there is no justification either from the general use of the word or from the context. *Mo'ed* may signify the *season*, or the *feast*, or the *assembly*, but never the *place* (of assembly).

We are now in a position to consider the meaning of the word in our Psalm. The E.V., R.V., and P.B.V., have followed the wild guess of Aquila and Symmachus, and have translated, "*the synagogues,*" "*the houses of God*"! If such a rendering could be justified it would, of course, prove the Psalm to belong to Maccabean times. But against it we have:

(a) The universal use of the word *mo'ed*.

(b) The fact that, in post-exilic times, the *mo'eds* were observed at Jerusalem alone, and not throughout the land.

(c) The Hebrew word for *synagogue* was entirely different.

(d) The Septuagint, which is the oldest Greek version, has preserved the correct meaning of the passage, thus: "*Come and let us make-to- cease the Feasts of God in the Land.*"

Following the hint here given I suggest that, instead of שרפו, "they have burnt," the original text had שבתו, "they have ceased." The passage would then be closely parallel with Lam. ii. 6, which we have already quoted, and would not, in itself, necessarily imply a later date.

v. 9. "We see not our Signs." It is significant that the words *oth*, "sign," and *mold*, "season" are used in juxtaposition both in this verse and in v. 4; thereby forcibly calling to mind Gen. i. 14, where the heavenly bodies are given, not for worship, but, "for signs and for seasons," i.e. to indicate the growing purpose of God in the natural Festivals of the year. The heathen regarded these heavenly bodies as objects of worship: so Jeremiah says (x. 2), "be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; though the heathen are dismayed at them." To Israel, these movements of the heavenly bodies were outward visible signs of the purpose of God, just as the rainbow (Gen. ix. 12 f.) and the Sabbath (Ezek. xx. 12, 20) were "signs"; but to the heathen, and to the Samaritans, they were ends in themselves, therefore our Psalmist says (v. 4), "They shew their signs as the Signs." To the heathen the worship of Israel must have seemed very like atheism, no wonder, therefore, that their anger should have raged against the Feasts, the Sabbaths, and all the *Sacramenta* of Jewish worship, so that our Psalmist can say, "The Feasts of God have ceased in the land; We see not our Signs." This form of persecution was, no doubt, very prominent in Maccabaeian times (1 Macc. i. 45 ff.), but when we consider such passages as Lam. ii. 6, we see that it was no new experience for Israel. It must also be remembered that, if our Psalm were written, as we have suggested, in the age of Nehemiah, it would certainly have been used, and very possibly modified, in the age of Antiochus (cf. 1 Macc. iv. 36—40).

"There is, no longer, a prophet." These words do not necessarily imply Maccabaeian times, for, indeed, we find the same complaint in Lam. ii. 9, "Yea, her prophets find no vision from YHVH" (cf. Ezek. vii. 26).

"Nor is there, with us, one that knoweth [how long]." The words in brackets weaken the sense; and, since they are almost identical with the words which immediately follow, they may possibly be due to a mistake. In Esther i. 13 we read of "wise men and those that know the times" (cf. 1 Chr. xii. 32).

v. 11. The word כלה, "consume," is possibly a mistake for the word סלה, "Selah," which, being merely a musical note, we have not translated.

v. 13. Here we have the first of the seven emphatic THOUS which mark the Covenant of Creation, and sound like the seven Trumpets of Jericho. According to the Babylonian story the beginning of Creation was the dividing of *Tiamat* (i.e. the sea). Schrader thus explains the myth: "While the universe was still in a liquid mass, crowded with animal shapes previously described, Bel cleft the darkness in twain, and thus separated Earth and Heaven from one another and produced an ordered universe. The living creatures, which could not have endured the light, perished. After this followed the creation of men and animals, also of the stars, including the sun, moon and five planets." (*Cuneiform Inscript. of O.T.*, Engl. translation, p. 13.)

Our Psalmist ascribes this Creation work, not to Bel, but, to the God of Israel:

*"THOU, with Thy power, didst break the Sea,
Didst shiver the heads of the dragons on the waters."*

The reader must not be misled by any thoughts of the division of the Red Sea. The allusion is to Creation, and to Creation alone. We may, indeed, say that v. 13 marks the First Day of Creation (cf. Ps. civ. 2). No doubt that work of Creation is, in our Psalm, regarded as "a sign"; for that which God has done in the world of Nature is a promise and foretaste of that which He will do in the world of Man.

v. 14. "THOU didst rend the heads of Leviathan." So Isaiah xxvii. 1 (Cheyne's translation):—"In that day shall Jehovah visit with his sword, the hard, and great, and strong, the leviathan the fugitive serpent, and the leviathan the wreathed serpent, and he shall slay the dragon in the sea" (cf. Is. li. 9 with Cheyne's notes). Also Job xxvi. 12, 13:—

*"By his power he hath stirred up the sea,
And by his skill he hath smitten Rahab;
By his breath the heavens become serene,
His hand hath pierced through the flying serpent."*

- Creation itself was a Covenant. * cf. Ps. xliv. 1
Day I. Light. ^b plural
- Day II.* Firmament.
- Day III.* { Waters in one place.
 Dry land.
- Day IV.* The greater and lesser light.
- Creation itself a Covenant (cf. Gen. viii. 22).
- 12 And God, too, is my King of old time^a,
 Who worketh salvation^b in the midst of the earth!
- 13 THOU, with Thy power, didst break the Sea,
 Didst shiver the heads of the dragons on the waters.
- 14 THOU didst rend the heads of Leviathan,
 Didst give him as food to the desert-folk,
- 15 THOU didst cleave out both fountain and brook ;
 THOU didst dry up perennial rivers.
- 16 The Day is Thine, and Thine, too, is the Night ;
 THOU didst establish the Lights and the Sun.
- 17 THOU didst set all the bounds of the Earth ;
 Summer, too, and Winter,
 THOU didst form them.

Cheyne well shows that all these passages point to a very early mythology. As *Tiāmat* was the personification of the Chaos of waters below, so, I think, Leviathan was, originally, the personification of the Chaos of waters above. Thus the "piercing," or the "rending of the heads of Leviathan," is identical with the creation of the Firmament (Gen. i. 6): in other words, *v.* 14 refers to the Second Day of Creation (cf. Ps. civ. 3 f.) of which we have a later, and more prosaic account, in Gen. i. 6—8. In the Babylonian cosmology the victory of Bel over *Tiāmat* was ascribed to Marduk:

"He cuts her like one does a flattened fish into two halves.
 The one he fashioned as a covering for the heavens,
 Attaching a bolt and placing there a guardian,
 With orders not to permit the waters to come out."

The act of Marduk, as Jastrow well observes, "corresponds closely with the creation of a 'firmament' in the first chapter of Genesis" [*Religion of Babylonia*, p. 428. See the whole passage.]

"*Didst give him as food to the desert-folk.*" The words we have translated "*desert-folk*" cannot possibly refer to "*the people in the wilderness*" (P.B.V.), but rather to "*the people, the desert-beasts,*" i.e. to the wild beasts that inhabit the desert. A thought, which originally had to do with the destruction of the Dragon of Darkness and the brood of Chaos, would, of course, lend itself to many stages of the historical contest between good and evil, or between Israel and the World-powers (Ezek. xxix. 3; Is. xxv. 6—8; Rev. xix. 17).

v. 15. "*THOU...THOU.*" This verse clearly refers to the Third Day of Creation (Gen. i. 9—13), in which, as in Ps. civ. 5—18, a twofold work is described, viz.,

- (a) the gathering of the waters into one place,
 (b) the gift of dry land and seed.

It is interesting to observe that, just as in the record of the Third Day the words "*And God saw that it was good*" occur twice, so, in this verse of our Psalm, the "*THOU*" is written twice. [Compare Table I. in my "*Letter to O.T. Critics.*"]

Once more the reader must not be misled by the commentators who see in this verse the cleaving out of water from the Rock, and the drying up of the Red Sea and of the Jordan. The work refers to Creation and to Creation alone; though it is true that each work of Creation is a "*Sign,*" and, as such, will naturally have its counterparts in the action of God in history.

v. 16. "*Day...Night...the Lights and the Sun.*" The work of the Fourth Day (Gen. i. 14—19) was the formation of Sun and Moon to rule over the day and over the night, and also of the "Lights" which were to be "*for signs and for seasons,*" i.e. to rule the Festivals of the Jewish year (Ps. civ. 19 ff.). Our Psalmist has now reached the depth of that sorrow whereof he had complained in *vv.* 8, 9, "*The Feasts...have ceased...We see not our Signs,*" he does not, therefore, go beyond the

An appeal to this
Covenant of Creation.

It is time that the
Bow were seen in the
Cloud.

- 18 Remember this [Thy Creation]^a:
The enemy hath reproached^b YHVH,
And a godless^c people hath blasphemed Thy name.
19 Give not up Thy turtle-dove to the greedy creature;
Forget not, utterly, Thine own poor creatures!
20 Look unto the Covenant;
For the darkness of the earth is full of mere homes of
violence!
21 Let not the contrite turn back shamed,
Let the poor and needy praise Thy Name.
22 Rise up, O God, plead Thine own cause!
Remember Thy reproach from the godless^d all the day!
23 Forget not the voice of Thine adversaries,
The din of Thine opposers that ever goeth up!

^a Sept.
^b or "reviled"
^c "foolish" v.
22: Deut.
xxxii. 6, 21

^d v. 18 "fool"

work of the Fourth Day in his appeal for God's help, but ends, in v. 17, with a reference to God's promise to Noah (Gen. viii. 22).

v. 17. "THOU didst set the bounds of the earth; Summer, too, and Winter." The reference is to Gen. viii. 22 (J), "While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." Jeremiah calls this God's "covenant of the day and (His) covenant of the night" (xxxiii. 20, 25), and regards this permanence of the seasons as an outward and visible sign of the permanence of God's Covenanted love for Israel (Jer. xxxi. 35, 36; xxxiii. 20, 21, 25 f.; cf. Is. liv. 9).

This thought, of applying the Covenant of Creation to the Restoration of Israel, seems to belong to the age of the Captivity and is therefore, so far as it goes, an argument against the Maccabean date of our Psalm.

v. 18. "Remember this [Thy Creation]." The Septuagint has given us the true meaning of the passage.

God is asked, not to remember that the enemy hath reproached Him, but, to "remember this [His covenant of Creation]." Compare v. 20.

"The enemy hath reproached YHVH." The "signs and seasons" of Israel's festal year were sacraments, given by God to Israel; when, therefore, the enemy raged against these Feasts and set their signs in opposition to God's Signs (v. 4), the act was one of blasphemy against God.

The word "reproach," "revile," is very common in the Asaph and Korah Psalms. See note on Ps. xlv. 16, p. 186.

v. 19. The verse is difficult. The reference to the enemies of Israel as savage beasts should be compared with Ps. lix. 3, 6 (notes, p. 250 f.).

v. 20. "Look upon the Covenant." In the Priest-code (Gen. ix. 13 ff.) God had promised Noah, "The bow shall be in the clouds, that I, when I see it, may remember the perpetual covenant...." Our Psalmist, following Jeremiah, has regarded this Covenant of Creation as the outward sign of the permanence of God's Covenant with Israel; therefore now, when Israel's sky is full of clouds, he bids God look upon the rainbow of His Promise. It may be that there is also an allusion to the Promise of the Trumpet (see note on Ps. xlv. 9, p. 186).

PSALM LXXV.

There are two prophecies, not far removed from one another in point of date, which give the key to this Asaph Psalm of judgement.

(i) The first (c. B.C. 586) is an apocalypse of Jeremiah (xxv. 15 ff.) in which God says:—

“Take the cup of the wine of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it...Then I took the cup at the Lord's hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the Lord had sent me: *to wit*, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse; as it is this day; Pharaoh king of Egypt,...and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Gaza, and Ekron ..Edom...Moab...Ammon, &c. &c. and all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth: and the king of Sheshach (i.e. Babylon) shall drink after them... And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Ye shall surely drink. For, lo, I begin to work evil at the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished?” (R.V.)

(ii) The other passage is the well-known taunt-song (Is. xiv. 3—23) in which (c. B.C. 556) an unknown prophet has pictured the fall of the “king of Babylon” as the fall of a “Lucifer” who had usurped the place of God.

Our Psalm should be compared with the Asaph Psalm (l.) in which judgement ‘begins at the house of God’ (Jer. xxv. 29: 1 Pet. iv. 17) and with Ps. lviii. in which the gods of nations are found guilty (see p. 246 f.), and also with the Asaph Psalm (lxxxii) in which God is pictured as sitting in judgement upon the assembly of the gods.

PSALM LXXV.

1 O God, we give Thee thanks, we give Thee thanks;
Thy Name^a is near^b,
They tell Thy wondrous works.

^a Is. xxx. 27
^b Deut. iv. 7

v. 1. “O God, we give Thee thanks...” “*Confitebimur tibi Deus.* Hic ‘confitebimur’ non paenitentiam significat, sed gloriam.” (Jerome). The words of the Psalmist in the Latin version suggested the opening of the *Te Deum*:—“*Te Deum laudamus, Te Dominum confitemur*” (see Grünwald). The English version, “*We acknowledge Thee to be the Lord,*” falls far short of that recognition of the Kingship of God which was intended by the original. Compare the *Hodu-Psalms*.

“*Thy Name is near.*” There is no need to amend the text after the example of the Septuagint. When God draws “near” it is for redeeming Judgement (Is. xiii. 6; xli. 1; Ezek. xxx. 3; Ps. lxix. 18 (19); lxxxv. 9 (10); cxix. 151; Mal. iii. 5). This “nearness” of God was specially associated with

Lucifer claims the throne of God. Cf. Is. xiv. 13 ff.

2 For—
 “I will seize on the Assembly ;
 It is I that judge in equity^b ;
 3 The earth and all the inhabitants thereof melt^c away,
 It is I that poised^d the pillars^e of it.”

* *Mold*, Ps. lxxiv. 4, 8; Is. xiv. 13
^b Ps. lviii. 1
^c Josh. ii. 9
^d Is. xl. 12
^e Job xxvi. 11

“*the Day of YHWH*” (Joel i. 15; ii. 1: iii. 14 (iv. 14); Obad. v. 15; Zeph. i. 7, 14). The *Asaph*, or “*Ingathering*,” in the seventh month was Nature’s type of that Great Day; and the thought of such a Judgement is one of the characteristics of the *Asaph* Psalms.

On the thought of salvation by the “*Name*” of God, see notes on Ps. liv., pp. 232—234.

“*They tell Thy wondrous works.*” The “*wondrous works*” refer to God’s merciful dealings in Israel’s history. The “*telling*” or “*recounting*” of these works formed an important part in the Temple songs of Thanksgiving (Pss. ix. 1: xxvi. 7, note: xl. 5, note: lxxi. 17: lxxii. 18: lxxviii. 4, 11, 32: lxxxvi. 10: and eighteen times in the Psalms of the Third Collection).

It is an interesting fact that, whereas in Ps. ix. the verbs “*thank*,” and “*tell*” (God’s wondrous works), in v. 1, correspond with “*strike the harp*,” “*proclaim*,” in the parallel verse (11), so, in our present Psalm, the same verbs “*thank*,” and “*tell*,” in v. 1, correspond with “*proclaim*,” “*strike the harp*,” in v. 9 (see note).

v. 2, 3. These verses are generally supposed to be spoken in the person of God; “*sic enim interpretati sunt veteres*” (Jerome). Even if we accept this view the form is due to the false claims of the heathen gods. As though He had said, “*That to which they make such proud claim is Mine by right.*” But since, in the preceding Psalm, the heathen were raging against the *Mold*, “*Assembly*,” or “*Feast*,” it seems more natural to take the word here also in the same sense, and to interpret these verses as the proud claim of heathendom (see next note).

v. 2. “*I will seize on the Assembly.*” The word *Mold*, “*Assembly*,” “*Feast*,” “*Season*,” has been already considered in our notes on the preceding Psalm. It denotes especially the solemn Assembly at the New Year, at which season the Babylonian religion supposed that Marduk took his seat as Judge in the Assembly of the gods (See Jastrow, *Relig. of Babylonia*, pp. 629—631, 678—681).

It is with reference to this claim that, in the taunt-song (Is. xiv. 13 ff.), the “*King*” of Babylon is made to say, “*I will mount up to Heaven; above the stars of God I will exalt my throne; and I will sit in the Mount of the Assembly (Mold), in the recesses of the north; I will mount above the heights of the clouds; I will be like unto the Most High.*”

In the preceding Psalm we have seen that the enmity of Israel’s foes was directed against the “*signs and seasons*” of Israel’s year, and especially against the *Mold* of the New Year’s festival. In the present verses that enmity is explained by the claim of Marduk to be the Creator and the Judge.

“*It is I that judge in equity.*” The pronoun emphasizes the claim. What that claim was may be inferred from Ps. lviii. 1, “*Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O ye gods, Do ye judge with equity the sons of men?*” (see notes, p. 246 f.). In post-exilic times the thought of God’s judgement upon the Nations was closely coupled with the thought of His judgement upon their gods (Is. xxiv. 21; Jer. li. 44; Ps. lxxxii. 6).

v. 3. “*It is I that poised the pillars of it.*” The Babylonian tablets claim for Marduk the creation of the world:—

“He established the stations for the great gods;
 The stars, their likeness, he set up as constellations.
 He fixed the year and marked the divisions.
 The twelve months he divided among three stars.
 From the beginning of the year till the close (?)
 He established the station of Nebir to indicate their boundary.
 So that there might be no deviation nor wandering away from their course.
 He established with him (i.e. with Nebir) the stations of Bel and Ea.”

The whole passage should be studied in Jastrow’s *Religion of Babylonia*, p. 434 f. It would seem that, when the city of Babylon rose to supreme power (c. 2000 B.C.), Marduk, as the god of Babylon,

Israel's warning to such proud boasters.

Dominion is not given to the "signs of heaven." See Jer. x. 2, 11.

4 I say unto the mad-boasters^a; Boast ye not!
 And, to the wicked; Set not up your horn!
 5 Set not up your horn on high,
 Nor speak with proud^b arrogancy^c.
 6 For not from the Gate (of sunrise);
 Nor from his Setting-place;
 And not from the Wilderness^d of the mountains—
 7 But God it is who is the Judge,
 He layeth this one low, and this other He setteth up.

^a Ps. lxxiii. 3

^b lit. "the neck." Sept. differs

^c 1 Sam. ii. 3;

Ps. xciv. 4

^d Jer. iv. 11

took the place, not merely of the older Bel, but of all the gods, so that even the names and functions of Anu, Bel, and Ea might be transferred to him (see Jastrow, pp. 118 f., 140 f.).

v. 5. "Nor speak with proud arrogancy." Lit. "And speak not arrogancy with the neck." The Septuagint, by a slight alteration of the text, read "And speak not arrogancy against God." No doubt they read *v'taur*, "against the Rock," i.e. "against the Creator." If this reading were correct it would confirm our interpretation of vv. 2, 3.

v. 6. "Gate (of Sunrise)...Setting-place...Wilderness of the mountains." If East, West, North and South had been intended why should three directions only be indicated? Clearly we must look deeper. The first word, *motza*, signifies literally "the going forth"; thus it is often used of a *spring* (of water) or of the "going forth" of the sun on his daily course (Ps. xix. 6; cf. Mic. v. 2). In Ps. lxxv. 8 we have translated it by "gates," thus:—

"So they that inhabit the bounds (of the earth) fear at Thy tokens
 While Thou makest the gates of morn and eve to ring with joy."

These words imply that the heathen, whose worship was a blind dread of the "tokens," or "signs," of heaven (Jer. x. 2), will be led to reverence God's "tokens," or "signs" (see Jer. x. 11 ff.). Two such "tokens," of heathen worship, were sunrise and sunset; but the true Creator of the Light has claimed these "signs" as His own by making the gates of morn and eve ring with joy.

In Ps. lxxiv. we saw that the heathen were setting their "signs" against God's "signs," i.e. nature-worship against spiritual religion. They claimed that their sun-god was the judge. Against such a claim the present verse protests.

"And not from the Wilderness of the mountains." The rendering of the E.V., P.B.V., "For promotion (cometh) neither from the east, &c.," is obtained by forcing the very common word *horim*, "mountains," to become an *infinitive hiphil* of the verb *rām* "to be high," "a causing to be high, hence "promotion"! No doubt there is an intentional assonance between *horim* (in v. 6) and *yorim*, "He setteth up" (in v. 7); but few scholars will accept the rendering proposed by the E.V.

Wellhausen evades the difficulty by altering the text so as to read,

"And not from the Desert, (nor yet from) the Mountains."

But this, too, is unsatisfactory; for, if the writer had wished to represent *South* and *North*, he would scarcely have used such vague terms as "Wilderness" and "Mountains."

The truth is, I believe, that three directions, and three only, are intended, just as in that other Asaph Psalm of Judgement (Ps. l. 1) where the one God, "El, Elohim, YHVH," takes the place of Anu, Bel, and Ea, shining forth "from East to Western sunset," and from the Heavenly Zion. (See notes, p. 216.)

If this be so we should interpret the "Wilderness of the Mountains" as a poetical name for the South in which the sun mounts to his meridian. To the Babylonians, who watched the motions of the heavens, the *three* directions, rising, setting, meridian, gave their law to day, and night, and year.

It would not be difficult to shew that the oldest of the triads, Anu, Bel, and Ea, had its origin in this parable of nature: and, indeed, we must believe that the Triune God intended His children to learn such a lesson from His Creation (Rom. i. 20). But our Psalmist, writing at a time when such

The Prophecy of Jer. xxv. 15-38 is being fulfilled. Cf. Rev. xiv. 9, 10. See, also, the following Psalm.

8 For in the hand of YHVH there is a cup^a,
And the wine glows,
It is full mingled^b, He poureth out therefrom;
The very dregs thereof earth's wicked ones must drink^c
and drain.

^a Jer. xxv. 15 ff.;
Is. li. 17

^b Rev. xiv. 10

^c Jer. xxv. 28

9 But, as for me I will proclaim for ever;
I will strike the harp to the God of Jacob.
10 All the horns of the wicked^d will I cut off^e;
The horns^f of the righteous-one shall be exalted.

^d plural

^e Jer. xlvi. 25;
Is. xiv. 12

^f Ps. lxxxix. 24;
cxxxvii. 17
Lk. i. 69

thoughts had been corrupted by a gross polytheism, declares that it is not from East, or from West, or from South, but only from Israel's God, that judgement comes forth for the world. Thus *vv.* 6, 7 answer to *vv.* 2, 3.

Since writing this note I find the following in the Rabbinic Commentary of Aben Ezra:—"And some say that this hints at the Astrologers who supposed that good and evil &c. depended upon the course of the stars, and the first Direction which is the East, also the West, and the South which corresponds with "the Wilderness of the Mountains," are they which rule over all mankind. And he does not mention the fourth Direction because it has no power, inasmuch as it is (at that time) beneath the earth."

The eloquent ellipsis in the verse should be compared with Jer. iii. 23.

v. 9. "I will proclaim...I will strike the harp." At first sight we are tempted to follow the Septuagint (with Baethgen, &c.) and to change אָנִיִּל, "I will proclaim," into אָנִיל, "I will rejoice." But the fact that the same verbs, "proclaim," "strike the harp," occur in the same relative position in Ps. ix. is a strong proof of the correctness of the present text (see note on *v.* 1). Verse 9 closely corresponds with *v.* 1, and we might have expected the Psalm to end here.

v. 10. If, as is natural to suppose, Israel be the speaker, then this verse introduces a martial note for which there has been no preparation in the earlier portion of the Psalm in which God, and not Israel, was the Judge.

It is quite possible that it may have been added in Maccabaeian times.

PSALM LXXVI.

It is evident that Psalms lxxv., lxxvi. form a pair. Not only do they contain similar expressions ("God of Jacob," lxxv. 9; lxxvi. 6; "the wicked of the earth," "the meek of the earth," "the kings of the earth," lxxv. 8; lxxvi. 9, 12), but the final judgement upon the Nations and upon their gods, which is anticipated in Ps. lxxv., is realized in Ps. lxxvi.

Both Psalms belong rather to apocalypse than to history, and should be studied in close connexion with that magnificent apocalypse, Is. xxiv.-xxvii., which Briggs has called a 'prophetic voice out of the Exile' (*Messianic Prophecy*, pp. 295-310).

But, above all, we must compare them with the Korah Psalms, xlvi., xlvi.

What has there been said (p. 204) respecting the deliverance from Sennacherib need not here be repeated.

The subject of Ps. lxxvi. is the victory of Judah's Lion. What that victory was may be gathered from Rev. v. 5. The Latin Church has fitly appointed this Psalm for Easter Eve:

"Quo Christus invictus leo
dracone surgens obruto
dum voce viva personat,
a morte functos excitat."

[MONE. *Hy. Lat.* 1. 162.]

PSALM LXXVI.

Salem is safe, through the presence of her Lion.	1 God is become known in Judah; In Israel His name is great. 2 For His covert was (made) in Salem, And His lair in Zion. 3 'Twas there He shivered the fiery-darts of the bow, Both shield and sword and battle.
--	---

v. 1. "God is become known." On the lips of the Asaph Psalmist, *Elohim* was as much a personal name as YHVH.

The usual translation, "*God is known*," does not express the full meaning of the Niphal of this verb, which, whether as *participle* (here), or as *past tense* (Pss. ix. 16; xlvi. 3, note), implies self-revelation. *God is become known* through the judgments He has done.

v. 2. "In Salem...in Zion." Salem (Gen. xiv. 18) was the old heathen name of Jerusalem, which, in the Tel el-Amarna tablets (15th cent. B.C.) is called *URU-Salim*, i.e. "*City of Salim*," or, "*City of Peace*." The god of this city was a god of storm and war, whose name is provisionally written *Nin-ip* (Pinches' *Religious Ideas of the Babylonians*, p. 17 f.), who corresponds with the *Nergal* or lion-god of the Underworld, specially worshipped at Cutha. He may probably be identified with *Hadad* or *Dôd*.

A hymn to Nergal (W.A.I. iv. 26, see Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 496) contains the following lines, which should be compared with our Psalm:—

"O warrior of the great city of Hades, that sweepest away the hostile land!
O god that comest forth from 'Sulim, that sweepest away the hostile land!
.....
O lord of Cutha...
O lord of the temple of 'Sulim..."

From this passage I infer that '*Sulim* (which signified '*rest*,' '*peace*,' '*sunset*,' see Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, vol. II. p. 272, Engl. translation) was almost a synonym with Hades, or, to speak more exactly, that '*Sulim*, in Cutha, corresponded with the unseen abode of Nergal in Hades.

What '*Sulim* was to Cutha that *Salem* was to Jerusalem, with its storm-god *Hadad* or *Dôd*. This may explain a difficult passage in Isaiah (xxix. 1 ff.) which contains, I believe, a clear reference to the old mythology of Salem. Thus:—"Ho Ariel, Ariel, the city where *Dôd* encamped!...then will I distress Ariel, and there shall be mourning and lamentation: and she shall be unto me as Ariel. And I will camp against thee round about.... But the multitude of thy foes shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones as chaff that passeth away.... She shall be visited by YHVH of Hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with whirlwind and tempest,

and flame of devouring fire. And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel...shall be as a dream.... So shall the multitude of the nations be that fight against Mount Zion."

Here Dôd is undoubtedly a Divine Name, just as it is in Is. v. 1 (R.V. "beloved"), and, probably, on the Moabite Stone, where, strange to say, it is used in connexion with the difficult word *Ariel*.

In Ezek. xliii. 15 *Ariel* is the name for the lower Altar-court (R.V. "Altar-hearth") as distinguished from *Harel*, which denotes the upper altar. Now the Semitic altar was a temple in miniature, and, as such, was a figure of the World-mountain. In the side of this mountain was the entrance to *Aralu*, the Babylonian name for Hades:—Thus the Gilgamesh Epic speaks of

"the mountain Mashu
.....

Whose back extends to the dam of heaven,
And whose breast reaches to Aralu."

I therefore suggest a connexion between the Hebrew *ariel* and the Babylonian *Aralu*. If the passage we have quoted from Isaiah be now read with this thought in view all will become clear. Zion, the City of Dôd, combines the related thoughts of altar-hearth and Hades. She is distressed by foes and becomes a very Hades (*vv.* 1—4); then, suddenly, her God comes forth in storm, whirlwind, tempest and flame, and her foes are all consumed as on an altar-hearth (*vv.* 5—7). Just as Cutha, with its god Nergal, was actually called *Aralu*, so Salem, with its god Dôd, would naturally be called *Ariel*. The thought was consecrated by the faith of Isaiah, and thenceforth became an ever-growing revelation of the Divine Indwelling.

YHVH has "His fire in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem" (Is. xxxi. 9, see context). This means destruction to the foes of Zion (Is. x. 24 ff.; xxx. 27 ff., &c.). But it also means—and this thought came later—the destruction of "the sinners in Zion" (Is. xxxiii. 14 ff.). The Apocalyptic writers of the O.T. loved to combine these thoughts. God would purify Zion by awful judgment but would suddenly appear for her deliverance (Zech. xiv. &c.). The Immanuel doctrine of Isaiah was developed in the Korah Psalms, xli. and xlvi., which should be carefully studied in connexion with our present Psalm.

"*His covert...His lair.*" Both words are chosen with a double meaning. "*Covert*" is used of the lion, in the parallel chapter of Jeremiah (xxv. 38), "*He* (i.e. YHVH) *hath forsaken His covert, as the lion*"; also in Ps. x. 9; but the word is once translated "*His pavilion*" (Ps. xxvii. 5). The other word, which we have translated "*His lair*," denotes the *den* or *lair* of the lion (Job xxxvii. 8; xxxviii. 40; Ps. civ. 22; Cant. iv. 8; Amos iii. 4; Nah. ii. 12 (13)), but is once (Deut. xxxiii. 27) used of God as *the refuge* of Israel.

It is an interesting fact that the prophecy of Jeremiah (chap. xxv.) which seems to have suggested the preceding Psalm (see p. 314) thus continues:—"YHVH shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy Habitation, He shall mightily roar over His pasture.... For YHVH hath a strife with the Nations; He cometh into judgement with all flesh; as to the wicked, He will give them to the sword" (*vv.* 30, 31; compare also *v.* 38).

v. 3. The craving for historical allusions must not blind our eyes to the fact that the destruction of the hosts of Sennacherib was only one small fulfilment of the hopes that centred in Zion through the Divine Indwelling. Isaiah himself looked forward to a time when, because of this Indwelling, all the weapons of war would be "*for burning and fuel of fire*" (Is. ix. 5), and the Korah Psalmist, who developed his thought of *Inmanuel* in Ps. xli., says of God,

"He stilleth wars to the utmost bounds of earth
He breaketh the bow, snappeth the spear,
Burneth the chariots with fire."

"*The fiery-darts.*" The Hebrew word *resheph* denotes *burning heat* (Deut. xxxii. 24) or *burning fever* (Hab. iii. 5; cf. Ps. lxxviii. 48). In the popular religion of Babylonia *Resheph* was a demon of fever. It is possible that our Psalmist uses the word of arrows in the sense of the "*lightnings*" or "*thunderbolts*" of the bow, but it is more probable that he alludes to pestilence as "*the arrow that flieth by day*" (Ps. xci. 5). In either case Zion's "Shield" "quenches all the fiery darts of the evil one" (Eph. vi. 16).

The Lion comes down his mountains against the foe (cf. Is. xxxi. 4).

- 4 Glorious art Thou and majestic,
From^a the mountains of prey.
5 The stout of heart are spoiled, they sleep their sleep,
And all the valiant ones are powerless.
6 At Thy rebuke, O God of Jacob,
Both chariot and horse are sunk in stupor.
7 Thou—terrible^b art Thou!
And who can stand before Thee, when once Thine anger is roused?

^a OR "more than"

^b v. 12

The roar of Judah's Lion (cf. Jer. xxv. 30 f.).

- 8 Thou proclaimedst Thy sentence from heaven;
Earth feared and lay still;
9 When God arose for the judgement,
To help all the meek of the earth.

His victory will bring all enemies to the feet of God.

- 10 For the wrath of man must give Thee thanks;
And what remains of wrath Thou wilt gird on.
11 Vow, then, and pay, unto YHVH your God;
All ye that are round about Him give tribute to the Terrible One.
12 He curbs the spirit of princes;
He is terrible^c to the kings of the earth.

^c v. 7

v. 4. "*From the mountains of prey.*" The alternative rendering, "*More than the mountains &c.*," scarcely gives a worthy comparison. It is better to retain the picture of Judah's Lion, coming down from His mountains, as in Is. xxxi. 4, "As the lion with the young lion growleth over his prey, ... so shall YHVH of Hosts descend to fight upon mount Zion, and upon the hill thereof."

vv. 5, 6. Byron's poem on the destruction of Sennacherib may well be used to illustrate these verses; but the Psalm reaches, far beyond all partial deliverances, into the region of eschatology.

v. 8. "*Earth feared and lay still.*" As the hushed forest listens to the lion's roar.

v. 10. A difficult verse. The general sense seems to be that God is no more moved from His purpose by the wrath of man than a lion is by the noise of a band of shepherds (Is. xxxi. 4); nay that very wrath must end in acknowledging His power.

v. 11. Just so, after the destruction of Sennacherib, Isaiah says, "At that time shall a present be brought unto YHVH of Hosts, even the people tall and glossy &c." (xviii. 7).

v. 12. "*The kings of the earth.*" The expression reminds us that we are in the region of eschatology rather than of history. See Ezek. xxxviii. 6, 15; xxxix. 2; Jer. vi. 22; Pss. II. 2; xlviii. 4 (with notes); Rev. xvi. 14—16; xx. 8—10.

PSALM LXXVII.

No Psalm can have a deeper lesson for the spiritual life than Ps. lxxvii.: yet, even Delitzsch confesses that the sorrow of the Psalmist is not for "a purely personal affliction," but for "an affliction shared in common with the whole of the nation." In other words, it is the nation that speaks through the individual—"Desperate tides of the whole great world's anguish Forced through the channels of a single heart."

Like other Psalms of this group, our Psalm belongs to a time of National sorrow (cf. *Intro.* to Ps. lxxiii.); Israel is tempted to feel that God has forsaken him and "cast him off." This sorrow finds expression in *vv.* 1—6, in which even the thought of God, and of happier days in the past (*vv.* 3, 5), is but 'a sorrow's crown of sorrows.' In these verses the Psalmist, though faithful (*v.* 6), has not got beyond the horizon of his own heart.

A new thought opens in *vv.* 7—9. The Psalmist turns to the Nature of God as revealed to Moses (*Exod.* xxxiv. 6 f.), and to the Promise of God which has been growing through the Ages. God cannot deny Himself. God cannot let His Promise fail. Then, *vv.* 10—12, he sees that the change was not in God, but in himself (*v.* 10), and is able to thank God (*vv.* 11, 12) for that past which, in *vv.* 1—6, had been a sorrow.

Now the light has fully broken; he sees God's Love shining through all the past history of Israel; and he looks forward to a Theophany in which the Shepherd of Israel will Himself appear to complete on earth that work of Redemption which He has hitherto done through others (see *vv.* 13—20, with marginal notes).

The Psalm should be compared with *Lam.* iii., which expresses "The Nation's complaint and its ground of consolation" (*Driver*). The Theophany, at the close, is very similar to the Song of Habakkuk (*Ch.* iii.), but even if it were possible to maintain (with *Delitzsch*) that *Habak.* iii. was borrowed from our Psalm, no argument, as to date, could be based upon this, since many critics refuse to accept *Habak.* iii. as the work of that prophet.

PSALM LXXVII.

The Psalmist, looking only at his own heart, sees nothing but sorrow.

- 1 My voice is unto God^a—and I would cry!
 My voice is unto God^a—and may^b He hear me!
- 2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord^c;
 My hand^d is outstretched all the night, without ceasing;
 My soul refuses to find comfort.
- 3 I may remember God, yet can only moan;
 I may meditate, yet my spirit is overwhelmed^e.
- 4 Thou holdest the (wakeful) guardians of mine eyes;
 I am sore stunned^f, beyond the power of speaking.
- 5 I think over the days^g of old;
 I may remember^h the years of ancient time;
- 6 My songⁱ is in the night;
 I make my meditation in mine own heart;
 And my spirit makes painful search.

^a Elohim
^b or "that He may" &c.
^c Adonai
^d Ps. cxliiii. 6
^e Ps. cxliiii. 4
^f perplexed
^g Ps. cxliiii. 5
^h See *Sept. &c.*
ⁱ or *music*
 Lam. iii. 14;
 v. 14

v. 1. "God"—Here, as usual, we translate *Elohim* by "God," though the English reader must thereby lose some of the force of the original, especially in a Psalm which, like the present, appeals to God by so many personal names; *Elohim* (*vv.* 1 bis, 3, 13 bis, 16), *Adonai* (*vv.* 2, 7), *El* (*vv.* 9, 13, 14), *Elyōn* (*v.* 10), *Yah* (*v.* 11).

v. 2. "In the day of my trouble I sought..." He had 'toiled all the night and had taken nothing'; and, surely, as the night is the season for fishing, so 'trouble' is the season for prayer! God's invitation to Israel was, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will set thee free..." (Ps. l. 15). Jacob names God as the God "who answered me in the day of my trouble" (Gen. xxxv. 3; cf. Jer. xxx. 7; Pss. xx. 1; liv. 7, note, p. 234). A late prophecy (Is. lxiii. 7—lxiv), which has much in common with our Psalm, speaking of God's relation to Israel, says, "In all their trouble He was troubled, while the Angel of His Presence was saving them" (Is. lxiii. 9): yet now the sheep, missing the Shepherd's voice, thinks itself forsaken!

"My hand is outstretched all the night"—i.e. I grope in the darkness!

"And falling with my weight of cares
 Upon the great world's altar-stairs
 That slope thro' darkness up to God,
 I stretch lame hands of faith..."

"My soul refuses to find comfort." So (Jer. xxxi. 15) in the Captivity Rachel wept for her children and "refused to find comfort."

v. 5. "I remember." According to the punctuation this verb is read with *v.* 6, "I remember my song..." It is, however, better to follow the Septuagint and to read, "I remember the years" &c. The verb occurs at least three times in the Psalm, twice in sorrow (*vv.* 3, 5) and once in hope (*v.* 11). Compare Ps. xlii. 4, note, p. 176.

vv. 7—9. In these verses the clouds of sorrow begin to break. The Psalmist, whose thoughts have hitherto been centred on self, now turns to consider the 'nature and property' of God.

v. 7. "Will the Lord...?" i.e. "Adonai," whose very name means Love (see Ps. liv. 4, note, p. 233). Will He "cast off for ever?" On the special use of this verb, in the Asaph and Korah Psalms, see Ps. xlii. 9, note, p. 185. It refers to the rejection, not of the individual, but of the

He begins to think of God's Nature and of His Promise (cf. Is. lxiii. 15).

- 7 "Will the Lord^a cast off for ever?
"And will He never more be favourable?"
- 8 "Is His Lovingkindness^b gathered in for ever?
"The Promise^c to the ages—is it ended?"
- 9 "Has God^d forgotten to be Gracious^e?
"Hath He, in anger, shut up His Compassion^f?"

- ^a Adonai
- ^b Exod. xxxiv. 6 f.
- ^c Ps. lxxviii.; Habak. iii. 9
- ^d El
- ^e Exod. xxxiv. 6
- ^f Cf. Is. lxiii. 7, 15

Nation, and is twice used in the alphabetical poem (Lam. iii. 17—31) which has much in common with our Psalm. Thus:—

*"Thou hast cast off my soul from peace...
And I said, My strength is perished, and mine expectation from YHVH.
.....
This I recall to mind, therefore I have hope,
The lovingkindnesses of YHVH—that we are not consumed—
That His compassions are not ended!
.....
For Adonai will not cast off for ever."*

I have placed in Italics the words which most closely resemble those of our Psalm, but the whole Chapter, which has been called "*The nation's complaint, and its ground of consolation*" (Driver), should be studied in this connexion.

"*And will He never more be favourable?*" i.e. Will He never more *shew favour, or take pleasure* in His People. See Ps. xlv. 3, note, p. 183, and Ps. lxxxv. 1.

The thought of the Psalmist should be compared with that of St Paul. "Did God cast off His People? God forbid" (Rom. xi. 1). See also note on v. 19.

v. 8. "*Is His Lovingkindness gathered in for ever?*" The verb *asaph* signifies "*to gather in*" (especially the fruits of the earth), hence "*to take away*." It is better here to retain the original meaning of the word since the thought might thus be paraphrased:—That *Lovingkindness*, which is part of the very Name of God (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7), and of which the whole Scripture testifies that it "*endureth for ever*";—that *Lovingkindness*, which was pledged to David (Is. lv. 3; Ps. lxxxix. 1, 2, 14, 24, 28, 33, 49);—can it now be gathered in and done with?

"*The Promise to the ages?—Is it ended?*" Or, possibly, "*The Promise—Is it ended to all ages?*" Wellhausen proposes to change one letter and to read "*Truth*," or "*Faithfulness*," instead of "*Promise*." In either case the meaning is the same (cf. Ps. c. 5; Luke i. 55, 70).

v. 9. God was revealed to Moses as "*A God (El) Compassionate and Gracious, Slow to anger and abundant in Lovingkindness and Truth*" (Exod. xxxiv. 6; cf. Joel ii. 13; Jonah iv. 2; Neh. ix. 17, 31; Pss. lxxxvi. 15; ciii. 8; cxi. 4; cxvi. 5; cxlv. 8). These attributes constitute His Nature; when, then, the Psalmist asks, "*Hath God (El) forgotten to be Gracious? Hath He, in anger, shut up His Compassion?*," there can be but one answer. He cannot deny Himself (2 Tim. ii. 13).

v. 10. Jerome translates, "Et dixi, imbecillitas mea est haec, commutatio dextrae excelsi."

The Hebrew word *Shanah* signifies "*change*," "*repetition*," hence *year* (as that which comes round into itself). This will explain the rendering of the E.V., R.V. (text), and P.B.V., "*the years of the right hand*" &c. The other rendering has, however, the authority of the Versions. It also gives a better sense. The Psalmist has (vv. 7—9) been contemplating the attributes of God. Those attributes do not change with the everchanging moods of men. With Him there can be 'no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning' (James i. 17): it is our weakness, only, that 'shapes the shadow time': thus he says, "*It is mine own infirmity, (this) changing of the right hand of the Most High.*"

vv. 11, 12. At first sight it may seem strange that "*calling to mind*," "*remembering*," "*musings*" and "*meditating upon*" God's works should bring joy to the Psalmist now, whereas this very thing seemed only to bring him sorrow in vv. 1—6. But the frame of mind made all the difference. If

He looks away
from self to God (cf.
Is. lxiii. 7 ff.).

- 10 Then I said, "It is mine own infirmity^a,—
" (This) changing of the right hand of the Most High^b.
11 "I will call^c to mind the great deeds of Yah^d;
" Surely I must remember Thy wonder-work of old,
12 "That I may muse on all Thy work,
" And meditate upon Thy wondrous doings."

^a cf. Jer. x. 19
^b Elyōn
^c or
"celebrate"
^d Exod. xv. 2

Now, all past re-
demptions are seen as
a pledge of the coming
Redemption.

- 13 O God^e, Thy way is in holiness^f;
Who is a Strong-God^g great like Elohim?
14 Thou art the Strong-God^g the Wonder-worker;
Among the Peoples Thou hast shewn Thy power.
15 Thou hast redeemed Thy People with (Thine) arm;
Even the sons of Jacob and Joseph.

^e Elohim
^f Ps. lxviii. 24
^g El

we only look within, then, to remember happier things may be "a sorrow's crown of sorrows"; but, if we look at God, then past joys become a pledge of greater joys that must come.

v. 11. "*I will call to mind.*"—The Hebrew text has two readings, (i) "*I will remember,*" (ii) "*I will cause (others) to remember,*" i.e. "*I will celebrate.*" The word reminds us of a unique prophecy (Is. lxiii. 7—lxiv.) which was evidently written when Jerusalem and the Temple were in ruins (lxiv. 10 f.). This prophecy has much in common with the Asaph Psalms and with our present Psalm in particular. The following passages should be compared:

Ps. lxxvii. 11.	with Is. lxiii. 7. " <i>I will celebrate the lovingkindnesses of YHVH.</i> "
Ps. lxxvii. 7.	„ Is. lxiii. 15 f.
Ps. lxxx. 14.	„ Is. lxiii. 15, 17. (Cheyne's notes.)
Ps. lxxvii. 15.	„ Is. lxiii. 12.
Ps. lxxvii. 16 ff.	„ Is. lxiv. 1—4. The prayer for a Theophany.
Ps. lxxvii. 20.	„ Is. lxiii. 11—14. When God, the Shepherd of Israel, guides His People with the "shepherds of His flock," i.e. Moses (v. 12), and (?) Aaron.

v. 13. "*Thy way is in holiness*"—Or, "*in the Sanctuary.*" The same word is used in Ps. lxviii. 24, where also it denotes that triumphant progress of God through the ages, of which the Sanctuary and the religious processions were an earthly type (see notes, p. 285, and observe the parallel passage in Habak. iii. 6).

After the Theophany in Ps. xviii. we read (v. 30), "*As for God, His way is perfect.*"

v. 15. "*Jacob and Joseph.*" The close relation between the Asaph guild and the House of Jacob will be seen in our *Introduction to the Asaph Psalms.*

v. 16. "*The waters saw—were in pangs.*" The words suggest, even if they do not necessarily imply, the *pangs of birth*. There is a close parallel in Habak. iii. 10, "*The mountains saw Thee,—were in pangs, The tempest of waters passed by, The Deep uttered his voice, And lifted up his hands on high.*" Compare also Pss. xcvi. 9; xcvi. 4. The Theophany in Ps. xviii. should be studied in this connexion.

At a certain period of Israel's history the Messianic hope took the form of a Divine Theophany. This period was, I think, the Captivity. The minds of men were then forced back upon the past. As God had delivered His People from Egypt so He would again appear, to deliver them from Babylon. The Second Isaiah was the Prophet who gave voice to this expectation (Is. xl. 1—11; xlii. 14 ff.; xlvi. 17—22; lii. 7—12; lx.) which tended, at times, to become apocalyptic when treating of the glories of the New Jerusalem. The Korah Psalms, and the *YHVH malak* Psalms, follow upon the same lines, while the Asaph Psalms give forth the same music in a minor key.

That Redemption will, as before, be a Theophany (cf. Habak. iii.; Pss. xviii., lxviii.).

- 16 The waters saw^a Thee, O God^b;
The waters saw—were in pangs^c!
The abysses also trembled;
17 Dark clouds poured down water,
High heaven uttered its voice,
Yea Thine arrows^d went abroad,
18 The voice of Thy thunder was in the spheres,
Thy lightnings lit up the world,
Earth trembled and quaked.
19 Thy way was in the sea^e,
Thy paths in the mighty waters,
So Thy foot-tracks were not known.

^a Ps. cxiv. 3 f.
^b Elohim
^c Habak. iii.
10

^d cf. Ps. xviii.
14; Habak.
iii. 11

^e Cf. Habak.
iii. 15

- 20 Like a Flock^f Thou hast guided Thy People,
"By the hand of Moses and Aaron^g."

^f Is. lxiii. 11

^g Numb. xxxiii.
1

v. 18. "*The voice of Thy thunder was in the spheres.*"—E.V. "*in the heaven,*" P.B.V. "*round about,*" R.V. "*in the whirlwind.*" The Greek versions read *ἐν τῷ τροχῷ*, "*in the wheel.*" The Hebrew word, *galgal*, signifies *that which revolves*, and was used, in late Hebrew, of the *spheres* (see Buxtorf). The Targum rightly translates, "*The voice of Thy thunder was in the spheres.*" We may note, in passing, that the difficult verse, James iii. 6, is to be explained from this use of the word.

v. 19. "*Thy foot-tracks were not known.*" At the passage of the Red Sea, and at each succeeding Theophany, that which took the eye was storm and tempest and destruction, thus God's "*foot-tracks were not known.*" But, afterwards, they were seen to be steps whereby the Good Shepherd (Ps. xxiii.) was guiding His sheep. This being the case our Psalmist infers that present troubles have in them the footsteps of God. St Paul may have been thinking of this text when he thus summed up his argument for the final Redemption of the Jews, "O the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out!" (Rom. xi. 33.)

v. 20. "*Like a Flock.*" An Asaph thought. See Pss. lxxviii. 52; lxxix. 13; lxxx. 1. The Storm-piece (vv. 16—19) ends in a pastoral symphony.

"*By the hand of Moses and Aaron.*" These words are identical with a passage, in the Priest-code (Numb. xxxiii. 1 ff.), which records forty stages for the forty years of wandering in the Wilderness. It would be too much to say that they are a quotation from P.; but certainly Aaron was not placed on a level with Moses before the age of the Priest-code; we therefore infer that the standpoint of our Psalmist was not far removed from that of P.

The next Psalm deals with those Wilderness wanderings which are alluded to in this verse.

PSALM LXXVIII.

We learn from Neh. viii., ix., that, in the seventh month, it was the custom for the Levites to stand on the "stair of the Levites" and to read Torah, or Law, publicly to all Israel. Nehemiah chapter ix. is a specimen of the Torah. It consists of a retrospect of Israel's history with a view to shew how, over and over again, God's mercy had been continued to Israel in spite of countless acts of unfaithfulness on Israel's part.

This Chapter should be carefully compared with our Psalm and with Pss. cv., cvi.

It is interesting to note that, in the times of the Chronicle writer, the Levites fulfilled that office of reading or singing Torah, which in earlier times was undoubtedly the office of the sons of Asaph. (See *Introduction to Korah and Asaph Psalms.*)

I suggest that the present Asaph Psalm was composed for this purpose. It must have been written before B.C. 444, since the writer has no knowledge of the Priest-code in its present form. But though, in the history, our Psalmist follows JE, his thoughts often border closely upon P. From a critical point of view we are led to conclude that the Psalmist lived at a time when the thoughts of the Priest-code were in the air: say c. 500 B.C.

Criticism has abundantly proved that the so-called "ten plagues" of Egypt, as arranged by the author of the Priest-code, were, in part, derived and expanded from two earlier lists of J and E.

Of these two lists, E seems to have known of *six* plagues, and J of seven. When, therefore, in our Psalm, we find allusion to six plagues only, we must not assume that the Psalmist had any knowledge of the "ten plagues" of Exodus as arranged by P, but rather compare his list with the two shorter lists of J and E, which he certainly knew. Of the two plagues which are peculiar to P (*Lice* or *Gnats* and *Boils*) our Psalmist makes no mention, whereas he alludes to every plague in the lists of J and E, with the sole exception of one (*viz. Darkness*), which is peculiar to E. It must, however, be observed that the order is not the same.

But, further, in Ps. cv. we have yet another plague-list consisting of seven plagues in a different and very suggestive order. The following Table will help the reader to determine the law upon which these lists have been formed. Plagues which are peculiar to J, E, or P have been placed in italics in those lists.

	Ps. lxxviii.	Ps. cv.	J	E	P
α Heavens		I Darkness			<i>Aaron's rod changed into a dragon</i>
β Water	I Blood, to corrupt water	II Blood	River smitten, death of the fish	Waters of the river turned to blood	<i>All the waters of Egypt turned to blood (J E)</i>
γ Earth	II { Swarm and Frogs } to corrupt the earth (<i>Wisd.</i> xvi. 2 ff.)	III Frogs	{ Frogs	Frogs	{ Frogs (J E) <i>Lice or gnats</i> (<i>Wisd.</i> xvi. 9; xix. 10) The Swarm (J)
	III Locust	IV Swarm and Lice	{	<i>The Swarm</i> (unknown)	{
α_1 Heavens	IV Hail, to destroy vegetation	V Hail and fire	<i>Murrain</i>	" <i>Fire flashing continually amidst hail</i> " —on man and beast	{ Murrain, on cattle (J) <i>Boils</i> on man and beast
β_1 Water	V Hail and Fire (?Pestilence) on cattle (see <i>Wisd.</i> xvi. 16-23)		Hail, on herbs and trees		Hail and Fire (J E) (<i>Wisd.</i> xvi. 17-20)
		VI Locust	Locust	Locust <i>Darkness</i>	Locust Darkness
γ_1 Earth	VI Death of Firstborn	VII Death of Firstborn	<i>Death of Firstborn</i>	"one plague more"	Death of Firstborn (J) (<i>Wisd.</i> xviii. 12)

In order to find the law of formation of these lists we will begin with the simplest case, viz. that of Ps. cv., and will compare each plague with the corresponding "Day" of Creation. Thus :

	Day	Plague-list of Ps. cv.
α Heavens	I "Let there be Light"	I Let there be Darkness
β Water	II Waters divided from the waters for man's good	II Waters changed to Blood for man's destruction
γ Earth	III { (a) Dry land (b) Seed	III Frogs to corrupt dry land IV Dust changed to lice
α_1 Heavens	IV "Let there be Lights" to give light	V Hail and fire, to destroy
β_1 Water	V Waters teem with fruitful life	VI Locust and caterpillars, for destruction of vegetation
γ_1 Earth	VI Man, in God's Image.	VII Destruction of the Firstborn

It will here be seen that each "plague" is regarded as the antithesis of the corresponding "Word" of Creation. It will also be noted that the "Days" of Creation are related to one another in the order Heavens, Water, Earth, Heavens, Water, Earth, or α , β , γ , α_1 , β_1 , γ_1 . This gives us an important hint for the plague-lists.

The plagues are, more properly, God's signs in the three Elements of *Water*, *Earth*, and *Heavens*.

In each plague-list the principle is this:—The same Word of God which is creative of good for His People becomes changed into destructive power for His foes. This view of the plagues is expounded at great length in *Wisdom* xvi.—xix.:—"For as

the notes of a psaltery vary the character of the rhythm, Even so (did) the elements, changing their order one with another etc." (*Wisd.* xix. 18).

In my *Letter to Old Test. Critics* (Deighton, Camb. 1892) I have shewn that all the ten-name lists of P are evolved, by a fixed law, from the six or seven-name lists of J E. We must not therefore suppose that the author of the Priest-code invented extra plagues to make up his favourite number ten, but that his ten-list answers to his ten words¹ of Creation in the same way as the earlier six or seven-lists answered to the six or seven "days" of Creation.

If now we turn to the plague-list in our present Psalm we may express the leading thought as follows:—

God shewed His Signs in Water, Earth, and Heaven.

Water—He made the very rocks give drink to His People (*vv.* 15, 16);
but, for His foes, water itself became blood.

Earth.—He rained flesh (quails) like dust to feed His People (*vv.* 26—29);
but He sent swarms of loathsome creatures to destroy His foes (*v.* 45
See the interesting passage in *Wisdom* xvi. 2 ff.)

Heavens—He opened the doors of heaven and rained down manna for Israel
(*vv.* 23—25);
but, on Egypt, He rained fire and hail (*vv.* 47—49; cf. *Wisd.* xvi.
16—23, xix. 20 f., where this contrast is worked out).

It is true that our Psalmist alludes to the wrath of God upon Israel (*vv.* 21, 31, 33, 59—64) as well as upon Egypt: but in the former case it is the anger of a father for the correction of a child, in the latter the destruction of a foe (cf. *Wisd.* xvi. 2—11, xviii. 20 f.).

The whole lesson of the Psalm, which is brought home in the closing verses, is this:—God does, indeed, punish Israel for ingratitude, but, in so doing, He ever finds new ways of carrying out His old promises which no human sin can finally frustrate or make void. Such a message would be full of meaning in the age of Ezra.

¹ The ten "Words" of Creation are the words (in Gen. i.) introduced by the formula, "And God said." Their relation to the six "Days" of Creation will be seen in my *Letter to Old Test. Critics*.

PSALM LXXVIII.

Invitation to the
public reading of
Torah.

1 Hearken, O my People, to my Law^a:
Incline your ear to the words of my mouth.
2 I would open my mouth in parable^b;
I would utter dark-speech^b from the past;
3 Which we have heard and known,
And which our fathers have told us.
4 We will not hide them from their children,
Telling to latest of ages the praises of YHVH,
Both His might, and His marvellous works that He hath
done.

^a *Torah*

^b Ps. xlix. 4

v. 1. "*Hearken...to my Law.*" The English word "*Law*" very feebly expresses the Hebrew *Torah*. *Torah* is properly the living Voice of Inspiration which comes to men through man, and which is the practical guide of life (Deut. xvii. 8 ff.; xxxiii. 9 f.; Lam. ii. 9).

The public reading of the *Torah* was in the Seventh Month (Deut. xxxi. 10 ff.; cf. Neh. vii. 73; viii. 1), on the Feast which, in olden times, was called the *Asiph*. This Feast I have shewn to be connected with the guild of *Asaph* singers (Hulsean Lectures for 1889). The public reading of the *Torah* was not for men only but for the women and the children. In the present *Asaph* Psalm the "*Torah*" consists of a practical lesson drawn from the past history of Israel in a way which is characteristic of these Psalms (see *Introduction to the Asaph Psalms*).

v. 2. "*I would open my mouth in parable.*" The *Asaph* Psalmist here uses "*parable*" and "*dark-speech*," exactly as the *Korah* Psalmist has done in Ps. xlix. 4, to shew that he has a meaning deeper than that which is reflected from the surface of his words. What the meaning is we shall hope to shew.

"*Dark-speech from the past.*" The Psalmist does not mean that he is repeating the dark-speech of olden time, but that his dark-speech is based upon the history of the past. He is, indeed, giving the lesson of Israel's history. St Matthew applies this verse to the Parables of Christ; "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

I will open my mouth in parables;

I will utter things hidden, from the structure [of the world]" (Matt. xiii. 35).

On this verse Bengel has the profound remark, "*Non solum dicit fundamenta, sed structuram.*" 2 *Macc. ii. 29.*" The parables of Christ were based upon the structure of the Universe. But we must not limit the application of the verse. It was not by His parables alone, but by His whole Life that Christ was and is to man that Light of Revelation of which W. Law has beautifully said, "This Light has dispersed all the Anxiety of (man's) vain conjectures; it has brought us acquainted with God, and by adding Heaven to Earth, and Eternity to Time, has opened such a glorious View of Things, as makes Man even in his present condition, full of a Peace of God which passes all Understanding" (*Christian Perfection*, Ch. 1.).

This reading of
Torah is ordained by
God as a duty.

- 5 For He established a Testimony in Jacob,
And made it a Law^a in Israel,
Which He commanded our fathers,
To make them known unto their children;
6 That the latest age might know,
Even children yet to be born,
Who should arise and tell their children;
7 That they should place their reliance on God
And not forget the great works of God^b,
But keep His commandments;
8 And not become like their fathers,
A generation "stubborn and rebellious^c,"
A generation that prepared not their heart,
And whose spirit was not faithful with God^d;
9 Ephraim children, carrying treacherous bows^e—
That turned back in the day of battle!
10 They kept not the covenant of God;
And refused to walk in His Law;
11 And they forgot His doings;
His marvellous works that He had let them see.

^a Torah

^b El

^c Deut. xxi. 18;
Jer. v. 23

^d El

^e cf. v. 57

v. 5. "Testimony in Jacob." The public reading of the Torah in the Seventh Month was not merely a custom, but a Divinely appointed ordinance. The word *Testimony* is used in a similar sense in Psalm lxxxii. 5, which is also an Asaph Psalm.

v. 9. "Ephraim children carrying treacherous bows." The literal translation of the text would be "carriers of shooters of the bow," which might possibly be rendered, "carrying and shooting with the bow." But the verse is obviously parallel with v. 57,

*"They faithlessly swerved like their fathers,
They turned aside like a treacherous bow."*

I would therefore suggest that, in v. 9, the original text had רמיה "treacherous," instead of רמ"י "shooters of."

Probably there is a double meaning in the words "Ephraim children" just as in Gen. xlix. 22, where Joseph (Ephraim) is called *ben porath*, "a fruitful bough"; as though he would say "sons of Ephraim" should be "sons of fruitfulness." But alas! Ephraim has not lived up to his name. These "fruitful boughs" have become unfruitful bows.

There is no historical allusion in this verse. God "bent Judah for Him, and filled the string with Ephraim" (Zech. ix. 13), but the weapon was faithless in His hand. So Jerome, commenting on v. 8 "a race stubborn and froward," says,

"Quare dixit *prava*? Quia facti sunt in arcum perversum. Arcus enim nunquam extenditur in eum qui se mittit, sed contra adversarios. Ista autem generatio cum esset recta a Deo condita, et haberetur in manu Dei quasi arcus, ut mitteret per eam sagittas, versa est quasi arcus perversus."

The Asaph Psalmists are specially interested in the House of Joseph (see *Introduction to Asaph Psalms*), but their object is, to extol God's goodness, not to extenuate man's guilt.

God's signs at the
Red Sea and in the
Wilderness.

- 12 In the sight of their fathers He wrought marvels,
In the land of Egypt—in the field of Zoan.
13 He clave the Sea, and brought them through;
He piled^a up the waters as a heap^a;
14 And He led them, by day, with a Cloud;
And all the night with a light of Fire.
15 He clave rocks in the Wilderness,
And gave (them) drink abundant as the Depths^b,
16 And he brought out rills from the rock^c,
And made waters to flow down as the rivers.

^a Exod. xv. 8

^b Ps. xxxvi. 6

^c Selq, Numb.
xx. 8—11

v. 13. "He clave the sea." So, in v. 15, the same verb is used, though in a different voice, "He clave the rocks."

In the earliest record (J) the drying of the Red Sea is ascribed to "a strong east wind" (Exod. xiv. 21^b), while the words which follow, respecting the waters "cleaving asunder" and standing as a wall on the right-hand and on the left, are assigned by critics to the Priest-code. The verb is, however, used in Is. lxiii. 12, "That led (them) by the right-hand of Moses...cleaving the waters before them": though here the context rather suggests that the cleaving of the waters refers to the gift of water from the Rock (see v. 11).

Neh. ix. 11 is parallel with our Psalm but, being probably late, must not be quoted to establish a date.

"He piled up the waters as a heap." Here we seem to have a quotation from the Song of Moses, Exod. xv. 8, "The floods were piled up as a heap." This Song, however, is not earlier than the Captivity (see *Critical Commentaries*).

So then, as far as this verse is concerned, it would seem that the standpoint of the Psalmist was nearer to that of P than to that of J E, though he does not appear to have known P in its present form.

v. 14. The Pillar of Fire and Cloud, as a guiding Light, belongs to J, see Exod. xiii. 21 f.; but the whole standpoint of the Psalm follows E rather than J, inasmuch as God, not Moses, is the Guide.

v. 15. "He clave rocks..." In Ps. lxxiv. 15; Prov. iii. 20, the verb is used of the creative work of God. The Prophets of the Exile were the first to apply it to the smitten rock in the Wilderness; and, in so doing, they allude to a New Creation, e.g. Is. xxxv. 6, "Then shall the lame man leap as the hart...because waters have been cleft out in the wilderness and torrents in the desert." Is. xlvi. 21, "And they thirsted not in the deserts through which He led them; water from the rock (*tsur*) He caused to flow down unto them; He clave the rock, and water gushed out."

v. 16. "rills (lit. flowing ones) from the rock." In v. 15 the word for rock is *tsur*, but here it is *selq*, i.e. the *crag*, or rugged rock. Both words are used of the Rock in the Wilderness; the Elohist uses *tsur* of the Rock in Horeb, Exod. xvii. 6; while J and P use *selq* in Numb. xx. 8—11. The contrast between the hard rock and the softly-flowing water is lost in the translation.

Job (xxix. 6) speaks of a rock (*tsur*) "pouring him out rivers of oil." We also have "honey out of the rock" (*tsur*) (Ps. lxxxi. 16); the rock (*tsur*) becomes "a standing water" (Ps. cxiv. 8; cf. Is. xlvi. 21). Also, in Deut. xxxii. 13, we read, "He made him to suck honey out of the rock (*selq*)."

The temptations at Massah and Meribah form one of the critical difficulties of the Exodus. Probably two traditions—those of J and E—referring to the same event, have become separate stories. Our Psalmist seems, in point of language, to follow the Massah story of J (Num. xx. 8^b) as developed by P (Num. xx. 8^c—11), which harmonizes the Meribah story of E (Exod. xvii. 2). The argument from silence must not be pressed, but, as far as it goes, we should infer that he knew only of one smiting of the Rock and that he placed it early in the journeyings through the Wilderness.

v. 18. "They tempted God..." They had "tempted" or "tried" Him at Massah (Deut. vi. 16; xxxiii. 8), saying, "Is YHVH among us or not" (Exod. xvii. 7, J); i.e. they had claimed to live by sight and not by faith. Now, a second time, they "tempted" or "tried" God by disdaining the manna and "asking for dainty food," lit. "for food for their appetite."

How ungrateful
they were!

- 17 Yet they went on sinning against Him,
Rebelling^a against The Most High in the desert.
18 And they tempted^b God^c in their heart,
By asking for dainty food,
19 Yea they spake against God—
They said, "Can God^d avail
To spread a table in the Wilderness?
20 True He smote the Rock, so that waters flowed out,
And streams ran in floods;
Can He also avail to give bread?
Can He provide for His People with flesh?"

^a *vv.* 8, 40, 56;
cf. *Is.* lxiii. 10

^b *El*
^c *vv.* 41, 56

^d *El*

According to the oldest tradition (J E) the manna was regarded by the People as "*vile food*," Numb. xxi. 5 (E). They said of it "*we have nought save this manna to look to*," Numb. xi. 6 (J). God gave it them, not as a luxury, but "*to try them*"—the same word being used as in this verse—"*Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may try them*" (Exod. xvi. 4, J). Even D regards it as a trial, "*And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, etc.*" (Deut. viii. 3, cf. v. 2). The manna was a trial, not merely because it was given from day to day, but because it was itself a tasteless food.

Our Psalmist seems to be following the earlier tradition, according to which both manna and quails were given at the same time, in answer to the "murmurings" of the People at Kibroth-hattaavah or "*the graves of lust*." See Numb. xi. 4—15, 18—24^a, 31—35 (J E), and compare the Priest-code version, in which the manna was given as food for the morning and quails for the evening (Exod. xvi. 6—14).

v. 20. The demand of Israel was for "*bread*" and "*flesh*."

According to P they had complained that in the land of Egypt they had had "*bread to satiety*," whereupon God says, "*At even ye shall have flesh, and in the morning ye shall be sated with bread*." This promise was fulfilled by the quails which came in the evening, and the manna in the morning. See Exod. xvi. 3, 11—14 (P).

The older version of J is somewhat different. The People ask for flesh (Numb. xi. 4—12) and complain of the manna, which according to J was a natural product of the wilderness, therefore God says in anger, "*YHWH will give you flesh, and ye shall eat. Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; but a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you*" (*vv.* 18—20, J). This was fulfilled by the wind which "*brought quails from the sea*" and was followed by the plague at Kibroth-hattaavah (*vv.* 31—34, J).

Clearly J and P differ respecting the manna: for, according to J, it was a poor natural product of the Wilderness against which the People murmured (Numb. xi. 6), while, according to P, it was altogether miraculous in its nature, and was given at the same time as the quails.

If, now, we ask Which of these two views is most nearly represented in our Psalm? the answer cannot be doubted. It is that of P. Bread and flesh are asked for (*v.* 20), and the manna (*vv.* 23—25) and quails (26—28) are given. The manna is "*the corn of heaven*" (*v.* 24), "*the food of the mighty*" (*v.* 25). But, on the other hand, the language of the Psalm is much nearer to J E than to P; and the Psalm agrees with J, against P, in making the plague at Kibroth-hattaavah follow upon the gift. The conditions of the problem would be satisfied if we might assume that the Psalm was written not long before P, and that the writer was familiar with the full texts of J and E, of which portions only have come down to us.

v. 21. "*enraged*"—a very strong word. See references.

v. 25. Just as "*bread of the Mighty*" refers to the manna, so "*food to the full*" refers to the quails. The word which we here translate "*food*" strictly denotes *food taken in hunting*; it is translated "*venison*" in Gen. xxvii. 3, but is used in the more general sense of "*victuals*" or "*provision*" for a journey (Gen. xlii. 25; xlv. 21; Jos. i. 11; ix. 11, etc.).

Ingratitude moved
God's anger.

21 Therefore YHVH heard and was enraged^a,
So fire was kindled against Jacob,
And anger went up against Israel^b,

22 Because they relied not on God,
And put not their trust in His help.

Yet, in wrath, He
remembered mercy.

23 Then He commanded the skies above,
And He opened the doors of heaven,

24 And he rained on them manna to eat,
And gave them the corn of heaven.

25 Man ate the bread of the Mighty^c,
He sent them food to the full,

26 He brought^d out the storm-blast^e in heaven,
And drave^f with his might the Sirocco^g;

27 So He rained on them flesh like dust,
And winged fowl, like the sand of the seas

28 And let it fall in the midst of His camp,
Round about His tabernacles.

^a *vs.* 59, 62;
Ps. lxxxix.
38; Deut. iii.
26

^b *v.* 31;
Ps. xviii. 8;
1 Chr.
xxxvi. 16

^c *i.e.* Angels
(Sept.)

^d *v.* 52
^e *east-wind*,
Exod. x. 13

^f *v.* 52
^g *south-wind*

The other word, which we translate "to the full," is the very word used by the murmurers who look back to the time "when we sat by the flesh pots, when we did eat bread to the full" (Exod. xvi. 3, P). It is also alluded to in God's answer (*v.* 12), "At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled (lit. sated) with bread." Both these verses are from the Priest-code, and the allusion to them in our Psalm, even if it be not a quotation, is another proof that the standpoint of the Psalmist is very near that of the Priest-code. There is, however, an important difference: for if the passage in the Priest-code be studied it will be seen that the thought of *satiety* and its effects is not worked out, as it is in J, by the consequent plague, and that the words "ye shall be sated with bread," are made to refer to the *manna*, whereas they properly refer (see J's version) to the *quails*. Our Psalm, in these two particulars, follows J rather than P.

v. 26. "He brought out (lit. "caused to journey")...And drave..." Both verbs suggest the driving of sheep or cattle; and both are used again in *v.* 52, "He brought out His People like sheep, And drave them as a flock in the Wilderness." He who maketh the winds His angels thus used the "storm-blast" and the "Sirocco" as patient beasts to bear the burden of quails to His People.

In Numb. xi. 31, J, we read, "And there journeyed a wind from YHVH, and brought (?) quails from the sea." The verb we here translate "journeyed" is only another conjugation of the same verb which is used in our Psalm, "He brought out (or caused to journey) the storm-blast in heaven." The occurrence of such an unusual expression in these two passages is very suggestive.

No argument as to the direction of the wind can be founded upon Numb. xi. 31, since the verb which is rendered "brought quails from the sea," might rather signify "cut off" or "moved down."

v. 27. "So He rained on them flesh..." In *v.* 24 we read, "He rained on them manna." Both passages are derived from Exod. xvi. 4, "Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you." This last verse, which is ascribed by critics to the Elohist, comes between two passages of the Priest-code, in the first of which we have the repining of the People for the days when they "did eat bread to the full," and in the second the answer of God, "At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled (sated) with bread." If these passages be studied it will be seen that our Psalmist interpreted the words of the Elohist, "I will rain bread (i.e. food) from heaven" as a promise, not of the manna only, but of the manna and of the quails. In this respect he entirely agrees with P.

vs. 28—31. Our Psalmist here closely follows the earlier record, JE, "And there journeyed a wind from YHVH and moved down (?) quails from the sea and left them by the camp, a day's journey on this



He let them see that
their desire had in it
the seed of sorrow.

Mercy and chastise-
ment were alike wasted
on them (cf. Numb.
xii. 1 f.).

- 29 So they ate and were sated exceedingly,
And their desire^a He brought^b upon them.
30 They were not deterred from their desire^a,
Their food was still in their mouth,
31 Then the anger of God rose^c against them,
And slew the strongest among them,
And laid low the chosen of Israel.
32 In spite of all this they still sinned,
And put no trust in His wonders:
33 Therefore He consumed their days in vanity,
And their years in trouble^d.
34 When He slew them then they enquired after Him,
And repented and sought God^e diligently,
35 And remembered that God^f was their Rock,
And God Most High^g their Redeemer.
36 Yet they did but gloze with their mouth,
And dealt falsely to Him with their tongue.
37 For their heart was not right with Him,
Nor were they faithful in His covenant:
38 He, too, the Piteous! that forgiveth iniquity!
And doth not destroy!
Who constantly checks His anger,
And letteth not His wrath rise all together!
39 For He remembered that they were (but) flesh;
A spirit^h that goes and doth not return.
40 How oft do they provoke Him in the Wilderness,
And grieve Him in the Desert!
41 For they turned and temptedⁱ God^k,
And limited^l the Holy One of Israel.

^a or *lust*
^b cf. Ps. cv. 40

^c *went up*, v. 21

^d or *terror*,
Lev. xxvi. 16

^e *El*

^f *Elohim*

^g *El Elyon*

^h or *wind*

ⁱ v. 18

^k *El*, v. 18

^l *set a mark*,
Ezek. ix. 4

side and a day's journey on that side, round about the camp.....And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the anger of YHVH was kindled against the People, and YHVH smote the People with a very great plague. And the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah (graves of lust), because there they buried the people that lusted" (Numb. xi. 31—35).

v. 33. This verse may possibly contain an allusion to Numb. xiv. 22 f., which critics assign to a revision of J E.

v. 41. "And limited..." The verb (only here, and Ezek. ix. 4, in the *Hiphil*) properly signifies "to set a mark." The Targum rightly interprets it here as *setting a limit*. By their unbelief they practically said, This thing God hath done, but this other is beyond His power.

The Sept., Vulg. and P.B.V. translate "*provoked*," or "*moved*," this sense being derived from the Syriac. Many modern commentators agree with this rendering, though it cannot be justified from Hebrew, is opposed to the parallelism of the verse, is a feeble repetition of v. 40, and is contrary to Jewish tradition.

God's signs in Egypt
were not of mercy but
of destruction.

- 42 They did not remember His hand,
The day when He redeemed them from the foe.
- 43 When He shewed in Egypt His signs,
His portents in the field of Zoan ;
- 44 He turned their canals into blood,
So that none could drink of their streams.
- 45 He sent forth the swarm to consume them ;
The frogs to destroy^a them.
- 46 He gave their produce to the caterpillar,
And their toil unto the locust.
- 47 He killed their vines with hail,
And their sycomore^b trees with the sleet^c.
- 48 And He gave up their beasts to the hail^d,
Their cattle to the fiery-darts^e.
- 49 He sent His hot anger against them,
Wrath, and fury, and distress,
A mission of angels of woe ;
- 50 He levelled a path for His anger ;
He spared not their soul from death,
He gave up their dear-life to the pestilence :
- 51 And He smote each first-born in Egypt,
Their first-begotten in the tents of Ham :

^a *corrupt*

^b Amos vii. 14
^c only here
^d Sym. *pesti-*
lence.
^e Ps. lxxvi. ;

v. 45. The Hebrew word *qrbv* "swarm" has no necessary connexion either with "*flies*" (E.V.) or with "*lice*" (P.B.V.). Such renderings are unfair attempts to make the Psalm agree with the "ten plagues" of Exodus.

In the Exodus record the word is only used by the Jehovist, Exod. viii. 21 *bis*, 22, 24 *bis*, 29, 31, and though the "*swarm*" is there interpreted as a swarm (of flies) such interpretation is nothing more than a guess. The word in itself means the "*swarm*," and is almost identical with the word which (Exod. xii. 38; Neh. xiii. 3) is used of a "*mixed multitude*" of people.

The critical scholar will note that in the Jehovist record the plague of *frogs* was immediately followed by the plague of the *swarm*. The two plagues were alike in this respect, that both were upon the *land*, and were identical in their effect; cf. Exod. viii. 14, "*the land stank*," with v. 24, "*the land was corrupted*." Our Psalmist combines them as one plague or sign, since, having spoken (v. 44) of a sign upon the *water* he now requires a sign upon the *land*. As far as this verse is concerned he differs from Ps. cv. 31, in that he follows J and not P.

v. 46. "*The caterpillar...the locust*." The two words are again found together in 1 Kings viii. 37; 2 Chr. vi. 28; Joel i. 4, ii. 25. The former word *haseel*, though translated "*caterpillar*," is only another name for the *locust*.

The plague or sign in this verse is upon the produce of man's labour from the earth.

Our Psalmist again follows the Jehovist, and again transposes the order of two plagues, which in J are closely related. According to J "the hail smote every herb of the field and brake every tree of the field" (Exod. ix. 25^b), and was followed by the locust which consumed the vegetation that the hail had left, whereas in our Psalm the locust is mentioned before the hail.

v. 48. According to J "*all the cattle of Egypt*" had died of the murrain (Exod. ix. 1-7), and the

In spite of all unfaithfulness God was faithful to His People.

52 But He brought* His people like sheep,
And drave them, like a flock, in the Wilderness.
53 He led them safely that they should not fear—
But the sea overwhelmed their foes!
54 So He brought them to His holy border,
This Mount His right hand had acquired.
55 He drove out Nations before them,
And gave them as an inheritance by lot,
Making the Tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

* v. 26 made to journey

The Ten tribes became again faithless.

56 Yet they tempted and rebelled^b against God Most High^c;
And His testimonies they would not keep;
57 But became renegades and traitors like their fathers;
They turned like a deceitful bow.
58 For they angered Him with their high-places;
And with their images they moved His jealousy.

^b 77. 8, 17, 40
^c Elohim
Eiydn

Therefore God cast them away from His Presence.

59 God heard, and was enraged^d,
And greatly abhorred Israel:
60 So He forsook the Dwelling of Shiloh,
The Tent He had dwelt in with man;
61 He gave His^e strength to captivity,
His^e beauty into the hand of the oppressor.
62 He gave over His People to the sword;
And was enraged with His Inheritance.
63 A fire consumed His young men;
And His maidens had no bridal-song.
64 His priests fell by the sword;
And His widows could make no lament!

^d v. 21

^e or its

hail was only upon the trees: but, according to E, the hail was mingled with fire, and was "*upon man and beast*" (Exod. ix. 22 f., 25*).

Our Psalmist in this verse agrees with E, but chooses the poetical word which we have translated "*fiery-darts*," which might apply either to the lightnings or to the arrow of pestilence (Ps. lxxvi. 3, note).

Instead of ברר, "*hail*," Symmachus read רבר "*pestilence*." Of course, if this reading be adopted the whole verse would refer to the plague of murrain which is peculiar to J.

v. 49. "*A mission of angels of woe*." We must not exactly translate "*evil angels*" (LXX. Vulg. P.B.V), because of later associations; but such a translation may be justified from grammar, and doubtless in the Psalmist's mind the plagues were personifications of the evil-working powers of nature.

v. 58. "*For they angered Him with their high-places*." The "*high-places*" (*Bamoth*) were not accounted as a sin to Israel until the 7th century B.C. (see Hastings' Dict., *High Place*). Our Psalmist is clearly looking back upon the Captivity of the Ten Tribes (B.C. 722) which is ascribed to this very sin in 2 Kings xvii. 6—23.

v. 60. "*So He forsook the Dwelling of Shiloh*." The "House of God in Shiloh" (Judg. xviii. 31)

Yet, even so, Zion
and David still carry
on the line of Promise.

65 Yet the Lord^a awoke as a sleeper,
As a warrior shouting from wine,
66 And smote His enemies^b backward :
He put them to endless shame.
67 Though He rejected the Tent of Joseph,
And chose not the Tribe of Ephraim ;
68 Yet He chose the Tribe of Judah,
The Mount Zion that He loved.
69 And He built like the Heights, His Sanctuary,
Like the Earth that He founded for ever.
70 And he made choice of David His servant,
And took him away from the sheepfolds :
71 From after the milch-ewes He took him,
To be shepherd to Jacob His people,
And to Israel His Inheritance.
72 So he shepherded them with wholeness of heart,
And led them along with skilful hands.

^a *Adonai*

^b *oppressors*

must have been something more than a "Tabernacle," otherwise there would have been no meaning in the threat. Jer. vii. 12—15, "But go now unto My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My Name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel.....Therefore will I do unto this House which is called by My Name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh" (cf. xxvi. 6, 9). Our Psalmist is not thinking of the capture of the Ark by the Philistines but of the deportation of the House of Ephraim by Sargon (B.C. 722).

PSALM LXXIX.

Ps. lxxix. is closely parallel with Ps. lxxiv. (see marginal references). This resemblance is so great that those commentators who have ascribed Ps. lxxiv. to Maccabean times have been obliged to assign the same date to the present Psalm. But the "heathen" (vv. 1, 6, 10) are not Greeks or Syrians, but "neighbours" (vv. 4, 12), and probably Moabites and Ammonites (v. 1, note). Now the Moabites had ceased to exist as a nation in the times of the Maccabees, and though the Ammonites were hostile (1. Macc. v. 6) yet there is no reason to assume the later date when all the conditions of the Psalm are fully satisfied if we assign it to the age of Nehemiah. See Neh. iv., and compare Introductions to Pss. lxxiv. and xliv. A similar combination of neighbouring Tribes against Israel is the subject of Ps. lxxxiii., which is the last of the twelve Asaph Psalms.

PSALM LXXIX.

That which was threatened upon us as sinners has now fallen upon us as saints. (Cf. Ps. xlv. 17 ff.)

- 1 O God, the heathen^a are come into Thine Inheritance^b;
Thy holy Palace-Temple have they defiled^c;
They have made "Jerusalem mere ruin-heaps^d."
2 They have given "the carcase" of Thy servants
"As food for the birds of heaven";
The flesh of Thy saints to the beasts of the earth.
3 They have shed their blood like water
All round^e about Jerusalem;
And none was (left) to bury^f them.
4 We are become "a reproach to our neighbours,
A scoff and jest to those that are round about us^g."

- ^a nations
^b Ps. lxxiv. 2
^c cf. Ps. lxxiv. 7
^d cf. Mic. iii. 1; Jer. xxvi. 18
^e cf. 1 Macc. i. 37
^f cf. Jer. xiv. 16
^g Ps. xlv. 14; cf. Ps. lxxx. 6

v. 1. "O God the heathen are come..." The complaint is identical with that in Lam. i. 10, "For she (Jerusalem) hath seen that the heathen are come into her Sanctuary, whom Thou didst command that they should not enter into Thy Congregation." Their very presence was itself a defilement. There is, however, this important difference, that, whereas in Lam. i. there is a deep Consciousness of Sin, in our Psalm (as in Ps. xlv.) the sorrow has fallen upon God's People rather in consequence of their fidelity than of any national guilt (cf. Ps. xlv. 18 note, p. 187). We may well suppose that the Psalm alludes to the same event as Ps. lxxiv.

"Thy holy Palace-Temple have they defiled." Wellhausen says, "This could not be properly asserted of the Chaldeans, who destroyed and burnt the Temple (586 B.C.). It applies only to the Syrians (169 B.C.), of whom it might be said, quite as truly as of the Chaldeans, that they laid Jerusalem in ruins (cf. 1 Macc. i. 31; ii. 7; 2 Macc. viii. 2-4)." But surely the allusion to Lam. i. 10 sufficiently explains the defilement! Deut. xxiii. 3 had ordered that "An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the Congregation of YHWH, even to the tenth generation": this order was enforced by Nehemiah (chap. xiii.) and caused great bitterness. Our Psalmist complains that these very Nations who had been excluded, as unclean, from the Congregation (Lam. i. 10) are now working their own will in the very Sanctuary. Surely this would, in his eyes, defile the Temple.

"They have made Jerusalem mere ruin-heaps." They have fulfilled to the letter that prophecy of Micah which seemed to the men of Jeremiah's age a blasphemy against God (Mic. iii. 12 with Jer. xxvi. 18 ff.). But here, again, there is a difference; for both Micah and Jeremiah denounced this evil on Jerusalem because of her sins, whereas, in the Psalmist's time, Jerusalem has been destroyed when she was striving after reformation. The destruction which followed closely on the reformation of Zerubbabel would account for all the conditions of the Psalm.

"Thine Inheritance"—God's "Inheritance," or "Possession" (Ps. lxxiv. 2), is His People (Ps. lxxviii. 9 note). In the previous Psalm God was "enraged with His Inheritance" (v. 62), yet, afterwards, He raised up a David to be shepherd "to Israel His Inheritance" (v. 71). To this "David" He promised, "I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance" (Ps. ii. 8). But now, on the contrary, "O God, the heathen are come into Thine Inheritance." Such a contrast between Israel's present and Israel's hope is itself a strong appeal, and full of hope (cf. the last verse of the Psalm).

v. 2. "The carcase." The word is in the singular; as though the whole People were dead. The allusion is to the threat in Deut. xxiv. 26, "And thy carcase shall be meat unto the birds of heaven" &c. This threat, through Israel's sin, has been fulfilled. Jeremiah constantly alludes to it, and, in every instance, he, like our Psalmist, uses "carcase" in the singular (see Jer. vii. 23;

Be just to us!	5 How long ^a , YHVH, wilt Thou be angry ^b for ever ^c ? Shall Thy jealousy (ever) burn like fire?	^a Ps. lxxiv. 10; lxxx. 4
A quotation (?) from Jer. x. 25.	6 "Pour out Thy wrath upon the heathen ^d that know Thee not, "And upon the kingdoms that call not on Thy name.	^b Ps. lxxxv. 5 ^c Ps. lxxiv. 1
	7 "For they have devoured Jacob, "And laid waste his fold."	^d nations, v. 1
	8 Remember not against us the iniquities of former ^e (times); *Jer. xi. 10 But let Thy mercies speed to succour us; For we are brought very low ^f .	^e Ps. cxvi. 6; cxlii. 6

ix. 22 (21); xvi. 4; xix. 7; xxxiv. 20). In all these passages, however, the People were regarded as *rebels*. Our Psalmist gives a wholly new turn to the thought by the words "*Thy servants*," "*Thy saints*"; as though he had said, 'The old threat has been fulfilled upon us when we were doing our best to serve Thee.' Such a thought implies a later date than Jeremiah (cf. Introduction to Ps. xliv.).

"*Thy saints*." The Psalmist applies the name "saints" (*Hasidim*) to the whole People of God. At a later time it became the name of a sect, viz. the *Hasidæans*. In 1 Macc. vii. 13—17 we read that, when sixty men of these *Hasidæans* were treacherously put to death it was felt to be a fulfilment of vv. 2, 3 of our Psalm.

"*And he laid hands on threescore men of them, and slew them in one day, according to the word which (the Psalmist) wrote,*

*"The flesh of Thy saints (did they cast out),
And their blood did they shed round about Jerusalem;
And there was no man to bury them."*

That such words should have been applied to such an event shews that the Psalm was regarded as Scripture in the time of the Maccabees.

To suppose that the Psalm was written in consequence of the death of those sixty men manifests a strange perversion of the critical faculty.

vv. 6, 7. These verses agree with Jer. x. 25. Many suppose that Jeremiah quoted them from the Psalm, especially as Jer. x. 24 agrees with Ps. vi. 1. If so the Psalm could only date from the first destruction of Jerusalem. But, on the other hand, if the Psalm be read consecutively, it will be seen that vv. 6—8 are different in structure and are more like prose than poetry. It should also be noticed that in v. 8 (see note) the Psalmist seems to be alluding to Jer. xi. 10. On the whole we conclude that the Psalmist quoted from the Prophet.

v. 8. "*Remember not against us the sins of former (times)*." The Hebrew *rishonim* might be either "*former (times)*," or "*former (people)*." The nearest parallel is Jer. xi. 10, "*They (i.e. the men of Judah) are returned unto the iniquities of their fathers, the former-ones*." But again we note that our Psalmist regards the sufferings of Israel as due, not to sins of his own day, but to the sins of their fathers in the past (cf. Ps. xliv.).

v. 9. "*Deliver us, forgive our sins*." It might seem as though these words contradicted our last note. But it is not so. In the second stanza, vv. 5—8, the Psalmist cries for justice against the heathen, compared with whom, Israel indeed is righteous:—Let God be just to us! But in the third stanza, vv. 9—12, the cry for justice is based upon the *Glory of God's Name*:—Let Him justify this Name by forgiving us (v. 9). Let Him clear it from the reproach of the heathen by a mighty vengeance (v. 10). Let Him shew the Glory of His Name by raising us from our low estate and by abasing those neighbouring nations (? Moab and Ammon) who hold Him now in scorn.

v. 10. "*Where is their God?*" A post-exilic taunt (see Ps. xlii. 3, note, p. 175). "*A vengeance*" &c. The word is used in the Priest-code, of "*YHVH's vengeance on Midian*" (Numb. xxxi. 3). The nearest parallel is from Jeremiah's prayer, "*Let me see Thy vengeance upon*

Be just to Thine
own Name!

9 Help us, O God of our salvation,
For the glory of Thy Name :
Deliver us, forgive^a our sins
For Thine own Name's sake.

^a atone,
Pss. lxxv. 3 ;
lxxviii. 38

10 Wherefore should the heathen say,
"Where is their God?"

^b Ps. xlii. 3, 10

May there be shewn upon the heathen in our sight
A vengeance for the blood of Thy servants that is shed.

11 May the groaning of the prisoner come before Thee ;
According to Thy mighty arm, free Thou
those destined to die!

12 And pay to our neighbours, sevenfold
into their bosom,
Their scorn wherewith they scorned Thee, Adonai!

13 So we, Thy People, the flock^c of Thy Shepherd-care,
Will give Thee thanks for ever :
From age to age we will recount Thy praise.

^c Ps. lxxiv. 1

them" (Jer. xi. 20 ; xx. 12 ; cf. also l. 15, 28 ; li. 6, 11, 36, and Ezek. xxv. 14, 17). As Christians we are called to a higher view ; but there is a sense in which even the souls of the martyrs beneath the Altar cry unto God, saying, "*How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*" (Rev. vi. 10).

We must also remember that in vv. 9—12 the leading thought is the honour of God's Name (see last note).

PSALM LXXX.

The historical stand-point of this Psalm would seem to agree exactly with that of the second Korah Psalm (Ps. xlii.). In both we find the same contrast between the Promises of God and the sad state to which His People are reduced, so that they are become a scoff and reproach to their neighbours: Both recall the 'driving out' of the Nations and the 'planting in' of Israel: Both appeal to God to arise, as of old, and to appear for Israel's help: Both seem to allude to the order of the Camps (Numb. ii), the Promise of the Trumpet (Numb. x. 9). This being so we shall not repeat what has been already written on Ps. xlii. But our Psalm is also connected with the group of Asaph Psalms in which it stands. The cry of Ps. lxxix., "*O God, the heathen are come into Thine Inheritance,*" is fitly followed, in Ps. lxxx., by the appeal to the Promise of the Trumpet.

But in Zech. ix. 14 (of uncertain date), the Promise of the Trumpet is to

issue in a Divine Advent, "YHVH shall be seen over them, and His arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and YHVH God shall blow with the trumpet,... YHVH Sababth shall defend them... And YHVH their God shall save them in that day as the Flock of His People...." This passage will best explain the expectation of the Divine Advent in our Psalm.

The Psalm was used for the season of Advent in the early Church, and an old Latin Hymn, for Advent, begins with a translation of *vv.* 1, 2,—

Intende, qui regis Israhel,
super cherubin qui sedes,
Appare Ephrem coram excita
potentiam tuam et veni.

[MONE, *Hym. Lat.* p. 42.]

PSALM LXXX.

May Elohim, the
God of Ephraim, ap-
pear on Earth!

1 Give ear, Thou Shepherd^a of Israel!
Thou that leadest Joseph as a flock^a;
Thou cherub-throned, shine^b forth!
2 Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
Rouse up Thy mighty strength
And come as our great-salvation^c!
3 ELOHIM, RESTORE US!
AND CAUSE THY FACE TO SHINE^d, THAT WE BE SAVED!

^a Ps. lxxix. 13

^b Deut. xxxiii. 2

^c Cf. Ps. xlv. 26

^d Numb. vi. 25

v. 1. "Shepherd of Israel." The earliest traditions of Israel associated its "hosts" with the stars, i.e. with the "hosts of heaven" (Gen. xv. 5; xxii. 17; xxvi. 4; xxxvii. 9; Ex. xxxii. 13; Jer. xxxiii. 22 &c.).

As God is the Shepherd of the stars, "bringing out their host by number" (Is. xl. 26), so He is the "Shepherd of Israel." Thus the title of "Shepherd" prepares us for the Divine Name "Sababth," "Hosts," which occurs four times in this Psalm.

In the Blessing of Joseph, Jacob speaks of God as "the God that was my Shepherd all my life long" (Gen. xlviii. 15 J). And, again, "From thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel" (xlix. 24).

The *Asaph* Psalms are specially interested in *Joseph* and in the thought of God as the *Shepherd of Israel*.

"Thou cherub-throned, shine forth!" So De Witt well translates. Here, as in Ps. xcix. 1, the thought is, not of a God dwelling between the Cherubim on the Ark, but, of a God throned on what we should now call the Powers of Nature (cf. Ezek. x.). As God had delivered Israel, at the Red Sea by a Theophany, when

"He rode on the Cherub and flew" (Ps. xviii. 10),

so now—"Thou Cherub-throned, shine forth!" This word "Shine forth" is used in another *Asaph* Psalm (l. 2, see note, p. 217) of a Divine Advent.

v. 2. "Before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh." These three tribes formed the Western Camp, under the banner of Ephraim, which was the *Ox* or *Cherub* (Numb. ii. 18—24). Both in the

Why does not Sabaôth go forth now with our hosts? (Cf. Ps. xliv. 9.)

4 YHVH Elohim Sabaôth,

How long hast Thou fumed^a against the prayer
of Thy People!

^a cf. Ps. lxxxv.
5

5 Thou hast given them bread of tears to eat;
And tears in full measure for their drink.

6 Thou makest us a strife to our neighbours^b;
And our enemies scoff at us.

^b Ps. xliv. 13

7 ELOHIM SABAÔTH, RESTORE US!

AND CAUSE THY FACE TO SHINE, THAT WE BE SAVED!

encampment (Numb. ii. 17 f.) and on the march (Numb. x. 17 f.) this Western Camp of Ephraim had the Sanctuary immediately in front of it; consequently the appeal to God, to shine forth "before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh," is an appeal to the Shepherd of Israel, who is guiding His People. now as of old (Ps. lxxix. 13), to manifest Himself as their Leader and Deliverer. See note on the Korah Psalm (xliv. 9), p. 185.

v. 3. "Elohim, restore us." We have generally translated *Elohim* by the word *God* but such a translation would here obscure the progressive import of the Refrain (cf. vv. 3, 7, 19).

"Restore us." The word is constantly used, especially by Jeremiah, of God bringing back His People out of captivity. It may, however, denote a change of heart as in Lam. v. 21.

v. 4. "How long hast Thou fumed..." The Psalmist uses a *past* tense, where we might have expected a *future*, because he is thinking of the many years of disappointed hope. Compare Zech. i. 12, "O YHVH Sabaôth, how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem...against which Thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?"

v. 8. "A Vine." The symbolism of the Vine is of very early date. Abraham, in his boyhood, must have known the legends of the World-tree of Eridu which had its roots "in the deep" and "spread its shade like a forest" (see note on Ps. lxxii. 16, p. 301). Whatever may have been the first conception of this "tree" it is certain that, when the Vine was introduced into Babylonia it was called "the tree of life" (*Babylonia*, in Hastings' *Dictionary*). Thus the Vine is the emblem of Israel as God's "holy shoot" (Hos. x. 1; Is. v. 1-7, where God, the owner of the Vineyard, is called *Dôd*: Is. xxvii. 2-6, where the Vineyard is to "fill the face of the world with fruit": Jer. ii. 21; xii. 10; Ezek. xv. 1; xvii. 1-10, 22-24; xix. 10-14; cf. Gen. xlix. 22 JE). This thought was connected with the House of David (Is. xi. 1, 10; Jer. xxiii. 5) and is fulfilled in Christ as the *Vine* (St John xv. 1 ff.), the *Branch*, the *Root of David* (Rev. v. 5).

It should be noticed that, though the *blood of the grape* may suggest the thought of suffering, yet, the leading thought of the *Vine*, in all the passages we have considered, is that of abounding life and fruitfulness and joy. This may explain the words of the *Didache*, Chap. ix.:—"And as touching the *feast of Thanksgiving*, thus, give ye thanks: First, concerning the Cup, We thank Thee, O our Father, for the holy vine of David Thy child, which Thou hast made known to us by Thy child Jesus." (Taylor's edition, p. 128 f. See also Taylor's *Theology of the Teaching*, p. 163 ff.)

"A Vine Thou didst move..." The verb is an unexpected one:—lit. "Thou didst make to journey." It is used about ninety times in Numbers of the *journeyings* of Israel in the Wilderness. See also Ps. lxxvi. 26, 52. Evidently the poet is thinking of the People under the image of the Vine.

v. 10. "Mountains were overshadowed by its shade." See note on Ps. lxxii. 16, p. 301, and the close parallel, there quoted, respecting the "stalk" or sacred tree of Eridu.

v. 14. This verse, at first sight, looks like the commencement of the Refrain; and, doubtless, if the Psalmist had intended to repeat the Refrain four times instead of three, it would have come after v. 13. But v. 14 is really parallel with v. 4.

v. 15. "And the Stem." I follow Hebrew tradition, and Jerome ("radicem"), in taking the Hebrew word *kanna* to signify a *stem*, *root* or *stock*. Others, following the Septuagint, change the word into an *imperative* and translate "protect that which" &c. (see R.V. margin). The P.B.V., "the place of the vineyard," is nothing more than a free paraphrase.

What promises
YHVH made for His
Vine!

8 A Vine Thou didst move out of Egypt ;
Driving out Nations and planting it in.
9 Thou madest room before it,
So it struck root, it filled the Land.
10 Mountains were overshadowed by its shade ;
And God-like cedars by its foliage.
11 It put forth its boughs unto the Sea^a,
And its shoots unto the River^b.

^a i. e. West
^b On the East
^c Is. v. 5; Ps.
lxxxix. 40

Why then is this
Vine so crushed?

12 Why hast Thou broken down its hedges^c,
So that all that pass may carp at it?
13 The boar out of the wood doth lay it waste ;
And teeming-creatures^d of the field feed upon it.

^d Ps. l. 11, note

Surely this Vine is
heir of hopes too great
to turn out false!

14 Elohim Sabaôth, return now!
Look from heaven and see, and take thought
for this Vine!

15 And for the Stem that Thy right hand hath planted,
And for the Branch^e that Thou madest strong for Thyself. ^o or *Son*

16 (As a vine) burned with fire, (as) mere fuel^f,
Let them perish at the rebuke of Thy Face.

^f Is. xxxiii. 12

17 Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand ;
On the Son of Man that Thou madest strong for Thyself^g. ^g v. 15

18 So will we not turn back from Thee :
Give us life^h, and we will call upon Thy Name.

^h Ps. lxxxv. 6

19 YHVH ELOHIM SABAÔTH, RESTORE US!

CAUSE THY FACE TO SHINE, THAT WE BE SAVED!

"*And for the Branch.*" In Hebrew poetry the same word (*bên*) is used for a "son" and for a "branch" (Gen. xlix. 22). The Psalmist, who has already alluded to this Blessing of the Joseph tribes, now uses the word *bên* in the same double sense: Joseph, or rather Ephraim, had been called *bên porath*, "a fruitful bough (or son)...whose branches (*banoth*, lit. daughters) run over the wall." The Psalmist, with this Blessing in his mind, thinks of the true Israel who shall fill the world with his fruit. The Targum translates, "*King Messiah.*"

v. 16. It is better to take both lines of this verse, in the same sense, as describing the necessary fate of those that are cut off from the true Vine. Cf. St John xv. 6.

v. 17. "*Let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand.*" It is true that Benjamin is called "*the son of my right hand,*" but I believe that the Psalmist is rather thinking of Gen. xlix. 14 ff. where Jacob, in blessing the two Joseph tribes, disregards the birthright and lays his right hand upon the head of Ephraim. As Ephraim was then singled out and chosen for the Blessing, so now, "*Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand.*"

"*On the Son of Man*" &c. The allusion to v. 15 is obvious. There the true Joseph (Ephraim) was a "son," pictured as a "*Branch*" made fruitful by God, here he is pictured more literally as the "*Son of Man,*" chosen by God for the Blessing. The title "*Son of Man,*" in the Old Testament, denotes man in his low estate (see Ps. viii. 4, p. 17, note). Ephraim was the younger son, but, by the Blessing, was "made strong" for God's own purpose. What God began in the past He will perfect in the future.

PSALM LXXXI.

The *New-moon* and the *Sabbath* belonged to the same order. The former marked the beginning, the latter the close, of the week. Both were announced in the Temple by the blowing of the Trumpet. The *Seventh Month* (Tishri) was essentially a *Sabbath* month. On the 1st day (i.e. the *New Moon*) of that month, the trumpets were blown all day long in Jerusalem, and, "while the drink-offering of the festive sacrifice was poured out, the priests and Levites chanted Ps. lxxxi., and if the feast fell on a Thursday, for which that Psalm was, at any rate, prescribed, it was sung twice, beginning the second time at *v.* 7 in the Hebrew text, or *v.* 6 of our Authorised Version" (Edersheim, *The Temple*, p. 257). According to Neh. viii. 2, this first day of the Seventh Month was observed by a public reading of the Law.

In the Asaph Psalm lxxviii. we have seen an allusion to this observance of New Year's Day, and now, in Ps. lxxxi. we find reference to the observance of the Trumpet with its Sabbath promise of Redemption and of Freedom (*vv.* 1—5, notes).

PSALM LXXXI.

Let the Trumpet
appeal to God as He
ordained (Numb. x.
1—10).

- 1 Raise the glad cry to God^a our strength;
Sound^b an alarm unto the God of Jacob.
- 2 Take up the melody, sound the timbrel;
The pleasant harp with the lute.
- 3 Blow the trumpet at the New-moon;
At the Full-moon, for the day of our Feast.
- 4 For this was a statute for Israel,
An ordinance of the God of Jacob.
- 5 He made this a testimony^c in Joseph,
When He went forth over the Land of Egypt.

^a Elohim
^b or *Shout!*

^c Ps. lxxviii. 5

v. 1. The verb *rdnan* denotes a *ringing cry*, generally, but not always (Lam. ii. 19), of *joy*. Here it is used in the *Hiphil* and should therefore properly imply a *causing* (others) to *ring with joy* (see Job xxix. 13; Ps. lxxv. 8; and probably Deut. xxxii. 43). In our translation, "raise the glad cry," we have endeavoured to express the causative force of the verb.

"Sound an alarm." The verb is used both for "*sounding an alarm*" with the Trumpets (Numb. x. 9; 2 Ch. xiii. 12) or of "*shouting*" with the voice: but, since the context (*v.* 3) distinctly mentions the trumpets it may be that here, also, we have an allusion to the Promise of the Trumpet (see Ps. xlvi. *vv.* 1, 5, notes). The rendering of the P.B.V., "*Make a cheerful noise*," is quite misleading. The clanging music and trumpet-call was an appeal to God to fulfil His own promise by a Divine Theophany as in the preceding Psalm.

v. 2. "Take up the melody." See Amos v. 23; Is. li. 3. The only other passage in which this word "melody" occurs is Ps. xcvi. 5, where, as here, it is coupled with the "harp" and with the trumpet-cry which welcomes the Divine King upon earth.

"The timbrel." The "timbrel" or "tabret" was generally played by women (Exod. xv. 20; Judg. xi. 34, &c.). It was used in the Temple worship and, in the only two other places in the Psalter in which it occurs, is coupled with the *dance* (Pss. cxlix. 3: cl. 4).

Good illustrations of the various instruments may be seen in the Appendix on *Music of the Ancient Hebrews* in the English translation of Wellhausen on the Psalms.

v. 3. The *shofar*, "trumpet," "cornet," or "horn," was a trumpet made of ram's horn. Another word is used for the silver trumpets blown by the priests in Numb. x. 2, 8, 9, 10, and frequently by the Chronicler-writer. When both words are used together, as in Ps. xlvi. 6, we might be obliged to translate *shofar* by "the horn" or "cornet," but it was the *shofar* that was "the trump of God" (Exod. xix. 16, 19: xx. 18; Ps. xlvii. 5; Is. xxvii. 13; Zech. ix. 14); it was the *shofar* that gave the sign for the fall of Jericho (Jos. vi. 4—20); it was the *shofar* that was used at the Feast of Trumpets (New Year's Day), and thus became a type of the Trumpet of the Judgement Day, and of the great Jubilee of Redemption (Lev. xxv. 9 ff.).

"At the New-moon." The *New-moon* might refer to any month, but the context leads us to think of the New Year's Day, i.e. the 1st day of the 7th month (Tishri), and thus it is translated in the Targum. This day was called "a day of blowing of trumpets" (Num. xxix. 1, P.).

"At the Full-moon." The word is only found here used, in a slightly different form, in Prov. vii. 20. We cannot therefore be sure as to its meaning. The root *ksh* signifies "to cover," hence it is supposed to denote the *full-moon* because the disc is then *covered* with light. Delitzsch defends this interpretation for the usage of a Syriac word *keso*. Certainly the Trumpet was blown on the Day of Atonement (Lev. xxv. 9).

"For the day of our Feast." The Hebrew *hag* would apply to any of the great feasts, but it is most natural to think of the Feast of Tabernacles which sums up the whole Sabbath purpose of God in the festal year. Ezekiel xlv. 21, 25, shews how the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the middle of the first month corresponded with the Feast of Tabernacles in the middle of the seventh month.

v. 4. "A statute...an ordinance." The same words are used, by the Elohist, of the test to which God put His People in the Wilderness, "There He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them" (Exod. xv. 25^b, see critical commentary); and also of the Covenant at Shechem, "So Joshua made a covenant with the People that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem" (Josh. xxiv. 25). In our Psalm the "statute and ordinance" is the blowing of the Trumpet which was "a memorial" before God and a standing promise of Redemption;—"And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets, and they shall be to you for a statute for ever throughout your generations" (Numb. x. 8, P.).

v. 5. Just as the reading of the Law in the seventh month was "a testimony in Jacob" (Ps. lxxviii. 5, note) so also the blowing of the Trumpet was "a testimony in Joseph," i.e. it was ordained by God as a witness to the final Redemption and the Coming of the Kingdom.

In Numb. x. 9 ff. it is appointed that when Israel goes to war, in his own land, against an enemy that oppresses him, then "ye shall blow an alarm with the Trumpets and ye shall come into memorial before YHVH your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies."

And not only in war but also at all the Feasts, and over all the sacrifices, the Trumpet must be blown, "that they may be to you a memorial before God. I am YHVH your God."

So strong is this language that R. Akiba asks, "Is it then the Trumpets that form the memorial and not the blood?" (Sifré *ad loc.*). The Sifré further makes God say, "When ye sound with the Trumpets I hear, and the sacrifices over which ye sound them are acceptable, and if ye do not sound over them then they (i.e. the sacrifices) are not acceptable."

Thus an almost sacramental efficacy is ascribed to the Trumpet in bringing the need of man before the throne of Grace.

"When he went forth over..." This strange phrase cannot refer to Israel going forth from the land of Egypt. It might, doubtless, be applied to God going forth in power against Egypt, though a different phrase is used for this (Exod. xi. 4), and thus we should have interpreted it except for Gen. xli. 45^b, P., where we read, "And Joseph went forth over the land of Egypt," i.e. Joseph rose (from a prison) to the highest post of honour and authority. As with Joseph so with Israel. As

God's answer. He has ever heard the language of human need.

"The language of.....I will hear.
 6 I removed his shoulder from the burden;
 His hands were relieved from the brick-basket.
 7 In distress thou didst cry, and I set thee free;
 I answer thee in the covert of thunder^a;
 I test thee at the waters of Meribah.
 8 Hear O My People, let Me take thee to witness^b;
 O Israel! if thou would'st but hearken!
 9 There must not be in thee a foreign god;
 Nor must thou worship any alien^c god;
 10 I am YHVH thy God^d,
 Who brought thee up out of the Land of Egypt^d:
 Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it."

^a Ps. xviii. 12;
 Hab. iii. 4

^b Ps. l. 4

^c Deut. xxxii.
 12

^d Exod. xx. 1

God is waiting to redeem; but Israel is not ready.

11 "But My People would not hearken to My voice;
 And Israel would none of Me.
 12 So I let them loose to the perversity^e of their hearts,
 That they might follow their own devices.
 13 Oh that My People would hearken to Me^f!
 That Israel would walk in My ways!
 14 Soon would I humble their foes,
 And turn My hand against their adversaries.
 Those that hate YHVH should yield submission^g to Him;
 While their time should endure for ever.
 I would feed them with the marrow^h of wheat^h,
 And sate them, from the very rock, with honeyⁱ."

^e Deut. xxix.
 19

^f Cf. Deut.
 xxxii. 29f.

^g Deut. xxxiii.
 29; Pss. xviii.
 44; lxvi. 3

^h Deut. xxxii.
 14

ⁱ Deut. xxxii.
 13

Joseph came forth from his prison ("on New Year's Day, according to Rashi) so Israel will come forth in the New Year of God's Redemption (Is. lxi. 2). As Joseph rose to the highest honour so too Israel will rise. All this is involved in the Promise of the Trumpet.

"The language of...I will hear." The text has "The language of I do not know I will hear." This can scarcely be correct. The context requires us to understand the words as the words of God. Now God had promised to hear the sound of the Trumpet.

v. 7. God had seen the affliction of His People and "heard their cry" (Exod. iii. 7), and had answered them by a Theophany (Ps. xviii. 7 ff.) out of the "covert of thunder."

"I test thee at the waters of Meribah." The testing is here, as in Zech. xiii. 9, wholly for Israel's good. The Psalmist seems to refer to some tradition different from that of Exod. xvii. 7 JE, or of Numb. xx. 13 P. Indeed the Psalmist should rather be explained from Exod. xv. 25^b E, "There he made for them a statute and an ordinance and there He proved them" (see critical commentary on context).

v. 8. This verse, with v. 10^a, is almost identical with Ps. l. 7, another Asaph Psalm, and contains the same reference to Exod. xx. 2 (see p. 218). The whole verse is suggestive of Deuteronomy.

v. 12. "So I let them loose," lit. "I sent them away." The word is used of letting loose the

scape-goat (Lev. xvi. 22) and also of *unloosing* a bridle (Job xxx. 11). It is used of divorce (Mal. ii. 16).

"*To the perversity of their hearts.*" This expression is only found in Deut. xxix. 19 (18), and eight times in Jeremiah. It is translated, "*imagination of the heart*" (E.V.) but, as it is always used in a bad sense, a stronger word is needed.

For the general thought we may compare (Ps. xc. 10 f.).

The student will not fail to note that our Psalm has much in common with the "Song" in Deut. xxxii., which critics assign to post-exilic times.

PSALM LXXXII.

In the preceding Psalm we have seen reference to the New Year's Day, and in order to understand the bold picture of the present Psalm we must go back to the observance of New Year's Festival (Zagmuku) in Babylonia. Of this Festival Jastrow says, "The eighth and eleventh days of the festival month were invested with special sanctity. On these days all the gods were brought together in the 'chamber of fates' of Marduk's temple. In symbolical imitation of the assembly of the gods in Ubshukenna (i.e. the heavenly 'assembly-room,' see p. 629), Marduk sits on his throne and the gods are represented as standing in humble submission before him, while he decrees the fates of mankind for the coming year. The Zagmuku festival in its developed form has striking points of resemblance to the Jewish New Year's Day. On this day, according to popular Jewish tradition, God sits in judgement with a book before Him in which He inscribes the fate of mankind. Nine days of probation are allowed, and on the tenth day—the Day of Atonement—the fates are sealed. The Jewish New Year is known as Rôsh-hash-shanâ, which is the exact equivalent of the Babylonian *rêsh shatti* (or zag-muku)." See *Religion of Babylonia*, p. 681.

Jastrow might have greatly strengthened his case if he had quoted from the Additional Service for New Year in the Jewish Prayer-Book. Thus:—"This day is the beginning of Thy works; a memorial of the First Day; for it is '*a statute for Israel, an ordinance for the God of Jacob*' (cf. Ps. lxxxi.). And, in it, fate is pronounced upon the countries, which one is for the sword, and which one for peace, which one for famine, and which for plenty, and on this day individuals (lit. *creatures*) are visited so as to be remembered either for life or for death. Who is not visited on this day? For the memorial of everything that hath been formed cometh before Thee," &c.

Our Psalmist was undoubtedly familiar with the Babylonian observance of New Year; he claims that God—not Marduk—has taken His seat for judgement. The "gods" of the Nations come before Him and receive their sentence (exactly as in Ps. lviii. 1 ff., see notes, p. 247). What authority they held (*v.* 6) they had received from God. This authority they have misused, in that their rule has been violence, not kindness (*vv.* 2—4); therefore now God Himself will come and claim His rightful heritage among all the Nations (*v.* 8).

PSALM LXXXII.

Elohim, the Judge,
is judging Elohim,
the judges.

1 God^a hath taken His place in the Congregation of the ^a Elohim
Mighty^b
In the midst of the gods^c He is judging.

^b El
^c Elohim. Cf.
Ps. lviii. 1

"Angels He calls
you. Be your strife
on earth to live an
angel's life."

2 "How long will ye judge unjustly,
"And accept the person of the wicked?
3 "Do justice to the weak and the fatherless^d;
"Deal rightly with the lowly and destitute;
4 "Deliver the weak and the needy;
"Rescue them from the hand of the wicked.

^d Is. i. 17, 23

v. 1. "God hath taken His place." The verb implies, not merely "standeth," but, "hath taken His stand." Cf. Is. iii. 13, "YHVH hath taken His stand to plead, He standeth to Judge the people" (see context).

"In the Congregation of the Mighty," Sept. "in the congregation of the gods," Jer. "in coetu dei," i.e. "in the Divine Assembly." The picture is evidently suggested by that Babylonian observance of New Year which we have noted in the Introduction to this Psalm. Such a poetic use of mythology indicates a late date.

"In the midst of the gods He is judging." The fact that the same word *Elohim* is applied to the God who judges and to the gods who are judged suggests that they, too, are, in some real sense, divine (see *v. 6*, note). According to Deuteronomy (iv. 19: xxix. 26: xxxii. 8 f.), YHVH, whose special portion was Israel, had assigned the Nations of the World to other Rulers (see note on Ps. lviii. 1, p. 247). Probably, in those early times, there was no very clear distinction made between the "Prince," who as an Angel or quasi-divinity presided over the Nation (Dan. x. 13), and, what we should now call, the idealization of the Nation itself. See Ezek. xxviii. 1—19, on "the Prince of Tyre," who at one moment represents the Nation, at another the ruling monarch, and at another the "cherub" whose place is in Heaven.

vv. 3, 4. These verses represent the Commission which God gave to all those, who, as Rulers, whether in heaven or on earth, are sharers in His authority and bearers of His Name.

vv. 5—7. God looks upon the Rulers as Christ may have looked when "grieved at the hardening of their hearts" (Mark iii. 5).

v. 6. "It was I that said, Ye are gods." The powers that be are ordained of God (Rom. xiii. 1).

The Psalmist was probably thinking of those who, like the "Prince of Tyre," ruled the heathen Nations. But his words apply to man, created in God's image, of whom it is said (Ps. viii. 5 f.)

"Thou didst make him little less than Elohim,
.....
Thou givest him dominion over the work of Thy hands."

Men could never be called *YHVH*, but men can be, and are, called *Elohim*. The former Name is Personal, but the latter is Official. When men are called *Elohim* it is as "judges" (Exod. xxi. 6: xxii. 7 ff.) in the act of exercising the divine commission. The same God who said of the Messiah, "Thou art My Son, It is I that have begotten thee this day" (Ps. ii. 7), said also of man, "Let us make man in our Image" (Gen. i. 26). The unique Sonship of the One, and the real but less complete sonship of the other, are both from the same Fountain. Thus our Lord quoted this verse

Their work is an
utter failure!

5 "They know nothing! they understand nothing!
"They darkly go their way!
"All the foundations of the earth are shaken!
6 "It was I^a that said, Ye are gods^b,
"And all of you sons of the Highest^c,
7 "But indeed as (mere) men^d ye shall die,
"And fall like other princes."

^a emphatic
^b Elohim
^c Elyôn
^d or *Adam*

God Himself must
do what these have
failed to do.

8 Arise O God;—Judge Thou the Earth;
For THOU^e must find Thy heritage^f in all the nations.

^e emphatic
^f Sept. Sym.
Jer.

to defend Himself from the charge of blasphemy, "*Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), say ye of him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said I am the Son of God?*" (St John x. 34 ff.).

v. 7. "*But indeed as (mere) men,*" lit. "*as Adam.*" Adam signifies "*man,*" i.e. "*mankind.*" Some commentators (e.g. Rashi, Jerome, &c.) understand the word as a proper name, i.e. "*as Adam.*"

"*ye shall die.*" These words are not inconsistent with the view we have suggested, viz. that the primary thought in the Psalmist's mind was of angelic or heavenly "Princes" appointed by God over the Nations of the World; indeed, Ezekiel actually says of the "Prince of Tyre," "They shall bring thee down to the pit; and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain, in the heart of the seas. Wilt thou say before him that slayeth thee, I am God?" (Ezek. xxviii. 8 f.).

v. 8. The end of the Psalm, as usual, answers to the beginning. The Vision of Judgement (v. 1) becomes (v. 8) a prayer for judgement. Those who bore, and misused, the name of Elohim must be deposed, and Elohim Himself must rule, and not by deputy, over all the Nations.

Except for this 8th verse the whole lesson of the Psalm would have been one of failure; but when man fails God acts (cf. Ezek. xxxiv. 11 ff.). Thus v. 8 resolves the discord and suggests the truth which Browning teaches us in Abt Vogler:—

"And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fulness of the days?"

PSALM LXXXIII.

Commentators are divided whether to place this Psalm in the days of Jehoshaphat and to explain it from 2 Chr. xx. (Kay, Delitzsch, and Perowne), or to assign it to Maccabaeian times and explain it from 1 Macc. v. (Theod. of Mops., Hitzig, Olsh., Graetz, Cheyne, &c.). It is, however, only fair to say that the advocates of either view have confessed to grave difficulties.

Against the earlier date the following facts should be duly weighed:—

(a) The league of Moabites, Ammonites, and "*Mēunim*" against Jehoshaphat was open war and not "*crafty counsel,*" or "*plotting*" (v. 4).

(b) Even if the doubtful word "*Mēunim*" be stretched to cover the Arabian tribes (Del.) still "*Amalek,*" "*Philistia,*" "*Tyre,*" and "*Assyria*" have no counterpart in 2 Chr. xx.

(c) The last verse of the Psalm implies a hope for the conversion of the world which was entirely beyond the horizon of Jehoshaphat's age.

Hitherto we have assumed 2 Chr. xx. to be strict history, but, unfortunately, such a view is no longer tenable. The Chronicle writer (c. 300 B.C.) completely remodelled history for purposes of edification (see Kautzsch, *Lit. of O. T.*, and compare 2 Chr. xx. with 2 Kings iii.).

If we bear this fact in mind the passage (2 Chr. xx.) will have a special interest apart from history, for it shews that a writer (B.C. 300) knew of Asaph Psalms with their appeal to the Promise of the Trumpet. He makes Jehoshaphat pray, exactly in the spirit of Ps. lxxix. 1, against the Moabites and Ammonites, "*And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom Thou wouldest not let Israel invade... And behold they are requiting us by coming to drive us out from Thy possession which Thou hast given us to possess*" &c.

Then, too, he makes a "*son of Asaph*" prophesy just such a deliverance as had been connected with the Promise of the Trumpet (*vv.* 14—17).

Against the Maccabean date the following facts are, to my mind, conclusive:—

(a) The "*Amalekites*" (*v.* 8) were not in existence at that time, for the Chronicle writer distinctly speaks of them as extinct before his own day (1 Chr. iv. 43).

"*Assyria*" (*v.* 9) had ceased to be a nation about B.C. 606. Advocates for the Maccabean date of the Psalm avoid this difficulty either by changing *Ashur* into *Geshur* (Graetz), or by understanding *Syrians* for *Assyrians*.

(b) A still stronger argument against the Maccabean date is the fact that the Psalm, not only by its title, but by its whole style and contents belongs to the group of Asaph Psalms. We have seen reason to place other Psalms of that group in the Persian age. Doubtless the warlike character of these Psalms would make them popular in the days of the Maccabees, and it is quite possible that some modifications may then have been introduced; but that a Psalm, like the present, so distinctly Asaphic, should have been composed at so late a date and inserted in the Asaph group is exceedingly improbable.

So then we set aside both the earlier and later date, and place this Psalm, like other Asaph Psalms, in the troubled times of Ezra and Nehemiah, or those which followed the death of Zerubbabel (see Neh. i.).

The little colony of the returned exiles was then in danger of extermination from the hatred of the surrounding Nations (cf. Introductions to Pss. lxxix. and lxxx); this hatred took the form of "*crafty counsel*" (*vv.* 4—6, cf. Ezra iv. 6 ff., and especially Neh. iv. 7 f.).

Our Psalmist sees, as it were, all the enemies of Israel in the past personified in the present. His eye travels South and West and East and North. He begins and ends with those Nations which were most nearly related to Israel because his thought rests on their ingratitude; but there is no reason to suppose that the Nations mentioned in *vv.* 7—9 were ever in arms against Israel at one and the same time. They stand rather as types of that hostility which Israel had faced in the past and was, even then, facing in the present. The outlook of the Psalmist may well be compared with Amos i., where the sin and punishment of Syria, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, and Ammon, are denounced. The ten hostile Nations of the Psalmist are like the "*ten horns*" (Rev. xvii. 14) which "*war against the Lamb.*"

PSALM LXXXIII.

The world-powers
of evil are surging
round the Church of
God.

South and East, and
West and North.

1 O God^a, be Thou not silent^b,
Refrain not Thyself, and be not still, O God^c;
2 For lo! Thine enemies clamour^d,
And they that hate Thee carry high^e their head:
3 Against Thy People they take crafty counsel,
And plot together against Thy treasured-ones.
4 They said, Come, let us blot them out from being a Nation;
That the name of Israel may be no more remembered.
5 For they have consulted together with one consent;
Against Thee they make a covenant!
6 The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites,
Moab and the Hagarenes,
7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek,
Philistia, with them that dwell at Tyre.
8 Even Assyria is joined with them,
And have lent a hand to the children of Lot.

^a Elohim
^b Sept. differs
^c El
^d Ps. xlix. 6,
14
^e Ps. cx. 7

v. 2. "clamour." In the Korah Psalm xli. 3, 6, the word is used of the enemies of Israel who "surge" around, like a sea, while in Ps. lix. 6 (see note, p. 251), it is applied to those same enemies as "clamouring" like dogs. So a well-known Hymn, translated by Dr Neale from the Greek compares the powers of evil to "troops of Midian" who "prowl and prowl around."

v. 3. "Thy treasured-ones," lit. "Thy hidden-ones" (see Pss. xxvii. 5; xxxi. 20).

v. 3—5. Baethgen quotes 1 Macc. v. 2, "And they (i.e. the Gentiles) took counsel to destroy the race of Jacob that was in the midst of them." But, though this Chapter affords a good illustration of the enmity of the World-nations against Israel, it must, in my opinion, be used only as an illustration, and not as the historical basis of the Psalm.

v. 6. "Edom." The Edomites, though most closely related as Children of Esau, were the perpetual enemies of Israel from the times of Moses to the times of the Maccabees.

"the Ishmaelites." These were related less nearly to Israel as Children of Abraham, but (Gal. iv. 29) born after the flesh, and persecutors of the Children of the Promise.

"Moab." The Moabites and Ammonites, as "Children of Lot" (*v. 9*), are still less nearly related.

"Hagarenes," or *Hagrites*. The name seems to be a late one as it only occurs in Chronicles and in this Psalm. The Hagrites were, possibly, Ishmaelites. They dwelt to the East of Gilead (1 Chr. v. 10, 19, 20). Thus, in surveying the hostile Nations, the Psalmist's eye has travelled Northwards, from Edom in the South, to the Hagrites on the East of Jordan.

v. 7. "Gebal." This name (cf. Arabic *Jebel*) might denote any mountain range. It is usually supposed to refer to Mount Seir, but, since the Hagarenes, who dwelt to the East of the Mountains of Gilead, were last mentioned, it seems more natural, in this place, to understand by *Gebal* the mountain-land of Gilead and Bashan which was the scene of Gideon's victory (Judg. viii.). If this view be accepted, "Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek" reverses the order of *v. 7*, the direction now being from the North-East to the South-West. "Philistia" and "Tyre" complete this movement from South-West to North-West.

v. 8. "Even Assyria." It must be confessed that, from every point of view, the mention of "Assyria" in this context creates a difficulty. If *Syria* had been intended all would be clear, and the geographical order, from Tyre to Damascus, would have been continuous; whereas *Assyria* was

As in the days of
the Judges so let it
be again.

- 9 Deal Thou with them like Midian^a;
Like Sisera, like Jabin, at the brook of Kishon :
- 10 They perished at En-dor;
They became as dung for the ground.
- 11 Make their nobles like Oreb^b and Zeëb^b;
Yea, make all their princes like Zebah^c and Zalmunna^c:
- 12 In that they said, Let us take as our own
The homesteads of God.
- 13 O my God make them as eddying dust,
As chaff before the wind,
- 14 As fire that feeds in a forest,
As flame that enkindles the mountains,
- 15 So follow them on with Thy tempest,
And scatter them in panic with Thy storm.
- 16 Fill their faces with shame,
That they may seek Thy Name, O YHVH !
- 17 Let them be ashamed and confounded for ever,
Yea, let them be abashed and perish ;
- 18 That they may know that Thou whose name is YHVH
art alone,
The Most High^d, over all the earth.

^a Numb. xxxi.
7 ; Judg. vii.
22 ; Is. ix. 4

^b Judg. vii. 25

^c Judg. viii.

The victory will
extend God's king-
dom over the whole
earth (cf. Ps. lxxxii.
8).

^d Elyôn

too distant to fall in with the geographical order, and too powerful to be spoken of as "*lending a hand to the children of Lot.*" Add to this, the Psalm was evidently written long after the Assyrian empire had ceased to exist. Theodoret, quoted by Baethgen, suggests that the Samaritans, as Assyrian colonists, might be called *Assyrians* (cf. Neh. iv. 7).

On the whole I think it probable that *Syria* is intended. The "*children of Lot*" (Ammonites) did actually hire the Syrians to help them against David (2 Sam. x. 6 ff.). And again at a later time (see Amos i. 3, 13 ; with 2 Kings x. 32 f.). The new and powerful Syria, which was the creation of Alexander the Great, was, of course, the chief enemy of the Jews in the times of the Maccabees, but if our Psalm had been written in that age it would indeed have been strange if such a mighty foe had been mentioned last, and then, too, as an ally of Moab and Ammon.

"*And have lent a hand,*" lit. "*have become an arm.*"

"*the children of Lot,*" i.e. the Moabites and Ammonites, who were perhaps the most cruel and relentless of all the foes of Israel (2 Chr. xx. 11).

v. 9. "*like Midian,*" i.e. "*like as with Midian.*" Midian was closely related, and, in early days, closely allied, to Israel. Saul shewed favour to the Kenite branch of the tribe because they had helped Israel in the Wilderness (1 Sam. xv. 6). The tradition that associated Midian with the sin of Balaam is possibly late (see critical commentary on Numb. xxii. 4, 7). In any case the war with Midian, Numb. xxxi., belongs to the Priest-Code. "The peculiar character of Numb. xxxi. will not escape the notice of the thoughtful reader. The *ideal* picture of a holy war there portrayed may remind him of that symbolical treatment of Midian as the spiritual enemy which is to be found both in Jewish and Christian writers" (Art. *Midian* in Hastings' Dict.).

The Priest-Code belongs to the same age as that to which we assign the present Psalm.

Midian certainly opposed Israel in the days of the Judges (c. 1250 B.C.) until the great deliverance wrought by Gideon (Judg. vi.—viii.).

"*Like Sisera, like Jabin.*" Two Jabins, kings of Hazor, are mentioned, see Josh. xi. 1—9, and Judg. iv. 2, the former as defeated by Joshua, the latter by Barak.

PSALM LXXXIV.

We now commence the Jehovistic Korah Psalms, which some have regarded as an Appendix to the Elohistie Psalms of the Second Collection.

The student should carefully read Pss. xlii., xliii., which originally formed the first Elohistie Korah Psalm, and compare them with the present Psalm, which is the first of the Jehovistic Korah Psalms. In both he will find the same peculiarities of language (see notes). In both he will find the same leading thought of Israel, as God's Pilgrim, pressing forward, through sorrow, up to the Vision of God.

The present Psalm may be divided into three parts, viz., (a) *vs.* 1—4; (b) 5—7; (c) 8—12. Each of these is marked by the word "*Happy*."

Part I. gives us the true ideal for man—"Happy are they that dwell in Thy House," &c. (*v.* 4).

Part II. gives us man's need of effort in reaching to this ideal—"Happy is Man...that have the highways in their heart" (*v.* 5).

Part III. gives us man's need of Divine aid in this his pilgrimage—"Happy is Man who trusts in Thee" (*v.* 12).

The student of Dante's *Purgatorio* will best understand the pilgrim's progress in this Psalm.

PSALM LXXXIV.

Man's true Home
s only found in God.

- 1 How dearly-loved are Thy Tabernacles*
O YHVH Sabaôth!
- 2 My soul longs^b, yea, pines,
For the Courts of YHVH;
My heart and my flesh make jubilee
Unto the Living God^c.
- 3 Even the sparrow finds her a house^d,
And the swallow a nest
Wherein she may store her young—
Thy Altars! O YHVH Sabaôth^e,
My King, and my God!
- 4 Happy are they that dwell in Thy House^f,
They will still be praising Thee.

* Pss. xliii. 3 :
xlv. 4

^b 2 Cor. v. 2

^c Ps. xlii. 2

^d *v.* 4

^e *v.* 1

^f *v.* 3

v. 1. "How dearly loved." Not simply "How lovely." The plural *y'didath* is only found here and in the Title of the Korah Psalm xlv., where it is translated "love" (lit. "loves"). The singular is used in Deut. xxxiii. 12 of Benjamin as "the beloved of YHVH."

"Thy Tabernacles" or "Sanctuaries." If the poet had been thinking only of the Temple he would have used the singular. It is a characteristic of the Korah Psalmists that, to them, the whole City is a *Sanctuary-home* of God. On the special use of this word in the plural see note on Ps. xlvi. 4, p. 198.

The reader will not fail to notice that this word is a connecting link between the first of the Elohist Korah Psalms (xliii. 3) and the first of the Jehovistic Korah Psalms. In both, man is a pilgrim seeking the Sanctuary-home, which is, indeed, "the City that hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. xi. 10).

v. 2. "My soul longs." "The LXX. has here ἐπιποθεῖ,—the word used by St Paul of the spirit's longing after 'the house from heaven': 2 Cor. v. 2" [Kay].

"Yea, pines." Lit. "is home-sick" (Gen. xxxi. 30). R. Judah Ha-Levi uses the word in his Hebrew Ode to Zion—"For thee my soul is home-sick."

"My heart and my flesh."—"Difficile est ut caro Deum pariter cum corde desideret" [Jerome].

"make jubilee." Though this verb generally denotes to sing with joy yet it is not always so, e.g. Lam. ii. 19, "Arise, cry out in the night"; Lev. ix. 24, "When all the people saw, they shouted, and fell upon their faces." It is used sometimes of that 'earnest expectation' which even the inanimate Creation extends to God. "Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of YHVH" (1 Chron. xvi. 33; Ps. xcvi. 12); "Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Thy Name" (Ps. lxxxix. 12 (13)); "Let the hills be joyful together...for He cometh..." (Ps. xcvi. 8 f.). If this be so, no wonder that "the tongue of the dumb shall sing" (Is. xxxv. 6) or that the 'heart and flesh' (of man) should "make jubilee unto the Living God."

The conjunction of "heart" and "flesh" is singular though not unique (cf. Ps. lxxiii. 26, where the word for "flesh" is different). Perhaps the nearest parallel is Ps. xvi. 9, "So my heart is glad... Yea, my flesh too can rest secure." If God be "the Living God" then man's whole being, the "flesh" that we call the lower nature, no less than the "heart" or soul, must at last find its full meaning and satisfaction in Him; though now there be a struggle between them.

"Let us not always say,
 'Spite of this flesh to-day
 I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!'
 As the bird wings and sings,
 Let us cry, 'All good things
 Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!'"

[BROWNING, *R. Ben Esra.*]

"Unto the Living God." Another point of contact with Ps. xlii.—xliii. See note, p. 174.

v. 3. We must not be misled by the popular Hymn to suppose that the birds make their nests on God's altars! The words of the Psalmist might be paraphrased thus:—God has put even into the heart of the little birds an instinct which guides them safely to their end, their happy home, the nest. But in the heart of man He has put an eternity of desire which can be satisfied only by Himself,—therefore when I think of my end, my home, my nest I say,

"Thy Altars! O YHVH Sabaöth,
 My King, and my God!"

"*Altaria tua, Domine virtutum.* Subauditur: anima mea desiderat, et cor meum et caro mea." [Jerome.]

St Jerome's homily on this verse is very good:—"I desire, O Lord, thy 'Everlasting Habitations': my soul longs and pines for the Courts of the Lord. I desire to have some resting-place and little nest for my soul and for my body.

"The birds which wander hither and thither as they list yet have, when their flight is over, a home and little nests where they may rest: how much more ought my soul and flesh to provide itself a home where it may be able to rest" (*Tract. de Ps. lxxxiii.* Morin, p. 88).

Man's need of effort
in seeking this Home.

5 Happy is Man^a whose strength is in Thee,
That have the highways in their heart ;
6 Passing through the Vale of Tears they change it to fountains,
Yea, an Autumn-rain clothes (all) with blessings^b ;
7 They will go from^c strength to strength^d ;
God^d Himself^d shall be seen in Zion.

^a v. 12

^b Ezek. xxxiv.
26

^c or from rampart to rampart

^d lit. *El Elohim*, see *Sept.* and *Aq.*

C. Rossetti has a poem to the same effect :

“Wisest of sparrows that sparrow which sitteth alone
Perched on the housetop, its own upper chamber, for nest ;
Wisest of swallows that swallow which timely has flown
Over the turbulent sea to the land of its rest :
Wisest of sparrows and swallows, if I were as wise !
Wisest of spirits that spirit which dwelleth apart
Hid in the Presence of God for a chapel and nest,
*Sending a wish and a will and a passionate heart
Over the eddy of life to that Presence in rest :*
Seated alone and in peace till God bids it arise.”

The words I have placed in Italics are a fine comment on *vv.* 2 and 5 of our Psalm.

v. 4. “*Happy are they that dwell.*” He does not say, as in *vv.* 5, 12, “*Happy is man that*” &c. ; for the happiness of *v.* 4 is the ideal happiness that remaineth for the people of God, and has not yet been reached by man.

“*Thy House.*” St Jerome sees an onward progress implied in the words “*Tabernacles*” (*v.* 1), “*Courts*” (*v.* 2), “*House*” (*v.* 4).

“*They will still be praising...*” Not merely (as Sept. P.B.V., &c.), “*they will always be praising,*” though that is true, but, “*they will still (i.e. again and again) be praising.*” The word implies that the cause for praise will ever be growing, so that the happy debt increases with its payment.

vv. 5—7. The Psalmist sees that, before the Heavenly Home can be reached, there is need of effort :

“We know the arduous strife, the eternal laws
To which the triumph of all good is given,
High sacrifice and labour without pause,
Even to the death : else wherefore should the eye
Of man converse with immortality.”

[WORDSWORTH, *Ode to Duty.*]

But the Psalmist also sees that the true pilgrims will win joy out of sorrow, strength out of struggle, and that the Vision of God awaits the conqueror.

v. 5. “*Happy is Man.*” The Hebrew here and in *v.* 12 is “*ashrty adam,*” as in Ps. xxxii. 2 (see note, p. 137) and nowhere else in the Psalter. If the thought had centred on an individual the Hebrew would have been “*ashrty haish*” (Ps. i. 1) or “*ashrty ish*” (Ps. cxii. 1), or “*ashrty hagever*” (Pss. xxxiv. 8 (9) : xl. 4 (5) : xciv. 12 : cxxvii. 5). Unfortunately in English we must translate all these forms, indifferently, by “*Happy is the Man.*” In the present instance the Psalmist is declaring the blessedness, not of Mankind in general, still less of the individual man, but of Man, God's Pilgrim, walking as he should, on the Dedicated Way.

“*That have the highways in their heart.*”—This word “*highway*” was used of the *path* of the stars (Judg. v. 20) whereby they climbed the steep ascent of heaven ; and also of the *terrace-stairs* that led up to the Temple (1 Chr. xxvi. 16, 18, &c.). Isaiah uses another form of the word for the “*highway*” by which God's pilgrims shall return to the Heavenly Zion (Is. xxxv. 8). And Jeremiah (xxxi. 21) thinking of such a pilgrimage, says, “*Set thine heart to the highway.*” See also note on Ps. xlviii. 13, p. 208.

K. 11.

46

There is a Babylonian Hymn, W.A.I. iv. 30, No. 3, lines 8—12, which Sayce thus translates :

“In the shrine of Ea thou dost not stand, thou dost not make the pilgrimage.
On the ascent of the temple thou dost not stand, thou dost not make the pilgrimage.
Thou dost not say : ‘Let me seize on the house !’
Thou dost not say : ‘Let me seize on the ascent !’
Thou dost not say : ‘Let me seize on the (shrine) !’”

[Hibbert Lect., p. 503.]

The winding stairway which ran round the mountain-temples of Babylonia was used for these pilgrimages, and represented the road, through the spheres, from Earth to Heaven.

In a Hebrew poem by R. Moses ben Ezra, published in *Treasures of Oxford*, p. 30, I found an allusion to our Psalm which might be translated :

“And he sets a highway in his heart
To mount to the heavens above.”

When, then, our Psalmist speaks of those “*That have the highways in their hearts,*” he means pilgrims who are bent, heart and soul, on climbing the steep ascent that leads to God.

St Jerome, in his Homily on this Psalm, says, “*Ascensiones in corde suo disposuit.* Qui disposuit ascensiones in corde suo? Beatus vir cujus est auxilium a Domino: ille disposuit ascensiones in corde suo. Quicumque sanctus est, cotidie in priora extenditur, et praeteritorum obliviscitur.”

v. 6. The general sense of the verse is clear:—As these brave-hearted pilgrims pass onward, sorrow is, for them, transformed into joy. The latter half of the verse is exceedingly difficult and the translation offered is only provisional.

“*Yea, an Autumn-rain.*”—The *moreh* (E.V. “*former rain,*” Joel ii. 23) fell in Autumn and prepared the ground for the seed. The fertility of the whole year in Palestine depended greatly upon the abundance of this rain. Thus, tearful Autumn is Nature’s parable of sorrow changed into blessings.

v. 7. “*From strength to strength.*” The Hebrew word may either signify *strength* or *rampart, wall, bulwark* (2 Sam. xx. 15: Is. xxvi. 1: Lam. ii. 8, &c.). I cannot but think that the word was chosen for the sake of this double meaning. The Dedication processions of Nehemiah mounted up to the Temple by the *Walls* of Jerusalem (Neh. xii. 31—40). So too in Dante’s *Purgatorio* each *rampart* that is climbed implies the effacement of one of the Seven Sins; thus as the Pilgrim goes *from rampart to rampart* he also goes *from strength to strength*. Dante’s Mountain of Purgatorio with its winding ascent through the seven spheres was only a poet’s explanation of the mountain-temples of Babylonia. Our Psalmist’s pilgrims, in their earthly Purgatorio, go “*from strength to strength*” (cf. Rom. i. 17), till they reach the Paradiso, the Heavenly “*Zion,*” where “*God Himself* (El Elohim)” is seen:—

“Christ Jesus bring us of His grace,
Beyond all prayers our hope can pray,
One day to see Him face to Face,
One day.”

Then the change will be—not “*from strength to strength*” but—“*from glory to glory*” (2 Cor. iii. 18).

v. 8—12. The high calling (Phil. iii. 14) of man calls for more than man’s strength. This too must be given; therefore this third part of the Psalm begins with prayer and ends with trust.

v. 8. “*God of Jacob*”—The pilgrim here fitly calls upon the pilgrim’s God.

v. 9. “*And regard the face of Thine Anointed*”—lit. “*of Thy Messiah.*” We must not anticipate the full development of the Messianic hope. The title *Messiah* is applied to the Priests in Lev. iv. 3, 5, 16: vi. 22, &c. In the Psalms it is, not unfrequently, applied to the chosen People of God (Pss. xxviii. 8, see context; cv. 15, where “*Mine Anointed*” is applied to the Patriarchs; cf. also lxxxix. 38). This being so we must not hastily assume, from the mention of “*Thine Anointed,*” that a Davidic king was on the throne at the time when our Psalm was written: on the contrary, it is more natural to understand, by the “*Anointed,*” the true Israel of God (Gal. vi. 16) who walk as His pilgrims. In Christian times the truth has been made clear that this “*Israel of God*” has found its perfect expression in the Person of Christ; therefore, we are right in giving the larger meaning to the Psalmist’s words:—

Man's need of God.	8 YHVH Elohim Sabaôth ^a , hear my prayer : Give ear, O God of Jacob.	^a Ps. lix. 5 (note)
	9 Behold, O God, our Shield ^b , And regard the face ^c of Thine Anointed !	^b v. 11 ^c Ps. cxxxii. 10
	10 [For better a day in Thy Courts than a thousand (elsewhere): I had rather be an abject in the House of my God Than dwell of the tents of unrest ^d ,]	^d wickedness
	11 For YHVH God is both Sun and Shield ^e . YHVH gives both grace and glory, No one good will He withhold From whole-hearted ^f pilgrims.	^e Gen. xv. 1 ^f Gen. xvii. 1
	12 O YHVH Sabaôth Happy is Man ^g who trusts in Thee.	^g v. 5

“Look Father, look on His anointed Face,
And only look on us as found in Him ;
Look not on our misusings of Thy grace,
Our prayers so languid, and our faith so dim ;
For lo ! between our sins and their reward
We set the Passion of Thy Son our Lord.”

v. 10. This verse seems to interrupt the connexion between vv. 9 and 11. On the other hand it would come most naturally after v. 2 or after v. 3.

“*I had rather be an abject...*” or, “*I would rather play the threshold.*” The verb (only here) is a reduplicated form from *šaf*, “*a threshold.*” We must not translate “*I had rather be a doorkeeper,*” for the office of “*doorkeeper*” was a very honourable one (Jer. xxxv. 4 ; 1 Chr. ix. 19, 22 ; xxvi. 12 ff. ; 2 Chr. xxiii. 4) and the Hebrew is quite different.

The word here implies something less than the lowest place. The Sept., *παρῆρησθαι* (Jer. *abjectus esse*), exactly expresses the meaning. It may, however, be noted that the Sept. uses the same verb in 1 Sam. ii. 36, “*Cast me into one of the priest's offices,*” where the Hebrew verb is not *šaf* but *šafah*. It is therefore possible that here too they read a different text, viz. פתחיה for שפחיה.

Such a reading could be well defended from 1 Sam. xxvi. 19 ; but, in that case, we ought to translate “*I had rather abide in the House of God,*” or, “*I would rather cleave to the House of God.*” Strange to say this is the reading of the Targum.

The reading of the Vulgate, “*elegi abjectus esse,*” suggests the contrast between Lazarus and Dives, or between Abraham's choice and that of Lot.

“*Than dwell in the tents of unrest.*” The root-meaning of “*wickedness*” in Hebrew is “*unrest.*”

There is a fine contrast between the “*House (or Home) of my God*” and the ever-shifting, homeless “*tents of unrest.*” See also notes on Ps. xvii. 15, 16, p. 82.

The word translated “*dwell*” is only found here and (7 times) in the Book of Daniel.

v. 11. “*Sun and Shield.*” God, of old, led His pilgrims by the Pillar of Fire and Cloud.

Except for clouds the sun would burn, not shine. Clouds, in Nature, are needful even for light. So too in Revelation : God is both “*Sun and Shield.*”

Thus, the “*Sun and Shield*” of the present Psalm, answer to “*Lovingkindness and Guidance (?)*” (Ps. xlii. 8) and “*Thy Light and Thy Truth*” (Ps. xliii. 3) in the closely parallel Psalm xlii.—xliii., see notes pp. 178, 179. The strange reading of the Septuagint, “*The Lord God loveth lovingkindness and truth,*” seems, in some way, to be due to a reminiscence of those earlier Psalms.

“*From whole-hearted pilgrims.*” Lit., “*from those that walk blamelessly.*”

PSALM LXXXV.

The Prophets of the Return, e.g. Deutero-Isaiah and Zechariah, though full of thankfulness for the past and hope for the future, are not without anxiety, and even perplexity, over the sorrows of the present (Is. lxiii. 15—lxiv; Zech. i. 12). Our Psalm, which undoubtedly belongs to this age, opens with thankfulness for that Return of God to His People which was one of history's great Days of Atonement (*vv.* 1—3). And though, in the middle portion of the Psalm (*vv.* 4—7), there is a full recognition of the sorrows and difficulties of the present, yet the concluding verses (9—13), return, with an infinitely larger hope, to the thought of *vv.* 1—3. What God *has* done in the Return to His People is but a faint type and promise of what He *will* do when He comes to dwell with men (Zech. ii. 10 f.; viii. 3; Hag. ii. 6 ff.).

We have spoken of the Return from the Captivity as one of history's great Days of Atonement. This needs a word of explanation:—

The earliest trace of a Day of Atonement is to be found in Ezekiel, who indeed suggests two such days, one at the Vernal, the other at the Autumnal Equinox (Ezek. xlv. 18, 20, see Sept.). These Days of Atonement were New Years' Days, the Service being a purification or cleansing of the Sanctuary, the Altar and the Courts (*vv.* 18—20). The Priest-code adopted only one of these Days, viz. that in the Seventh Month but changed the date from the first day of the month to the tenth. Ezekiel's thought of atoning the Sanctuary, Altar, and Courts was still maintained. Thus:—"*And he (the Priest) shall atone the holy Sanctuary, and the Tent of Meeting, and the Altar shall he atone, and for the Priests and for all the People of the Congregation shall he atone*" (Lev. xvi. 33). Clearly the original thought of Atonement was directed to God rather than to man; it was not so much the forgiveness of sin as the removal of those obstacles which might prevent God's Glory (Shekinah) from dwelling with His People.

If we bear this earliest thought of Atonement in mind we shall best understand the present Psalm.

The Psalmist starts from the undoubted fact that, in the Return from the Captivity, God has returned to His Land (*v.* 1). This being so the Land and the People are 'atoned' (*vv.* 2, 3).

And yet (*vv.* 4—7):—How are we to reconcile this fact with the painful facts of sin and sorrow in the present? No—I must listen for God's meaning (*v.* 8).

I see it now. The true Atonement is coming which will mean, not merely the dwelling of God on earth but the lasting union between earth and heaven (*vv.* 9—13).

The Atonement that God purposed for the world was not an act of ritual, but the historical fact of the Incarnation.

Our Psalm was used, in the early Church, for Advent, and is appointed in our English Church as a Proper Psalm for Christmas Day.

PSALM LXXXV.

The fact that God has returned to His Land proves that His People are forgiven,

and that God is appeased.

But yet, if so, why all this sin and sorrow? Cf. Is. lxiv. 9 ff.

- 1 O YHVH Thou hast favoured^a Thy Land ;
 Thou hast turned^b again the Captivity of Jacob ;
 2 Thou hast forgiven^c the guilt of Thy People ;
 Thou hast covered all their sin.
 3 Thou hast gathered in all Thy wrath.
 Thou hast turned from the heat of Thine anger.
 4 Turn^d us again, O God of our salvation
 And withdraw^e Thine indignation against us,
 5 Wilt Thou for ever be angry^f with us?
 Wilt Thou protract Thine anger for generations?
 6 Is it not THOU that must turn^g and quicken us
 That Thy People may rejoice in Thee?
 7 Shew us Thy lovingkindness, O YHVH,
 And grant us Thy salvation.

^a Ps. xlv. 3

^b vv. 4, 5

^c *lifted off*

^d vv. 1, 5

^e Pss. xxxiii.
 10: lxxxix.
 33

^f Pss. lx. 1 :
 lxxix. 5; Is.
 xii. 1

^g vv. 1, 4

v. 1. "*Thou hast favoured.*" See the parallel Korah Psalm xlv. 3, p. 183, note. The *favour* has been shewn, historically, in the fact that He has brought back His People from Captivity (Zech. i. 16 f.).

v. 2. "*Thou hast forgiven...Thou hast covered....*" Cf. Ps. xxxii. 1, 2, p. 136.

v. 3. "*Thou hast gathered in....*" The verb *asaph* (whence the *asiph* or feast of *ingathering*, Exod. xxiii. 16; xxxiv. 22) signifies 1st "*to gather in*," and "*to remove.*" It is used here in sharp contrast with the *protracted anger* of v. 5.

v. 4. "*Turn us again.*" The word "*turn*" is used twice in vv. 1—3 and twice in vv. 4—6.

This is no accident: v. 4 corresponds with v. 1; God has "*turned again the Captivity*" (v. 1), but we need a deeper and more inward change; therefore we still cry, "*Turn us again.*"

Verse 6 also corresponds with v. 3. God has "*turned from* (or suffered a change in) *the heat of His anger*" (v. 3), but *we*, too, need a change before we can find life and joy in Him. This must be His work, therefore we say, "*Thou...must turn and quicken us*" (v. 6).

It should be noticed that the abrupt change from the joy of vv. 1—3 to the sorrow of vv. 4—7 is exactly after the pattern of Ps. xlv., which is the second of the *Elohistic* Korah Psalms, as this is the second of the *Jehovistic*.

v. 5. "*Wilt Thou protract Thine anger....*" That "*wrath*" which was "*gathered in*" (v. 3), and so put away, as we supposed, for ever, is it to linger on for all generations? Compare Zech. i. 12.

v. 6. Instead of the *interrogative halo*, "*Is it not?*" the Sept. read *hail*, "*O God.*"

The thought of the verse may be thus expressed, 'God only (cf. Ps. lxxv. 3, note) can work that change in us which can give us life. This He needs must do, otherwise His People would be driven to the folly of despair' (v. 8).

The nearest parallel is found in the section Is. lxiii.—lxiv., which may be called an Appendix to the Second Isaiah. Compare, especially, lxiii. 17, "*Why shouldst Thou make us to err, O YHVH, from Thy ways, and harden our heart from Thy fear? Return for Thy servants' sake...*"; and, lxiv. 5, "*...Thou wast wroth and we sinned.*"

This bold appeal to God not to drive His People to despair would well suit the age of

I would fain understand His purpose.

8 I would hearken what God^a YHVH may speak ;
For He will speak peace to His People, to His Saints,
Lest^b they turn again unto folly.

^a *El*

^b or *let them not*

Yes — God will speedily return to His Earth (cf. *v.* 1). The full Atonement will then take place (cf. *v.* 2); and God Himself with Man will be well-pleased (cf. *v.* 3 and Lev. xxvi. 4—12).

9 Nay but near^c is His salvation to them that fear Him,
That Glory may dwell in our Land^d.
10 Lovingkindness and Truth are met together;
Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other ;
11 Truth springs up from the Earth^e ;
And Righteousness looketh forth from Heaven.
12 YHVH, too, will give the good,
And our "Land will give her increase^f."
13 Righteousness shall march before him^g,
And shall keep the way of his^h steps.

^c Is. xlvi. 13 :
li. 5; lvi. 1

^d or *Earth*

^e or *Land*

^f Lev. xxvi. 4

^g or *Him*

^h or *His*

Zerubbabel; it should be compared also with Psalm xliv. 17—26, a Psalm which occupies the same place in the *Elohistic* Korah Psalms that Ps. lxxxv. does in the *Jehovistic*.

v. 8. The Prophet-Psalmist now stands upon his watch; exactly as Habak. ii. 1.

The P.B.V., following the Sept., reads, "I will hearken what the Lord God will say [concerning me]"; clearly the Sept. read *bi*, "in me" instead of *ki*, "for," with which the next line begins. If such had been the text the right translation would have been "in me," or "with me" (cf. Zech. i. 9, 13, 19, &c.), and not "concerning me."

"He will speak peace." God's thoughts for His People are thoughts of peace (Jer. xxix. 11).

"Lest they turn again unto folly." So Aq., Sym., Jer., &c. The Sept., however, had a different text, and it must be confessed that the present Hebrew text is harsh and strange. The P.B.V. omits the words "unto folly."

v. 9. "Nay but near is...." The order of the words in the Original throws stress, not upon *salvation*, but upon its *nearness*.

The expression "The Day of YHVH is near" is very frequent in the Prophets (see Is. xliii. 6; Ezek. xxx. 3; Joel i. 15; ii. 1; iii. 14; Obad. 15; Zeph. i. 7, 14); but the Second Isaiah is still nearer to the thought of our Psalm; thus "My righteousness is near" (li. 5); "My salvation is near" (lvi. 1). At this period, which was also the period of the Korah Psalms, the hope of Israel was centred on nothing less than a Theophany (Is. lxiv. 1 ff.).

"That Glory may dwell in our Land." Ezekiel, in vision, had seen the "Glory of YHVH" leave Jerusalem (Ez. xi. 22) because of the sins of his People, but he had also had a vision of the return of that Glory to dwell in the New Jerusalem (xliiii. 2—4) when the Glory filled the Temple-City. Upon this prophecy our Korah Psalmist doubtless framed his hopes (cf. Zech. ii. 9).

Aben Ezra's note is as follows: "...then God will turn from the heat of His anger so that His Glory may dwell in the midst of them. This is *simply near*." He further remarks that this Psalm is a witness that the Divine Glory did not dwell in the Second Temple.

v. 10. "Lovingkindness and Truth...Righteousness and Peace." Of these pairs we are told (*v.* 11) that "Truth" springs forth (as a crop) "from the Earth," and that "Righteousness" looks forth (like a sun) "from Heaven." We might, perhaps, infer from this, that, in each pair, the first term is from Heaven, and gives the cause, while the second is from Earth, and gives the effect. Be this as it may, certain it is that the qualities mentioned are not even virtues if they stand alone; Lovingkindness and Truth must be wedded in man (Ps. xv. 2; Prov. iii. 3; xxvi. 6; xx. 28; Eph. iv. 15), even as they are perfectly united in God (Exod. xxxiv. 6; Pss. xxv. 10; xl. 11; lvii. 3; lxi. 7; lxxxvi. 15 &c.). In like manner Righteousness is not complete without Peace (Is. xxxii. 17; Jas. iii.

18). On the duty of man, made in God's Image, to imitate the 'virtues' (2 Pet. i. 3) of God see notes on Pss. cxi., cxii., pp. 42, ff.

"*Truth springs up.*" The verb *tsamah* (whence *Tremah*, E.V. "*Branch*") is used of the growth in Paradise: Gen. ii. 9, "And YHVH God *made to spring up* from the ground every tree that was pleasant for sight and good for food." It is used again of Paradise lost: Gen. iii. 18, "Thorns also and thistles shall *it* (i.e. the Earth) *make to spring up* for thee." It is used also of Paradise regained: Is. iv. 2, "In that day shall the *outspring* (E.V. badly, *branch*) of YHVH be for beauty and glory, and the fruit of the Earth for majesty and comeliness."

In the Second Isaiah this thought of Paradise restored is frequently connected with the word. Thus: xlv. 8, "Drop down, ye heavens from above, let the skies pour down Righteousness: let the Earth open...and let her *make Righteousness to spring up...*" (cf. lv. 10, where God's Word, like the rain, is to "*make the earth to spring*" (E.V. "*bud*"). lxi. 11, "As the Earth bringeth forth her *outspring* (E.V. "*bud*") and as the garden *maketh to spring* the things sown in it; so YHVH God *will make to spring* Righteousness and Praise."

In Jeremiah and Zechariah *Tremah* "*the Outspring*" (E.V. "*the Branch*") became actually a proper name of the Messiah; but with this we are not now concerned, since it is evident that our Psalm is much nearer in thought to the Second Isaiah.

v. 12. "*YHVH, too, will give the good.*" The literal translation here is best; "*the good*" implies everything that is good. Probably the Psalmist thought, as Aben Ezra suggests, of the rain, "*His treasure the good*" (Deut. xxviii. 12), which was the outward sign and pledge of every other blessing (Ps. lxxviii. 9: Is. lv. 10: Ezek. xxxiv. 26: Hos. vi. 3: Joel ii. 23). The whole passage should be closely compared with Lev. xxvi. 4-12 and also with Jer. xxxiii. 14 ff. where "*the good thing*" is the Advent of *Tremah* as "*The Lord our Righteousness.*"

The rain, which fell in Autumn, was naturally associated with the Autumn Feast of Ingathering or Tabernacles (Zech. xiv. 17). The "*good*," and "*the goodness*" of God were also associated with this season (Ps. lxx. 4, 11: Jer. xxxi. 12, 14: Zech. ix. 17).

v. 13. "*Righteousness shall march.*" The verb *halak*, "*walk*," or "*go*," is used in Kal, Piel, and Hithpael almost in the same sense. The habitual mode of life would be indicated by the Hithpael, e.g. "And Enoch *walked* with God." The Piel, which is used in our Psalm, seems, sometimes, to have the force of *walking* with others so as to *lead* them (Ps. lv. 14), indeed it is once translated "*lead*," Prov. viii. 20, "*I lead* (marg. *walk*) in the way of righteousness." I suggest that, here too, the sense of the word might be paraphrased, "Righteousness shall take the lead before him" (i.e. Israel).

"*And shall keep the way of his steps.*" If we retain the Masoretic text we ought to translate "*And may he (or it) make his steps for a way.*" In that case the best illustration would be the legend of good King Wenceslas.

But by changing the Hebrew letter *l* into *r* (with which it is often confounded) we should read *yishmor derek*, "*he will keep the way*" &c. (See Baethgen's note). We should then have a still closer parallel with Is. lviii. 8, "*And thy Righteousness shall go before thee; the Glory of YHVH shall gather up thy rear.*" Cf. Is. xli. 2 (R.V. marg.).

PSALM LXXXVI.

Psalm lxxxvi. is little more than a liturgical arrangement of prayers taken from older Psalms. Though not alphabetical it has many points in common with alphabetical Psalms (cp. *v.* 4 with xxv. 1; *v.* 11 with xxv. 4; *v.* 16 with xxv. 16; *v.* 12 with ix. 1, cxi. 1, cf. xxxiv. 1).

This is specially to be noted in the allusion to God's Memorial-Name, revealed to Moses (Exod. xxxiv. 6), as "*Merciful and Gracious,*" &c.

This is the central thought of our Psalm (*vv.* 5, 15), and is a favourite thought in the alphabetical Psalms (see notes on Pss. cxi. 4, p. 43, cxii. 4: cxlv. 7f, p. 65).

We may also compare the world-wide hope of *v.* 9 with Ps. cxlv. 21.

Like the alphabetical Psalms our Psalm also seems to be ruled by the number *ten*, as may be seen by comparing *v.* 5 with *v.* 15; *v.* 6 with *v.* 16; *v.* 7 with *v.* 17.

The Title, which ascribes the Psalm to David, cannot be seriously regarded. A more important question is this, Is the Psalm to be reckoned in the group of Korah Psalms? We have traced a relation between Ps. xlii.—xliii., the first of the Elohistie Korah Psalms, and Ps. lxxxiv., the first of the Jehovistic Korah Psalms: also between Ps. xlv., the second of the Elohistie Korah, and Ps. lxxxv., the second of the Jehovistic Korah: We might therefore have expected a relation between Pss. xlv. and lxxxvi. But this does not exist; consequently we infer that our Psalm does not properly belong to the Korah group.

It is *Adonaic* rather than *Jehovistic*, and this may possibly account for the tradition which assigned it to David.

PSALM LXXXVI.

Israel's prayer, based upon the goodness and compassion of God (cf. *vv.* 11—15).

- 1 O YHVH incline Thine ear,
Hear me, for I am poor and needy;
- 2 Keep my soul, for I am devoted^a (to Thee):
Save Thy servant—Thou art my God—
(Thy servant) that trusteth in Thee.
- 3 Be gracious to me, O Lord^b,
For unto Thee do I cry all the day:
- 4 Gladden the soul of Thy servant,
“For to Thee, Lord^c, I lift up my soul^d.”
- 5 FOR THOU, LORD^e, ART GOOD AND FORGIVING,
AND PLENTEOUS IN MERCY, TO ALL THAT CALL UPON
THEE.
- 6 Give ear, O YHVH, to my prayer^f,
And attend to the voice of my plaint.
- 7 In the day of my trouble^g I call Thee,
For Thou wilt answer me.
- 8 There is not Thy like among the gods^h, O Lordⁱ,
There is not the like of Thy doings.
- 9 All nations^k Thou hast made shall come
And fall down before Thee, O Lord^l,
And pay honour to Thy Name:
- 10 For Thou art great and doing Wonders^m;
Thou art God alone.

^a godly

^b Adonai

^c Adonai

^d Ps. xxv. 1

^e Adonai

^f Ps. liv. 2

^g Pss. xx. 1;
1. 15; lxxvii.
2

^h Exod. xv. 11
ⁱ Adonai

^k Rev. xv. 4

^l Adonai

^m Exod. xv. 11;
Ps. cxi. 4,
note

Past-Redemption is a pledge of a wider Redemption that is coming (cf. Ps. lxxvii. 13—15).

v. 2. “*I am devoted (to Thee).*” There is no one word in English that fairly represents the meaning of *hasid*. In Ps. iv. 3 (4) we translated it by “*His loved one*” (cf. xvi. 10), while in Ps. xviii. 25 (26) we were obliged to give it the active form of “*loving*.” The word occurs twenty-five times in the Psalms and is usually translated in the E.V. by “*saint*.” Unfortunately the ecclesiastical use of the word *saint* has obscured its Biblical meaning, which, both in O.T. and in N.T. properly denotes (i) one called and *loved* by God, and thus (ii) loved into *loving*. Israel is essentially God's *hasid*, “*loved-one*,” “*holy-one*,” or “*saint*” (Pss. iv. 3; xvi. 10: 1. 3; lxxxv. 8; lxxxix. 19, &c.), just as he is, from another point of view, God's *Servant*. Both titles are used in this verse.

v. 8 f. There is an undoubted reference here to the Song of Moses, Exod. xv. 11, “*Who is like unto Thee among the gods, O YHVH? Who is like unto Thee, unique in holiness? Fearful in praise-songs, doing wonders!*”

It is interesting to note that the Author of Rev. xv. 3 f. recognised this allusion to the Song of Moses, for in quoting *v.* 9 of our Psalm he says, “*And they sing the Song of Moses...saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the Nations (or ages). Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name? (Jer. x. 7). For Thou only art holy (cf. Exod.); for all the Nations shall come and worship before Thee (cf. Psalm); for Thy righteous acts have been made manifest.*”

Just as in the Asaph Psalm lxxvii. the thought of God's name as “*Gracious and Merciful*” (*vv.* 7—9)

- Prayer for guidance,
in the presence of foes;
based on the goodness
and compassion of
God (cf. *vv.* 1—7.)
- 11 "Teach^a me Thy way, O YHVH^b,"
"I would fain walk in Thy truth^c."
Unite my heart to fear Thy Name.
- 12 I thank Thee, O Lord^d my God, with my whole heart,
And would honour Thy Name for ever:
- 13 For Thy lovingkindness toward me is great,
And Thou hast delivered my soul from nethermost Sheôl^e.^o Deut. xxxii. 2
- 14 "O God the proud are risen against me,
The Congregation of tyrants have sought my life,
And have not set Thee before them^f." Ps. liv. 3
- 15 BUT THOU, LORD^g,—"THE GOD^h MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS^h
SLOW TO ANGER, PLENTIOUS IN MERCY AND TRUTH^l—"
Adonai^h El^h Exod. xxxiv. 6; Psa. cxi. 4; cxlv. 8
- Prayer based on *vv.* 8—10.
- 16 Turn to me and be gracious unto me.
Give Thy strength to Thy servant^k;
And help the son of Thine handmaid^k. Ps. cxvi. 16; Wisd. ix. 5
- 17 Work for me a sign for good^l;
That those that hate me may see and be ashamed,
Because Thou^m, YHVH, hast helped me and comforted me.ⁿ Emphaticⁿ Jer. xxiv. 6

led the Psalmist to "call to mind the great deeds of Yah," and His wonders at the Red Sea (*vv.* 11—12), and so to look onwards to a great Redemption in which all Nations would share (*vv.* 13—15), so our Psalmist, starting from the same Memorial-Name of God (*v.* 5), is led on to hear, across the ages, an echo of the New Song of Moses and of the Lamb, sung by "All Nations that God has made" (*vv.* 8—10).

In consequence of this passage the Latin Church appointed the Psalm as a proper Psalm for the season of Epiphany.

v. 11^a. The quotation is from Ps. xxvii. 11; and though our Psalmist does not actually quote the following words, "because of mine enemies," he clearly has those enemies in his mind (see *v.* 14).

v. 11^b. Though not a quotation the words suggest Ps. xxvi. 3. Now Pss. xxvii. and xxvi. are closely related; there, as here, God shews the way and His pilgrim walks in it.

v. 11^c. "Unite my heart." The Sept. reads, "Let my heart rejoice": but the other versions (Aq., Sym., Targ., Jerome) favour the translation we have given. The prayer must be taken as the prayer of the Congregation (Israel), asking for that *unity of heart* which was the Promise of the latter days. Hupfeld well quotes Jer. xxxii. 39, "And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me for ever" (see context). But the prayer may also be made, by each individual, a prayer for that *single heart* to which so many Gospel promises are made.

The three prayers, (i) "Teach me Thy way," (ii) "I would fain walk in Thy truth," (iii) "Unite my heart..." mark an onward progress in disciple-life. As Christians we may interpret them as (i) The desire to know Christ—answered by Christ the Way; (ii) The wish to follow—answered by Christ the Truth; (iii) The cry for single-hearted strength—answered by Christ the Life.

v. 13. The deliverance from the Captivity was a resurrection of the Nation from the "nethermost Sheôl."

v. 14. See note on Ps. liv. 3, p. 232.

v. 15. For note on the name *Adonai*, which occurs 7 times in this Psalm, see on Ps. liv. 4, p. 233. On the Memorial-Name of God, as revealed to Moses, see note on Ps. cxi. 4, p. 43.

PSALM LXXXVII.

The Prophetic promises which express the widest hope for the Gentiles are Is. xix. 23—25; Zeph. iii. 9 f.; Is. lvi. 6 f. But our Psalmist goes far beyond them all. He starts from the thought—so characteristic of Korah Psalms—of the Temple-City. This City will fulfil the promise of Is. ii. 2 ff.

Her gates are loved by God as though they were the very gates of Heaven (v. 1 f.). She is again “married” to her People (v. 3, note; cf. Is. lxii. 1—5). But in this reunion she brings with her all the Gentile Nations as sharers of her joy (v. 4 ff.), exactly as in the Elohistic Korah Psalm xlv. vv. 9—end (see notes, p. 193 ff.). But, whereas in Ps. xlv. the Nations court Zion’s favour (v. 12) and only “enter into the King’s Palace” in her train (v. 15), here in the present Psalm (v. 4 f.) they become, in Zion, “fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God” (Eph. ii. 19). Thus Zion is, indeed, the true Metropolis, “the Mother of us all” (Gal. iv. 26). Our Psalm throws light, for one moment, upon what St Paul calls “*the mystery of Christ*,” viz. “*that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs*” (Eph. iii. 6).

PSALM LXXXVII.

The Temple-City,
uplifted from the
earth (Is. ii. 2 f.),

draws all the Nations
to itself and to God
(Rev. xxi. 24 ff.).

The River of Life
(Rev. xxii. 1 f.).

- 1 His foundation^a upon the Holy Mountains^b (YHVH loveth).
- 2 YHVH loveth^c the gates of Zion
More than all the dwellings of Jacob.
- 3 With honourable-ones art thou bespoken^d
Thou City^e of God!
- 4 “I make mention of Rahab^f and Babylon
“As of those that know Me:
“Lo! Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia;—
“Each of them was born there.”
- 5 And of Zion it shall be said,
“Each and every one was born in her,”
And He Himself—the Most High^g—shall establish^h her.
- 6 YHVH shall count—when enrollingⁱ the Nations—
“This one^j was born there.”
- 7 Singing and dancing—
All fountains are in thee.

^a Is. xiv. 32;
Heb. xi. 10
^b Ps. xlviii. 1
^c Ps. lxxviii. 68
^d Cant. viii. 8
^e Ps. xlvi. 4,
note
^f Ps. lxxxix. 10

^g Elyôn
^h Ps. xlviii. 8
ⁱ Ezek. xiii. 9
^j Is. xliv. 5

v. 1. “*His foundation.*” The pronominal affix, being *masc.*, must refer to God and not to the City. In Is. xiv. 32 the fact that “*YHVH hath founded Zion*” is flung as a challenge to the Gentiles; while in Is. xxviii. 16 Zion stands as the foundation-stone, of a great purpose, laid by God. Just as God is said to have founded the Earth (Pss. xxiv. 2; lxxviii. 69; cii. 25; civ. 5, &c.) so also He founded that great purpose of salvation of which Zion was an outward type. In Is. ii. 2 f. this purpose is associated with the uplifting of “the Mountain of the House of YHVH” to the top of the mountains where it becomes a centre of attraction, drawing all the Nations of the Earth to it (Ps. xlviii. 2, note, p. 205). So too Ezekiel saw in vision the ideal Temple, framed like a City, upon an exceeding high Mountain (Ezek. xl. 2).

The view of Jerusalem in the Korah Psalms is greatly influenced by a prophecy of Jeremiah, where the Prophet declares that the Ark of God shall, in future, be no more remembered or come to mind, but that, instead, "At that time they will call Jerusalem the Throne of YHVH, And all Nations will be gathered together (like waters, Gen. i. 9) to the Name of YHVH at Jerusalem," i.e. "The whole City will be as holy as was the most sacred part of the temple" [Briggs, *Messianic Prophecy*, p. 244].

Our Psalmist has all these prophecies in his mind; when then he speaks of God's "foundation upon the holy mountains," we must not limit his vision to the topography of Jerusalem.

v. 3. "Honourable-ones." The participle occurs in fifteen other passages, and in all of them, with one exception, it is used of *persons*. The one exception is Prov. viii. 24, where it is used of fountains "abounding with water." In the present instance the participle is *feminine* and therefore suggests "honourable women."

"Art thou bespoken." The only other instance in which this Pual occurs is Cant. viii. 8, "in the day when she is bespoken (for marriage)."

Putting these facts together it would seem that the "City of God" is here regarded as the Bride, and that the "honourable-ones" are "Her virgin-friends in her train" (Ps. xlv. 14), who, through her bridal, are brought into the King's Palace.

Thus we find a close parallel in thought between this Psalm, which is the *third* of the Jehovistic Korah Psalms, and Ps. xlv., which is the *third* in the Elohist group.

It is, of course, possible that the fem. participle should be translated "honourable things."

"Gloriosa dicta sunt de te, Civitas Dei. Omnis prophetarum chorus de hac adnunciat Civitate" [Jerome].

"Jerusalem luminosa, verae pacis visio,
Felix nimis ac formosa, summi Regis mansio,
De te O quam gloriosa dicta sunt a saeculo!"

[Mone, *Hym. Lat.* vol. i. p. 433.]

v. 4. Those Nations that before were "far off," like Ethiopia and Egypt in her pride and Babylon in her unrest, as well as those nations which were "near," like Philistia and Tyre, have now, through Zion, been numbered among God's "friends"; nay, they are 'no more strangers and sojourners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God' (Eph. iii. 18 ff., see context).

"Rahab" and "Babylon" represent types of the world-nations: we need not, therefore, follow the commentators who seek to date our Psalm from a time (e.g. the age of Hezekiah) when Egypt and Babylon were both in power.

"Philistia and Tyre" were mentioned as *enemies* in the Asaph Psalm lxxxiii. 7.

v. 5. The strange reading of the Septuagint, *ἄνθρωπος Σιών ἐπεὶ ἄνθρωπος*, "a Man shall say Mother Zion," is exceedingly interesting, and is accepted by Wellhausen as representing the correct text, which he translates, "But every one calls Zion his mother, And of it is every one native." It is true that there is another doubtful reading, *ἡ μήτηρ Σιών*, which is accepted as genuine by Jerome, "Pro 'mater Sion,' Septuaginta interpretes transtulerunt 'Numquid Sion dicit homo?'" [Commentarioli in Psalmos, Ed. Morin, p. 66; cf. also *Tractatus de Psalmo lxxxvi.*, p. 102]. But Jerome is undoubtedly wrong. The true reading of the Sept. is *ἄνθρωπος*, from which *ἡ μήτηρ* (hence Vulg. "numquid") is a corruption.

"Each and every one was born in her." This is true whether of Nations or of individuals:—the Jerusalem that is above is 'the Mother of us all.'

When Dante (*Purg.* XIII. 94 f.) asks a group of redeemed souls to tell him whether any of them belonged to Latium he receives the answer:

"O brother mine, each one is Citizen
Of our true City; but you wish to say,
'Who lived his pilgrim-life in Italy?'"

v. 7. The translation is merely provisional. Many other renderings are possible but none is wholly satisfactory. The Sept. had a different text.

The general sense seems to be as follows:—In thee, i.e. in the heavenly Jerusalem, all fountains of life and joy are ever springing (cf. St John iv. 14).

On the "River" that gladdens the "City of God" see Ps. xlv. 4, note, p. 197; Rev. xxii. 1; cf. Dante, *Paradiso*, xxx. 59 ff.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

The double Title which ascribes this Psalm both to "the sons of Korah" and to "Heman the Ezrahite" has been considered in our "*Introduction to the Asaph and Korah Psalms*," but we may here notice that Ps. lxxxix. is ascribed to "Ethan the Ezrahite";—thus Pss. lxxxviii., lxxxix. form a pair, and are to be read together. Ps. lxxxviii., in itself, is unrelieved by a single ray of hope (*v.* 1 note). Like the David-Jeduthun Psalm xxxix. it is full of allusions to the Book of Job. It also contains many rare words which the Hebrew scholar will recognize as characteristic of Job, *e.g.* "freedom," *v.* 5; "pineth," *v.* 9; "I spread forth," *v.* 9; "Abaddon," *v.* 11; "youth," *v.* 15; "horrible-dread," *v.* 15; "terrors," *v.* 16. Our Psalmist is also familiar with the story of Jonah as a type of Israel (*v.* 6, note). The plaint is not that of an individual but of a dying Nation. Israel is dying (*vv.* 3, 4); nay he is dead, he has gone down, like the sun, under the waters of death (*vv.* 5—7). This suggests, as in the Babylonian legend, the thought of leprosy: Israel is like a leper (*vv.* 8, 9). This being so, what shall become of God's praise in the world? (*vv.* 10—12);—is not this Israel's work? Why then should God have cast him off? (*vv.* 13, 14). And yet, strange mystery! this Servant of God is the Sufferer, marked out for God's anger and for the world's disdain! (*vv.* 15—18). When the reader has once grasped the reference to Israel as the Suffering Servant the application to Christ will need no exposition. The Psalm is appointed for Good Friday. There is no need always to seek the groundwork of a Psalm in history. Nature has its lessons too. May not this Psalm of Darkness be interpreted from a parable of Nature? The darkness of the year is deepest at the Winter Solstice, *i.e.* at the Festival of *Hanucca* (Dedication). But that Day is the 'Birth-day' of the Sun who comes forth from the "Waters of death" (see Introduction to Ps. xxx. p. 126).

May it not be that the present Psalm of Darkness represents the sad aspect of *Hanucca*, just as Ps. xxx., which is assigned in its Title to that season, represents its joyous aspect? If the two Psalms be compared it will be seen that they have much in common.

At the Service of *Tenebrae*, which, in the ancient Church was held in Holy Week, the lights were extinguished one by one till the whole Church was left in darkness.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

- 1 O YHVH, God of my salvation^a,
I have cried day and night before Thee;
- 2 Oh let my prayer come before Thee,
Incline Thine ear to my supplication.
- 3 For my soul is sated with sorrows,
And my life draweth nigh to Sheôl.
- 4 I am reckoned as them that are sinking^b to the Pit,
I am become as a man without strength.
- 5 Among the dead in freedom^c,
As those that are slain, that lie in the grave,
Whom Thou rememberest no more,
Since they are cut off^d from Thy hand.
- 6 Thou hast laid me in the lowest Pit^e,
In deep darkness^f and abyss^g.
- 7 Thy wrath lies hard^h upon me,
And Thou hast humbled (me) with all Thy billows.

Israel has gone
down into the waters
of death.

^a Text doubtful

^b Pss. xxviii. 1;
xxx. 3

^c Job iii. 19

^d Lam. iii. 54;
Is. liii. 8

^e Lam. iii. 55

^f v. 11
cf. Lam. iii.
6

^g Ps. lxix. 2, 15

^h cf. Ps. xxxii.
4; xxxviii. 2

v. 1. The Hebrew scholar will see that with the slightest possible change of the text the parallelism might have been maintained, thus:—

*“O YHVH, my God, in the daytime I cry,
I make my moan unto Thee in the night.”*

This correction is favoured by v. 13 and by the analogy of Ps. xxii. 2; it is also accepted by Graetz, Baethgen, Cheyne, and others. If we adopt this emendation, which has much in its favour, then the title, “*God of my Salvation*,” which is the one ray of hope in this gloomy Psalm, goes out.

v. 5. “*Among the dead in freedom!*” The word *hophshi*, “*free*” is often used of a slave who has been “*let go free*.” Job (iii. 19) uses it in bitter irony of the ‘freedom’ which death only brings. Such may well be the meaning here. But the word is also applied (2 Kings xv. 5; 2 Chr. xxvi. 21) to the “*several house*,” *i.e.* the *isolated house*, in which a leper was obliged to dwell. This being so we might translate, “*Isolated among the dead*.” Either way the meaning is much the same. The franchise of the grave is isolation from the land of the living.

“*As those that are slain*”—not “*wounded*” (P.B.V.).

v. 6. The Targum translates, “*Thou hast laid me in the Captivity which is likened to the lowest Pit*.” Cp. Zech. ix. 11.

Israel uses the same expression in the Jonah-like prayer of Lam. iii. 55, “*I called upon thy Name, O YHVH, out of the lowest Pit*.” (See Context.)

“*In deep darkness*”—Again we have a parallel with Lam. iii. 6, when the same word is used, “*He hath set me in deep darkness, as they that are long dead*” (cf. Ps. cxliii. 3).

“*abyss*”—The word occurs, with a slightly different punctuation, in Ps. lxix. 2, 15, a Psalm which is full of allusions to Jonah and to Lam. iii.

It is also used in Jonah ii. 3, (4). The similar word in Zech. i. 8 is, by the Jewish interpretation, referred to Babylon as “*the Deep*,” an “*Abyss*” which had swallowed up Israel.

The reader who will fairly weigh these passages will, I think, be convinced that our Psalm does not record the experience of an individual but of the Nation.

He is like a leper
(Job xix. 13—21).

8 Thou hast estranged mine acquaintance from me,
Thou hast made me a loathing unto them,
I am shut in, and cannot go forth^a.
9 Mine eye^b pineth through my sorrow,
I call Thee, O YHVH, daily,
I spread^c forth my hands unto thee.

^a cf. Lam. iii. 7

^b Pss. vi. 7;
xxx. 9

^c Job xii. 23

Can God be honour-
ed by Israel's death?
(Ps. vi. 5, note.)

10 Wilt thou work wonders among the dead?
Or shall the shades^d rise up and pay Thee thanks?
11 Shall Thy lovingkindness be recounted in the tomb?
Or thy faithfulness in Abaddôn^e?
12 Shall Thy wonders^f be known in the darkness?
And Thy righteousness in the land of oblivion?

^d Job xxvi. 5

^e Job xxvi. 6;
xxviii. 22

^f v. 10

Israel exists for the
purpose of setting
forth God's praise.

13 Whereas I—I cry unto Thee, O YHVH,
And in the morning my prayer awaits Thee.
14 Wherefore, O YHVH, shouldst Thou cast off my soul?
(Wherefore) shouldst Thou hide Thy Face from me?

Israel is marked out
for sufferings.

15 Afflicted have I been and dying from my youth up;
I have borne Thy horrible dread^g—I am distracted;
16 Thy hot anger hath passed^h over me;
Thy terrorsⁱ have cut me off^k,
17 They compassed me like water all day long;
They surrounded me altogether.
18 Thou hast estranged from me lover and friend;
Mine acquaintance are—deep darkness^l...

^g Job xx. 25

^h cf. Ps. xlii. 8

ⁱ Job vi. 4, only

^k Lam. iii. 53

^l v. 6

With reference to Jonah as a type of Israel see pp. 83, 128 f., 135, 161, 165, 167 f., 178, 274 f., 288 f.

v. 8. See Ps. lxix. 8, note, p. 290.

v. 13. "*Whereas I—I cry.*" Cf. Ps. lix. 16, "*Whereas I—I sing.*" The daily service in the Temple is Israel's tribute of praise to God.

v. 15. The Speaker is Israel (cf. Ps. cxxix. 1). In the P.B.V. the verse is wrongly divided.

"*Thy horrible-dread.*"—The word occurs six times in Job. It is usually translated "*terrors*," but we require that word in v. 16. It is used also of the "*horror of great darkness*" that fell upon Abraham (Gen. xv. 12).

v. 17. "*They compassed me.*"—The same word is used of "*the toils of Sheol*" in Ps. xviii. 5 (6); and of enemies, in Pss. xvii. 11: xxii. 12, 16: cxviii. 10, 11, 12. It is also used, in another voice, in Jonah ii. vv. 3, 5, "*The floods compassed me about,*" "*The deep compassed me about.*"

"*They surrounded me.*" This verb also occurs in Pss. xvii. 9 and xxii. 16.

v. 18. "*Deep darkness.*" The conclusion is strikingly abrupt, but may be explained from Job xvii. 14. The rendering of the P.B.V., "*And hid mine acquaintance out of my sight,*" is little more than a free paraphrase, founded on the reading ׀׀׀׀ "to withhold" (Jer. Syr. Rashi) instead of ׀׀׀׀ "*darkness.*" Thus Jerome renders, "*notos meos abstulisti.*"

PSALM LXXXIX.

In the Title this Psalm is ascribed to "*Ethan the Ezrahite*" just as the preceding Psalm is ascribed to "*Heman the Ezrahite*"; but in the present Psalm there is no mention of "*the Sons of Korah*." Obviously the two Psalms are closely connected. The darkness of Ps. lxxxviii. is interpreted by the dim but growing light of Ps. lxxxix.

The Psalm has many points of contact with the Asaph and Korah Psalms. Thus the reference to the Covenant of Creation, *vv.* 9—12, should be compared with the closely parallel passage in the Asaph Psalm lxxiv. 13—17. Also the sign of this Covenant, the Bow in the Cloud; cf. *vv.* 8, 37 (notes), with Ps. lxxiv. 20 (note, p. 313). Again, the reference to the Promise of the Trumpet (*v.* 15 ff., notes) is thoroughly characteristic of the Asaph and Korah Psalms. So, too, is the bold juxtaposition of promise and non-fulfilment (*vv.* 38 ff., notes, with Korah Psalm xlv. 9).

Our Psalm closes the Third Book of the Psalter and should be compared with Ps. lxxii., which closes the Second Book. Both Psalms are meditations on the advent of the second David. Both Psalms dwell on unfulfilled prophecies. Both Psalms have passages in common (see marginal references). Our Psalm would well suit the season of Hanukka, the birth-day of the Sun (see *Introd. b, Ps. xxx.*, p. 126). It is the necessary complement to Ps. lxxxviii., interpreting, as it does, the Parable of growing light, both in Nature and in Revelation. It is suitably appointed in our Church as a proper Psalm for Christmas Day.

PSALM LXXXIX.

Israel longs for the fulfilment of the Messianic promise (cf. Ps. lxxii.).

- 1 The Lovingkindnesses of YHVH, for ever, would I sing ;
From age to age I would proclaim His Faithfulness with
my mouth,
- 2 For I said, "Lovingkindness is being built up for ever—
(Up to) the heavens in which Thou wilt establish Thy
Faithfulness*"—

* Ps. cxix. 90

v. 1. "*For ever would I sing.*" The optative form of the verb is a connecting link with the preceding Psalm. There the truth has been stated that Israel's work in life was to shew forth the praises of Him that had called him. Here Israel declares his desire to set forth those praises, especially as manifested in the promise to David.

v. 2. "*For I said.*" The Sept. and Jer. read "*Thou didst say.*" But the words are the words of the Psalmist and are continued in *vv.* 5 ff.

On the special significance of God's "*Lovingkindness*" and "*Faithfulness*" in this connexion see on Ps. xxxvi. 5, 7, p. 149. In the Church of the Old Testament every age added some new structure to that growing Purpose which was "building itself up in Love" (cp. Eph. iv. 16).

Two verses possibly
out of place.

3 "I have made a covenant with My chosen,
I have sworn to David My Servant,
4 I will establish thy seed for ever,
And build up thy throne from age to age"—

Creation itself testi-
fies to this Divine
event.

5 Yea, the heavens praise Thy wonder-work, O YHVH;
And Thy Faithfulness in the Congregation of the Holy-ones^a v. 7
6 For who, in high-heaven, can compare with YHVH?
Who can match with YHVH among the sons of the gods^b? ^b Ps. xxix. 1
7 A God^c revered in the great Assembly of the Holy-ones, ^c El.
And to be feared by all that are round about Him.
8 O YHVH, God of Hosts, who like Thee, the strong Yah?
With Thy Faithfulness all around Thee!

The Covenant of
Creation (cf. Ps. lxxiv.
13-17).

9 THOU^d dost lord it over the pride of the sea; ^d emphatic
When his waves lift up themselves THOU^d layest them to rest;
10 THOU^d—Thou didst crush Rahab as one slain;
With Thy mighty arm didst scatter Thine enemies;
11 Thine is the heaven—Thine, too, the earth;
The world and all her fulness—THOU^d didst found them;
12 North and South—THOU^d didst create them;
Tabor and Hermon ring with joy through Thy Name;
13 Thine is an Arm with power;
Thy hand is strong, Thy right-hand high!
14 Righteousness and Judgement are the basis of Thy throne;
Lovingkindness and Truth go before Thy Face.

The Promise of the
Trumpet implies the
Kingship of God.

15 Happy are the People that know the Trumpet-sound;
O YHVH, they will walk in the light of Thy Face^e. ^e Presence
16 In Thy Name they are glad all the day,
And in Thy Righteousness they are exalted.
17 For Thou art the glory of their strength,
And through Thy favour our horn is exalted.
18 For to YHVH (belongs^f) our Shield^g,
And—to the Holy One of Israel—our King.

^f or, *YHVH*
is our Shield
&c. as in
P. B. V.

^g Ps. lxxxiv. 9

v. 3, 4. These verses, in their present position, are singularly abrupt. They interrupt the sense, whereas they would read naturally after v. 19.

v. 3. "David My Servant." David had been idealized in the days of the Prophets, see Hos. iii. 5; Jer. xxiii. 5; xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23 f.; xxxvii. 22, 24. But it was in the Persian age, when the House of David had sunk almost to obscurity, that men turned with fondest hope to the "sure mercies of David" (Is. lv. 3).

v. 5. "Yea, the heavens..." It is not merely that "the heavens are telling the glory of God"

The Promise through
Nathan (2 Sam. vii.
12-17).

Cf. Pss. lxxii. 8;
lxxx. 12.

- 19 Of old Thou spakest in vision of Thy holy-one^a, and didst ^a or *loved one*
say :—
“I have laid help on a Mighty-one,
I have exalted a Chosen-one from the People ;
20 I found David My Servant,
I anointed^b him with My holy oil ; ^b 1 Sam. xvi.
13
21 One with whom My hand should stay,
Yea, and Mine arm should strengthen.
22 The enemy^c shall not exact upon him, ^c Cf. St John
xiv. 30
Nor shall the son of wickedness^d afflict him ; ^d 2 Sam. vii.
10
23 For I will beat down his enemies before him,
And smite them that hate him ;
24 Yea, My Faithfulness and Lovingkindness (shall be) with him,
And, in My Name, shall his horn be exalted.
25 And I will set his hand on the Sea^e, ^e West
And his right-hand on the Rivers^f, ^f East
26 HE shall call Me ‘Thou art my Father^g,
My God and the Rock of my salvation’ ; ^g 2 Sam. vii. 14
27 I, too, will appoint him (My) firstborn,
A Most High^h to the kings of the earth. ^h Deut. xxvi.
19 ; xxviii.
1. Elyôn
28 My Lovingkindness will I keep with him for evermore,
And My Covenant is faithfulness itself with him ;
29 And I will make his seed eternal,
Yea, his throne as the days of heaven.
30 Ifⁱ his sons should forsake My law, ⁱ Cf. 2 Sam.
vii. 14 f.
And not walk in My judgements ;
31 If they should profane My statutes,
And not keep My commandments ;
32 Then I would visit their transgression with the rod,
And their iniquity with scourges ;
33 Yet I would not divert My Lovingkindness^k from being his, ^k 2 Sam. vii. 15
Nor would I belie My Faithfulness ;
34 I would not profane My Covenant,
Nor would I change the edict of My lips ;
35 Once for all have I sworn in My holiness,
That I will never prove false to David ;
36 That his seed shall be eternal,
And his throne^l as the Sun before Me ; ^l 2 Sam. vii.
16 ; cf. Ps.
xix. 4 f.
37 It shall abide—as the Moon^m—eternal—
And the witness in the sky is faithful.” ^m Ps. lxxii. 5, 7

(Ps. xix. 1), that they are bearing testimony to God's Purpose of Creation, but, as Browning makes David say,

"There were witnesses, cohorts about me, to left and to right,
Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the alive, the aware:"

In this consciousness "*the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy*" (Job xxxviii. 7);—in this consciousness the heavenly host praised God, saying, "*Glory to God in the highest*" (Luke ii. 14). It would indeed be strange if the heavens, and the order of the Seasons, should bear no testimony to the one Divine Event to which the whole Creation moves.

The word "*praise*" in this verse denotes a *thankful confession*.

v. 7. The Septuagint read a slightly different text.

v. 8. "*With thy Faithfulness all around Thee.*" If we had eyes to see it all Nature is "*the Rainbow round about the Throne*" (Rev. iv. 3).

vv. 9—12. The emphatic THOUS should be compared, Ps. lxxiv. 13—17.

v. 9. The "*Sea*" represented, to the Hebrews, that element of darkness and chaos which God subdued by His first Creative Word (Gen. i. 3). The context clearly shews us that we are not to think of God's power of stilling the storm, but of His power of bringing light out of darkness, order out of chaos. Thus the first Word of God testifies to His whole Purpose (see Ps. xix. 1, note, p. 90).

v. 10. "*Thou didst crush Rahab as one slain.*" So Job (xxvi. 12) "*He divided* (lit. *broke*) *the Sea, by His power; and, by His understanding He smote through Rahab.*" So also Is. li. 9, "*Art Thou not it that cut Rahab and slew the Dragon?*" Is. li. 15, "*I am YHVH thy God that divided* (lit. *broke*) *the Sea whose waves roared.*"

These passages, in which the context proves that the allusion is, not to history, but to God's work of creation, bring us to the *locus classicus* for the Covenant of Creation, viz. Jer. xxxi. 35—37, "*Thus saith YHVH who giveth the Sun as a light by day and the ordinances of the Moon and Stars for a light by night, who divideth* (lit. *breaketh*) *the Sea whose waves roared; YHVH of Hosts is His Name. If these ordinances remove from before Me, saith YHVH, then too the seed of Israel shall cease from being a Nation before Me for ever,*" &c. (cf. Gen. viii. 22).

A still closer parallel is found in the Asaph Psalm lxxiv. 13 f.

"THOU, with Thy power didst break the Sea,
Didst shiver the heads of the dragons on the waters.
THOU didst rend the heads of Leviathan."

See note p. 312.

v. 11. "*Thine is the heaven—Thine, too, the earth.*" Compare the parallel in Ps. lxxiv. 16,
"*The Day is Thine, and Thine, too, is the Night.*"

v. 12. "*Tabor and Hermon*"—i.e. West and East (cp. Ps. lxxv. 8).

v. 15. "*Happy are the People that know the Trumpet-sound.*" The word *trough*, which we translate "*Trumpet-sound,*" is associated with every thought of Israel's Redemption.

(a) It was the characteristic of New Year's Day (*Rosh Ha Shanah*) which (Lev. xxiii. 24; cf. Numb. xxix. 1) is called "*A memorial of the Trumpet-sound*" (E.V. "*of blowing of trumpets*").

(b) It marked the finished atonement, and the beginning of the great year of Jubilee;—see Lev. xxv. 9, where the "*horn of the Trumpet-sound*" is, in E.V., translated "*the trumpet of the Jubilee.*"

(c) It is used of the note (E.V. "*an alarm*") sounded by the Priests in the day of Israel's danger, which was to be the signal of God's Advent for salvation (Numb. x. 5 f.).

(d) It was used of the "*shout*" (E.V.) at which the walls of Jericho fell (Josh. vi. 5, 20).

If these passages be studied they will justify the words of our Psalmist,

"*Happy are the People that know the Trumpet-sound.*"

See also notes on Pss. xxvii. 6, p. 117; Ps. xlvii. 5, p. 202; and lxxxi. 1—5, p. 344 f. It will be seen that the thought is characteristic of Asaph Psalms.

The Christian application is well expressed in a Hymn of Charles Wesley's beginning

"Blow ye the trumpet, blow,
The gladly solemn sound;
Let all the nations know,
To earth's remotest bound;
The year of Jubilee is come;
Return, ye ransomed sinners home."

Yet now it seems
just the reverse (cf.
Ps. xlv. 9 ff.).

- 38 Yet THOU^a hast cast off^b, hast spurned,
Hast shewn anger against Thine Anointed!
39 Hast abhorred the Covenant of Thy Servant,
Hast profaned^c his crown to the earth!
40 Hast broken^d down all his hedges^d,
Hast made his strongholds a ruin.
41 All that pass by^e spoil him,
And he is become a reproach^f to his neighbours.
42 Thou hast exalted the right-hand of his adversaries,
And hast gladdened all his foes;
43 Yea, Thou turnest back the edge of his sword,
And givest him no stand in the battle.
44 Thou hast put an end to his brightness,
And hurled his throne to the earth;
45 Hast shortened the days of his vigour,
Hast crowned him—with shame!

- ^a emphatic
^b Ps. xlv. 9
(note)
^c Ps. lxxiv. 7
^d Ps. lxxx. 12
^e Ps. lxxx. 12
^f Ps. xlv. 13

v. 18. There is ambiguity here, as in Ps. lxxxiv. 9. The words may denote that our Shield and our King belong to God (cf. Ps. xlvii. 9); or, that God Himself is our Shield (cf. Gen. xv. 1; Pss. iii. 3; vii. 10; xxviii. 7; lix. 11, &c.) and God Himself is our King (Sept. and P.B.V.). Now the Promise of the Trumpet, which has been alluded to in v. 15, is directly connected with the Advent of God as King (Ps. xlvii. 1 note), and the Kingship of God on earth is one of the characteristics of the Korah Psalms, I therefore would paraphrase vv. 15—18 thus,—‘Happy is Israel, to whom the Promise of the Trumpet has been given.’ That promise implies God’s help now, nay more—it implies that God Himself is Israel’s Shield and that the Holy One of Israel will come as Israel’s King.

v. 22. “*Nor shall the son of wickedness afflict him.*” The same words are applied to Israel by Nathan, 2 Sam. vii. 10, “*And the sons of wickedness shall not afflict him.*”

vv. 26, 27. The pronouns are emphatic, i.e. ‘He, on his part, will be a true son to Me; I, on My part, will be to him a Father.’

v. 37. “*And the witness in the sky is faithful.*” Some would translate, *And (as) the faithful witness in the sky.* In either case the sense is the same.

Our Psalmist began (vv. 5—12, notes) by regarding Creation itself as testifying to God’s sure Covenant of Creation; so, in this verse, he closes the first half of the Psalm by returning to the same thought. The passage Jer. xxxi. 35—37 was probably in his mind. See also note on Ps. xix. 1.

v. 38. “*Yet THOU*”—‘The very One whose Name (vv. 9—12) and Purpose is written in Creation—hast seemingly blotted out that Purpose, so that we look for it in vain.’

“*hast cast off.*” A characteristic word in Asaph and Korah Psalms. See note on Ps. xlv. 9.

vv. 40, 41. From the parallel passages, in the Asaph Psalm lxxx. 12 f., and the Korah Psalm xlv. 13, we infer that the Sufferer who is called (vv. 38, 39) “*Thine Anointed,*” “*Thy Servant*” is none other than the People.

v. 44. “*his brightness.*” The word might be used of the *clearness* of the heavenly bodies (cf. Ex. xxiv. 10) but it more readily suggests “*cleansing,*” e.g. of a leper (cf. Lev. xiii. 7, 35; xiv. 2, &c.). It is therefore probable that, as Kay suggests, there is an allusion here to that affliction which had been pictured as leprosy in Ps. lxxxviii. 8.

When sun or moon lose their *brightness* they are often pictured, in Babylonian legends, as suffering from *leprosy*.

v. 50. “*the reproach of Thy Servants*”—What this “*reproach*” was may be gathered from Ps. lxix. 7 note, p. 290. It was “the reproach of Christ.”

An appeal to God to remember the shortness of life, and not to delay the coming of Messiah (cf. Ps. xxxix.).

- 46 How long, O YHVH, wilt Thou hide Thyself entirely^a? ^a for ever
 How long shall Thy wrath burn as fire?
 47 Remember—I alas how frail!—
 For what a vanity hast Thou created all the sons of men!
 48 What strong-one is there that shall not see death,
 Or that can deliver himself^b from the power of Sheôl? ^b his soul
 49 Where are Thy former lovingkindnesses, O Lord^c, ^c Adonai
 That Thou swarest unto David in Thy faithfulness?
 50 Remember, O Lord^d, the reproach of Thy Servants— ^d Adonai
 How I bear in my bosom all (these) many Peoples!—
 51 Wherewith Thine enemies have reproached, O YHVH,
 Wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of Thine
 Anointed.

Ascription to Book
 III.

BLESSED BE YHVH FOR EVER;
 AMEN AND AMEN.

"How I bear in my bosom." The expression implies *cherishing*, as a nursing-father or a nursing mother (Numb. xi. 12; Is. xl. 11), it cannot therefore refer to bearing "*reproach*."

"All (these) many Peoples"—The words are strange and possibly not altogether correct (see Versions), but the general sense must be gathered from Numb. xi. 12 (JE) where Moses says, "Have I conceived all this people? have I brought them forth, that Thou shouldst say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing-father carrieth the sucking child?"

v. 51. "*The footsteps of Thine Anointed*"—The Hebrew root *qgb* signifies "*heel*," "*end*," "*footstep*." The Targum translates—"the tardiness of Thy Messiah." This meaning well suits the context (v. 46 ff.) which dwells on the shortness of life and pain of hope deferred.

THE P.S.

IN THREE COLLECTIONS

TRANSLATED WITH NOTES

BY

E. G. KING D.D.

PART III THIRD COLLECTION

(BOOKS IV & V, Pss. XC—CL)

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PREFACE.

A LABOUR of love which has extended over many years is now completed. The few who will take the trouble to study the Introduction on the *Influence of the Triennial Cycle* will see that it suggests a new view as to the composition of the Psalter. A portion of this article appeared in the *Journal of Theol. Studies* for Jan. 1904 and I have to thank the Editors and the Oxford Press for the use of the blocks which were then made for Tables I, II.

My sincere thanks are due to my friend and neighbour the Rev. P. J. Boyer, Vicar of Rothersthorpe, for the care with which he has read the proof-sheets. Nor would I forget all those in the home whose generous labours have afforded me the time for study.

GAYTON RECTORY, BLISWORTH.

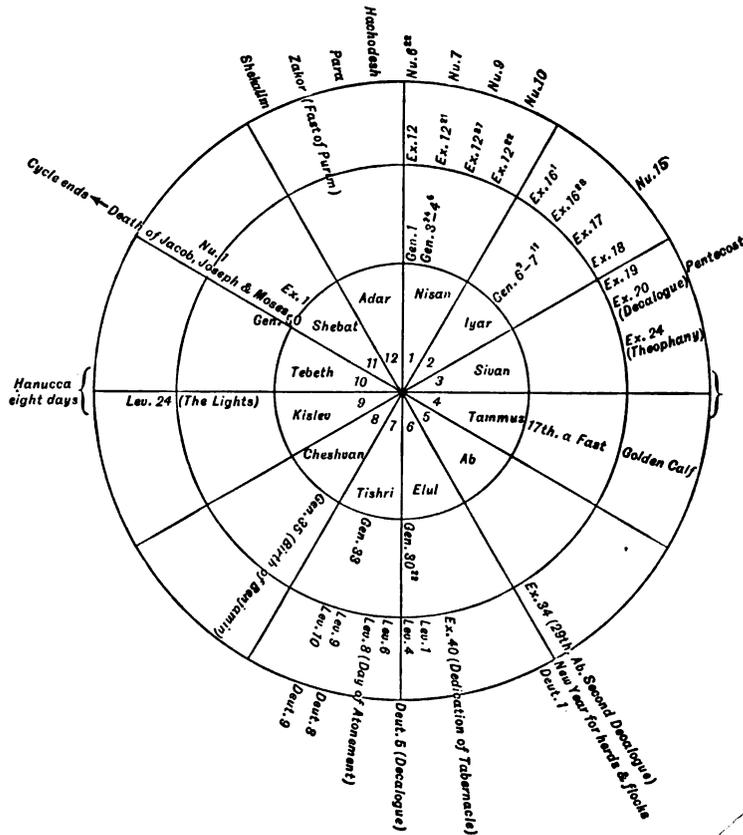
Sept. 18th, 1905.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE TRIENNIAL CYCLE ON THE PSALTER.

IN Palestine, in early times, the Pentateuch was read through consecutively in a cycle of three years, a portion (*seder*) being appointed for each Sabbath (*T. B. Meg. 29^b*. See article by Dr A. Büchler in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Apr. 1893). This triennial cycle may possibly have arisen from the fact that the lunar months would require an intercalated month once every three years to reconcile them with the solar year.

We will assume, with Dr Büchler, that the cycle commenced in the first month (*Nisan*); it may then be indicated by three concentric circles, as in the following diagram, in which a sufficient number of the Sabbath-readings are given to shew the arrangement of the whole.

TABLE I.



Thus—the first year read Gen. i.—Ex. xi.
 the second year read Ex. xii.—Num. vi. 21.
 the third year read Num. vi. 22—Deut. xxxiv.

The way in which the triennial cycle coincides with tradition is most suggestive. A few instances may suffice. Thus:—

The first month, Nisan. Here the first year opened with Gen. i., the Creation of the World; accordingly we find (*Rosh Hash. 10^b*) that the world was created on the 1st of *Nisan*. The Sabbath nearest to the Passover read the Sacrifice of Cain and Abel (Gen. iv.), which in Jewish tradition (*Pirke R. Eliezer*) is associated with the Passover.

The reading for Nisan in the second year of the cycle was Ex. xii.—xv., *i.e. the institution of the Passover* and the *Song of Moses*; accordingly we find in the *Mechilta* on Ex. xiii. that the passage through the Red Sea took place on 7th of Nisan.

The third year of the triennial cycle, for Nisan read Num. vi. 22 ff., *i.e. the Priestly Blessing*, also the *Offerings of the Princes at the Dedication of the Tabernacle* (Num. vii.), and a *second Institution of the Passover in the Wilderness* (Num. ix. 1–14). This last reading is most interesting, especially as it would seem to be a later addition to the Priest-code.

If we study the context we shall see that the writer, P^s, goes back to the *first* month. Thus:—

‘And YHVH spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, *in the first month of the second year* after they were come out from the land of Egypt, saying, Moreover, let the children of Israel keep the Passover in its appointed season,’ &c. Thus he interrupts his story, which had begun with the *second* month (Num. i. with vii. 1, see critical commentaries), in order to insert a passage about the Passover in Nisan. We begin to suspect that the arrangement of the documents in the Pentateuch was not altogether uninfluenced by the Calendar.

We now pass to the *second* month.

The second month, Iyar. P. tells us (Gen. vii. 11) that, ‘*in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on this same day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up.*’ Whence did P. derive this precise date?

Is it a mere coincidence that Gen. vii. 11 is read in the triennial cycle about the seventeenth day of the second month? As on the second ‘day’ the waters were divided from the waters for man’s good, so in the second month the waters are mingled with the waters for man’s destruction.

The third month, Sivan. The Feast of Pentecost usually occurs on the sixth of this month. In the first year of the cycle the readings from Genesis would have reached chap. xi., *i.e. the Story of Babel and the Confusion of*

Tongues, at the season of Pentecost. Now it is certain that the writer of Acts ii. associated the Confusion of Tongues with the Day of Pentecost, the Gift of the Spirit being a reversal of the curse of Babel. Again, we know that a very early Jewish tradition connected the *Giving of the Law* with the Feast of Pentecost. The origin of this tradition is not to be found in the Old Testament, but, if we turn to the triennial cycle, we see that in the second year of that cycle the Decalogue (Ex. xx.) was the Sabbath-reading for Pentecost. According to the present arrangement of the Pentateuch the Decalogue was written twice, each occasion being marked by a Theophany. On the first occasion Moses is forty days in the Mount; then comes the sin of the Golden Calf, the breaking of the Tables followed by a second period of forty days, after which the Tables are rewritten (Ex. xxxiv.). Thus, assuming that the Law was given on Pentecost (6th of Sivan), we should expect to find a second Giving of the Law eighty days later, i.e. on 29th of Ab. This expectation is fully borne out. Dr Büchler says: 'We are able to assign Ex. xxxiv. as the reading on the last Sabbath of the month Ab, with which opinion tradition is in accord (*Sedar Olam* vi.), inasmuch as it informs us that Moses went up Mount Sinai with the tablets of stone on the 29th of Ab, which occurrence is related in Ex. xxxiv.' If this chapter be studied it will be found to contain the elements of a second Decalogue by J., originally independent of the Decalogue by E. in Ex. xx. Thus the 29th of Ab practically marks a second 'Giving of the Law,' and we may note the fact that, in the third year of the cycle, Deuteronomy began on this day. If we divide the interval between Pentecost and 29th Ab into two equal periods of forty days each we arrive at 17th *Tammuz* as the date for the sin of the Golden Calf (Ex. xxxii.). Now this exactly agrees with Jewish tradition. '*The fast of the fourth month* took place on the 17th of Tammuz. . . . To this tradition adds, that it was also the anniversary of making the golden calf, and of Moses breaking the Tables of the Law' (Edersheim, *The Temple*, p. 297).

Every Old Testament scholar knows that the duplicate stories of the Giving of the Law by E. and J. involve a great critical difficulty. I suggest that the Jehovist records originated with a race that began its year at the Summer Solstice, while the Elohist records dated their year from the Vernal Equinox. Thus the 29th Ab would, in the Jehovist year, have been two months after the Solstice, exactly as Pentecost was, in the Elohist year, two months after the Vernal Equinox. In other words, each system would have had a similar Festival at the end of its second month. When P. came to arrange these records in the form in which they have come down to us, he found these two traditions located in their respective months, and was therefore obliged to make two events out of what was originally one.

I merely give this as an example of the way in which a study of the Calendar would throw light upon the criticism of the Pentateuch. Perhaps on this subject I may be allowed to refer to my *Letter to Old Testament Critics* (Deighton, Bell and Co.).

We now turn to

The sixth month, Elul. The 1st of Elul was, for some purposes, reckoned as a New Year's Day (Mishna, *Rosh Hash.* i. i.). Thus we are led to compare it with the 1st of Tishri (Rosh Hashana) when, as we shall see, the Decalogue was again read.

In *Elul*, in the second year of the cycle, the closing chapters of Exodus were read, in which P. describes the Dedication of the Tabernacle. To this we shall have occasion to return.

The Seventh Month, Tishri. This month opened with Rosh Hashana, or New Year's Day. The *Seder* for this day, in the first year of the cycle (see Büchler), was Gen. xxx. 22 ff., which records the birth of *Joseph*, and derives the name from the root *Asaph* (אֶסַפ). To this I shall again have occasion to return when I speak of the position of the *Asaph* Psalms in the triennial cycle of the Psalter.

Dr Büchler calls attention to the fact that, in the Midrash, the 1st of Tishri is given as the birthday of Joseph. The tradition arose from the reading of this passage in the triennial cycle.

The second year of the cycle read, for this day, Lev. iv. with the thought of Atonement for Priests and People (cf. Ezek. xlv. 18, 20 Heb.), while the third year read Deut. v., containing the Deuteronomic version of the Decalogue. Büchler tells us that there was a practice (assigned to Ezra, *T. B. Meg.* 31^b) of reading the curses at Pentecost and Rosh Hashana with the Decalogue. So too we find that the section Deut. v.–xi., which is complete in itself, begins with the Decalogue and ends with the Blessings and the Curses. The Samaritans had also the custom of reading the Decalogue on Pentecost and Rosh Hashana (Petermann, *Reise in Orient*, p. 290, quoted by Büchler). Thus the custom dates from very early times. I shall have occasion to return to this point when I speak of the triennial cycle of the Psalter and the Psalms of Imprecation. We now return to the study of Table I. It is important to observe that the Book of Genesis ended (with the death of Jacob and Joseph) on the first Sabbath in *Shebat* (the eleventh month), and that the Book of Leviticus also ended on this same Sabbath. As to the end of Deuteronomy there are two traditions, preserved in the *Mechilta* to Exod. xvi. 35; R. Joshua asserts that Moses died on the 7th of *Adar*, while R. Eliezer places the death of Moses on the 7th of *Shebat* (Büchler). In other words, the chapter of Deuteronomy which records the death of Moses was read either on the

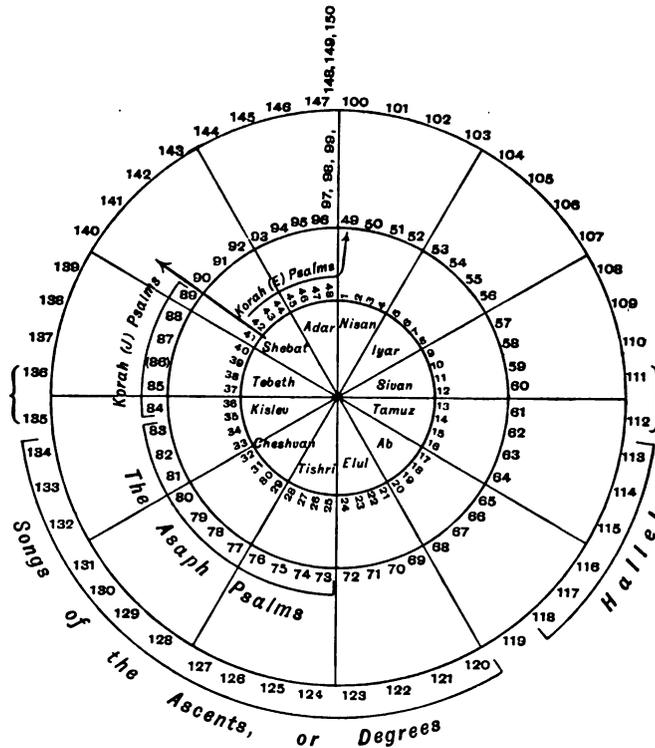
first Sabbath of *Adar*, or on the first Sabbath of *Shebat*. I have no doubt but that the date given by R. Eliezer, *i.e.* 7th of Shebat, is the more correct, since it agrees with the death of Jacob and Joseph. If this be so we note that the first, third, and fifth books of the Pentateuch ended on the same day, that day being the first Sabbath of the eleventh month (*Shebat*). It is interesting to note that P., or the editor of Deuteronomy, agrees with this tradition, for he assigns the Book of Deuteronomy to the *first of the eleventh month*, 'And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel' (Deut. i. 3). The Song of Moses and Death of Moses are evidently placed on the same day (cf. Deut. xxxi. 22, xxxii. 48 ff. (P.)): indeed the Book of Deuteronomy is but the episode of a day between Num. xxvii. 12-15 and Deut. xxxii. 48 ff. The Appendix containing the Song of Moses and the Blessing of Moses would supply Sabbath-readings for the remaining Sabbaths in *Shebat* and *Adar*.

There were four additional Sabbath-readings for the twelfth month, consisting of special lessons which were not in the order of the *Sedarim*. These were (i) *Shekalim* (see Exod. xxx. 11); (ii) *Zakor*, *i.e.* 'Remember Amalek' (Deut. xxv. 17), chosen doubtless because of the season of *Purim*; (iii) *Para* (see Num. xiv.); and (iv) *Hachodesh* (Exod. xii.). These may possibly have served the purpose of an intercalary month.

We have seen that precise dates, *e.g.* for the Birth of Joseph, the Death of Moses, the Giving of the Law, the Sin of the Golden Calf, &c., were evolved by the Scribes from the cycle of Sabbath-readings; may we go back still further and suggest that the precise dates which are so characteristic of the Priest-code were evolved in a manner not wholly unlike, in so far as they were influenced by the Calendar? We cannot now discuss this question, since our object is to determine the influence of the Calendar not upon the Pentateuch but upon the Psalter. Before we leave Table I we must call attention to a fact noted by Büchler, *viz.* 'that the first Book of the Pentateuch commenced on the 1st of Nisan, the fifth on the 1st of Elul, the third on the 1st of Tishri, the second and fourth on the 15th of Shebat, thus corresponding to the four dates given in the Mishna (*Rosh Hash. i. 1*), as first days of the year for various subordinate purposes, *e.g.* the tithing of animals and fruit.'

We now proceed to arrange the Psalter for a triennial cycle of 147—50 Sabbaths.

TABLE II.



In examining this plan we are at once struck by the fact that *the first and third Books of the Psalter end in Shebat, exactly as the first and third Books of the Pentateuch end in Shebat.* We also note that *the second Book of the Psalter ends (Ps. lxxii.) at the close of Elul, exactly as the second Book of the Pentateuch ends at the close of Elul.* The benediction at the end of this second book attains a new meaning if we read it in connexion with the closing words of Exodus and the closing year. The prayer ‘*May the whole earth be filled with His Glory*’ (Ps. lxxii. 19), should be compared with the words of Exod. xl. 34, ‘*And the Glory of YHVH filled the tabernacle*’; we may also compare the words ‘*The Prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended*’ (Ps. lxxii. 20) with ‘*So Moses ended the work*’ (Exod. xl. 33).

The ‘*Asaph*’ Psalms (lxxiii.—lxxxiii.) would begin in the seventh month, *i.e.* at the Feast of *Asiph*, at the season when, in the first year of the cycle, Gen. xxx. 22 f. was read, which tells of the birth of *Joseph*, and derives the name from the root *Asaph*. I have shewn¹ on independent grounds that the *Asaph* Psalms were connected with this season of the *Asiph* and with the house of *Joseph*. In the

¹ Introduction to Part II, pp. v—x.

second year of the cycle Leviticus began at this season, and the Asaph Psalms are essentially 'Levitical' Psalms. Again, if we observe the position of Ps. xc. in the triennial cycle we find that it comes at the very time which tradition associated with the *Death of Moses*. I venture to think that this is the origin of the title which assigns this Psalm to Moses. This title is as follows:

'*A Prayer of Moses the man of God*,' which is almost identical with the heading of the Blessing of Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 1) which was read at this time in the order of the *Sedarim*. If this be correct, Pss. xc.—c., which form one group, ought to have points in common with the *Song of Moses* and the *Blessing of Moses*, i.e. with Deut. xxxii., xxxiii., which were read at the same season. This is abundantly borne out by the facts of the case. Thus:—

Ps. xc.	Title	Deut. xxxiii.	1
"	v. 1 ' <i>dwelling-place</i> ,	"	27
	used of God		
	also in Ps. xci. 9		
xc.	13	xxxii.	36
"	15	"	7
xci.	4	"	11
"	6	"	24
"	7	"	30
"	13	"	33
xcii.	10	xxxiii.	17
"	15 (a triple allusion)	xxxii.	4
xciv.	1	"	35 xxxiii. 2
xcv.	8	xxxiii.	8 (cf. xxxii. 51)
xcvii.	7	xxxii.	43 (Sept. text).

If the references be studied they will abundantly prove that this group of Psalms has been influenced by Deut. xxxii., xxxiii. We may also add that the mention of '*A New Song*' (Pss. xcvi. 1, xcvi. 1) contains an allusion to the *Song of Moses* as the Old Song, an allusion which would be very evident when they were used together at the same season in the Temple worship.

Another characteristic of the group of Psalms xc.—c. is the Kingship of God on earth, '*YHVH is become King*' (Pss. xciii. 1; xcvi. 10; xcix. 1), the only other passage which is exactly parallel being found in the Korah Psalm xlvi. 8. This Psalm has many other parallels with the group.

Compare	Ps. xlvii.	2	with	xcvi.	4
"	"	8	"	xcvi.	10
"	"	1	"	xcviii.	4
"	"	6-8	"	xcviii.	4-6
"	"	10	"	xcvii.	9.

Indeed the Kingship of God is characteristic of the Korah Psalms exactly as it is of group xc.—c. But if we turn to Table II we shall see that the Elohist Korah Psalms xlii.—xlix. occupy exactly the same place in the *first* year of the cycle that the Psalms xc.—c. do in the *second* year, while Pss. cxliv.—cl., which were sung in the third year of the cycle, also speak of the 'New Song' (cxliv. 1, cxlix. 1) and of the Kingship of God (cxlv. 1, cxlvi. 10); and this too at a time when, in the order of the *Sedarim*, the Song of Moses, which is the *locus classicus* for the Kingship of God, was recited. Can this all be accident?

Another group of Psalms (cxx.—cxxxiv.) known as the *Songs of Degrees*, or the *Songs of the Steps*, is, rightly or wrongly, associated in tradition with the Pilgrimage of the Station-men who brought up the firstfruits (*biccurim*) to the Temple. These firstfruits could not be brought *before* Pentecost, while the *last* day for offering them in the Temple was 25th *Kislev*, i.e. *Hanucca* (the Feast of Dedication).

But, if we turn to Table II we shall see that these Songs of Degrees occupy the fifteen Sabbaths *from 1st Elul to Hanucca*. Thus, in the third year of the triennial cycle, these Psalms would be the Sabbath Psalms in the Temple during those very months in which the constant processions of pilgrims were bringing the firstfruits.

The Greek Church appointed these Psalms for the fifteen Sundays before Christmas, and, since Christmas is identical with *Hanucca*, it will be seen that they followed the practice of the Synagogue. (See also *Introduction to the Songs of the Steps*.)

Again, we have already seen that the 'Curses' were, according to Jewish tradition, read as a sort of Communion Service at the seasons of the Decalogue, i.e. at Pentecost and Rosh Hashana. We have also seen that the 29th Ab was, practically, a second Pentecost; consequently, if the Psalms of Imprecation have any connexion with the 'Curses,' we should expect to find them at these seasons. If we turn to Table II what do we find? The two Psalms of Imprecation quoted by St Peter (Acts i. 20) are the 69th and the 109th; of these Ps. lxix. comes *immediately after the 29th Ab*, while Ps. cix. comes *immediately after Pentecost*. We also note that Pss. lviii., lix., which are also Psalms of Imprecation, come at the season of Pentecost, in the second year of the cycle; and that Pss. lxviii. and cxix., which are Psalms of the Law, both come on the Sabbath nearest to the 29th Ab. Many other illustrations might be given; but we will conclude by calling attention to a fact which all commentators have observed but which none have explained, viz. the striking similarity between the closing Psalms of Book I and the closing Psalms of Book II, this similarity extending at times to practical identity of several verses, e.g. Ps. xl. 13–17 with Ps. lxx. 1–5; Ps. xli. 7 f. with Ps. lxxi. 10 f.

If we study Pss. xxxv., xxxviii.—xli. which close Book I, and also Pss. lxix.—lxxii. which close Book II, we notice that they are not only closely related to one another but also that they are penitential in character, and, like Ps. xxii., full of references to Jeremiah. Now if we turn to Table II we see that Ps. xxii. and also Pss. lxix.—lxxii. came in the sixth month, *Elul*, which, coming as it did before New Year, was *the penitential month of preparation* (see Dr Schiller-Szinessy in *The Prayer Book Interleaved*, p. 257). We also see that Pss. xxxviii.—xli., which close Book I, came in the *tenth* month, *i.e. at the close of the cycle*. It will be remembered that, even in the days of Zechariah, there was a '*fast of the tenth month*' even as there was a '*fast of the seventh month*' (Zech. viii. 19). Indeed, as I have already suggested, if the Jehovist traditions were derived through a race which began its year at the Summer Solstice, then the month which we call the tenth would have been the seventh. This will account for the practical identity of the Feasts of Tabernacles (seventh month) and *Hanucca* (tenth month). It will also explain the similarity between the '*Asaph*' Psalms (seventh month) and the '*Korah*' Psalms (tenth month).

Again,—The Hallel, and especially the latter portion of it (Pss. cxvi.—cxviii., see pp. 472 ff.), is closely parallel with Ps. xviii., and also with Pss. lxvi.—lxviii. (see pp. 275 ff. with pp. 472 ff.). But it will be seen from Table II that Pss. cxvi.—cxviii.; lxvi., lxvii.; xviii., occur in the triennial cycle at the *same season*, in the third, second, and first year respectively. The reader will note a growing purpose, a development of joy, as he traces the same thoughts from the first to the third year of the cycle. This, perhaps, is seen most plainly in the three Great Sabbaths as marked by Ps. l. in the first year, Ps. c. in the second year, and the Great Halleluyah (Pss. cxlvi.—cl.) which, in the third year, closes the whole cycle.

If we study Table II we see that, though the *Jehovistic* Korah Psalms are in their proper place at *Hanucca*, the *Elohistic* Korah Psalms are removed from that feast by six (or seven) Sabbaths. Yet these *Elohistic* Korah Psalms are most closely related to the *Jehovistic*¹, and undoubtedly belonged to the same feast. This suggests a cycle beginning, not as the triennial cycle did in *Nisan*, but on the second Sabbath in *Shebat*. In other words, we are led to suspect that, just as in the triennial cycle, the Second and Third Collections of the Psalms began in *Shebat*, so at a still earlier time the First Collection began in *Shebat*.

If the reader will make this correction in pencil on Table II he will see that the forty-one Psalms of the First Collection exactly occupy the Sabbaths from the second Sabbath in *Shebat* up to the Sabbath before *Hanucca*, so that the *Elohistic* Korah Psalms (xlii.—xlix.) would come in their right place at *Hanucca*.

¹ Part II, pp. xiii, 173, 181 f., 190.

According to this arrangement Ps. xiv. comes in the second month, in which we find Ps. liii., with which it is identical¹. Pss. xx., xxi., which are Psalms of the 'King,' come in the month *Tammuz*, in which we have already found Pss. lxi., lxiii., which are Psalms of the 'King.'

Ps. xxx., which has the singular title *For the Dedication of the House*, would come on the 3rd Sabbath in *Elul*, on which day, in the order of the *Sedarim* (see Table I), Exod. xl. was read, *recording the Dedication of the Tabernacle*. We may also mention the fact that Ps. xxvii., which was recited morning and evening throughout the month of *Elul*, would come immediately before the opening of that month.

Let me only remark, in conclusion, that I have no thought of suggesting that the Psalms were originally written for consecutive Sabbaths, but I do maintain that certain groups of Psalms belonged to certain definite points of the Calendar, that the triennial cycle was a natural development of this earlier thought, and that this triennial cycle was known to the editor who arranged the Psalter in Five Books.

This earlier thought may roughly be expressed as follows:—The Spring months represent the Parable of Creation (cf. Pss. viii., ciii., civ.) with the Gift of food (*Unleavened Bread, Pentecost*); but, as in our Lent, the labour and sorrow are ever present. The Summer months commemorate the Goodness of God in His harvest-gifts. They are months of '*Hillulim*' (see Jud. ix. 27, *marg.*, Lev. xix. 24, *marg.*, and cf. *Hallel* and perhaps the month *Elul*). The Synagogue has preserved this thought in the Seven Sabbaths of 'Comforts' which come at this season of the year.

The Autumn (seventh month) is not only the *Sabbath* of the year but also the *Ingathering* (Heb. '*Asiph*'; compare the '*Asaph*' Psalms and their characteristic thoughts which so entirely suit the season (see Index s.v. *Asaph*).

The Winter months, from *Hanucca*, are full of *Dedication* thoughts as in the Korah Psalms (see Index s.v. *Hanucca, Group of Korah Psalms*), while the growing light is a Parable of the coming *Kingship of God upon earth*, a characteristic of all the Psalms which come at this season (see Index s.v. *Kingship of God, Song of Moses*).

¹ In my Commentary on Ps. xiv., before I had any suspicion of the triennial cycle, I had occasion (p. 74) to point out the striking allusions to Gen. vi. 1-4; it is certainly a remarkable coincidence that Gen. vi. 1-4 should have been read in the order of the *Sedarim* at this season (see Table I).

INTRODUCTION TO THE *SONGS OF THE STEPS*, GENERALLY CALLED THE *SONGS OF DEGREES*.

VARIOUS interpretations have been given of the term "*Steps*" or "*Degrees*" in this context, but none of them is found to meet all the conditions of the problem.

It will be well briefly to review the more probable of these interpretations, stating the objection against each, after which we shall endeavour to state our own theory.

1. The *Steps* are interpreted as *Stations* marking the ascents of the Pilgrims or Station-men as they went up to Jerusalem at the Feasts.

Objections:

- (a) A different word would be used for *Stations*.
- (b) There is no absolute proof that these 15 Psalms were so used in *early* times.
- (c) Some of these Psalms would be suitable for such a purpose, e.g. cxxi.—cxxiii., but many of the others shew no fitness whatever.

It is probable that the "*Songs of the Steps*" were used by the Station-men (Edersheim, *Temple*, p. 337, f.) in later times, but this does not, in itself, give us the origin of these Psalms.

2. It has been suggested by Gesenius and Delitzsch that "*the fifteen songs derive their name from the step-like progressive rhythm of their thoughts*" (Del.).

Objections:

- (a) This does not apply to all the Psalms of the group, certainly not to Ps. cxxxii.
- (b) It is not peculiar to these Psalms, being found in other passages, e.g. Ps. xxix., Is. xxvi. 5 f., Jud. v. 3, 5, 6. (Baethgen.)
- (c) The suggested explanation fails to account for the title of Ps. cxxi., "*A Song for the Steps.*" We may then set aside this suggestion also.

3. The old Jewish tradition (T. B. *Succa*, 51^b) tells us that there were *fifteen steps* between the Court of the Women and the Court of Israel, and that these *fifteen steps* "corresponded" with the fifteen Songs of the Steps. T. B. *Middoth*, 35^a (quoted by Armfield) describes these steps as follows:—

"And there were fifteen steps which went up from the midst of it (the Court of the Women) to the Court of Israel, corresponding to the fifteen Steps

in the Psalms, upon which the Levites said the Song. They were not straight, but curved, like the half of a circular floor."

That this semicircular flight of steps existed in the *Temple of Herod* is certain from the testimony of Josephus, *B. J.* v. 5, and there is no reason to doubt its use by the Levites.

Jerome, in treating of these Psalms, states that these steps could still be traced in his time in the ruins of the Temple:—"Hoc igitur templum in circuitu quindecim gradus habuit. Signa aliqua videmus: numerate, et videbitis ita esse ut dicimus. Levitae igitur et sacerdotes, unusquisque secundum ordinem stabat in gradibus." (*Tract. de. Ps. cxviii.*, ed. Morin, p. 220.)

It must however be observed that this tradition does not assert that these steps were the *origin* of the Step-Psalms, but merely that they *corresponded* with them. In other words, *we are led to look for a common origin for the fifteen steps in the Temple and the fifteen Songs of the Steps.*

Unfortunately we have no details as to these steps in the Temple of Zerubbabel, with which our Psalmist would have been familiar, but in the ideal Temple of Ezekiel we find a flight of seven steps to the outer Court (*Ezek. xl. 22, 26*) and another flight of eight steps to the inner Court (*xl. 31, 37*). Thus the fifteen steps are divided into 7 + 8.

This is suggestive, since the Songs of the Steps also form two distinct groups of 7 + 8.

Evidently we are on the right track, but what we require to discover is the common origin of these double groups of steps, in the Temple and in the Psalms.

Again, if we study the first of these groups; i.e. the seven Psalms cxx.—cxxvi., we note that they have a certain relation to one another which might be expressed by $a_1, b_1, c_1, a_2, b_2, c_2, a_3$, i.e. that they are related just as the "Days" of Creation are related to one another.

If, too, we study the second group, i.e. the eight Psalms, cxxvii.—cxxxiv., we find that, on the whole, *they correspond with the Psalms of the first group in inverted order.* This will best be seen in tabular form as follows:—

PSALMS	PSALMS
120 <i>The longing for Peace</i>	<i>Peace attained in Unity</i> 133, 134
a ₁ { 121 <i>The Guardian care of God for Israel</i>	God's care for David's house 132 B
b ₁ { 122 <i>Salem—the City of Peace</i>	David's care for God's House 132 A
c ₁ { 123 "Oculus sperans"	"Look with expectation" 130, 131
a ₂ { 124 "Nisi quia Dominus"	God in history 129
b ₂ { 125 <i>A Salem Song of Peace</i>	<i>The Proselytes in Zion</i> 128
c ₂ { 126 <i>The turning point</i>	"Nisi Dominus" 127
a ₃ {	

It will be seen that the relationship between the Psalms of the ascending and descending groups is very close, except in the case of Ps. cxxxii., which seems to break the connexion. But this Psalm is, on quite independent grounds, regarded by many scholars as out of place among the "Songs of the Steps." My own opinion is that it had no place in the original group, but that it was inserted by a later editor for a special reason, and that it is therefore capable of being harmonized with the companion Psalms in the way suggested in the Table.

This movement of two bands in opposite directions is not peculiar to the Songs of the Steps, it seems to be a characteristic of Dedication Processions. Thus, at the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem by Nehemiah the two companies of Levites went round the city in opposite directions (Neh. xii. 31 ff.). So also with the two companies of the night-watch in the Temple, "one company passed eastwards, the other westwards." (Edersheim, *Temple*, p. 121.)

The Dedication Processions (see pp. 126, 207 f.) have their counterpart in the religion of Babylonia, the winding stairs round the step-pyramids being used for such processions.

In this latter case we begin to see the Nature-origin of the practice, since each step or stage of the step-temples represented one of the heavens or spheres. Some of these step-temples rose in seven stages, some in three, but in either case the stages represented *spheres*, their counterpart in the Jewish Temple being *Courts*.

The Jewish Temple rose in three Courts; if therefore the symbolism of the higher number seven were required it would be natural to represent it, as Ezekiel does, *by steps leading from Court to Court*.

It is obvious that, in the Babylonian religion, the pilgrimage-procession, through the seven stages to the sanctuary on the top, was suggested by the movement of the heavenly bodies, which, by night, are ever climbing the steep ascent of heaven, thus suggesting, as afterwards to Dante, man's pilgrimage to God.

That the typology of the "*stairs*" or "*steps*" was derived from the movement of the heavenly bodies will be evident to anyone who will take the trouble to verify the following references:

√^{ll}llD *sl*;—Jacob's "*ladder*," better *stair-way* (Gen. xxviii. 12).

"*stair-way*" (E.V. "*courses*") of the stars (Judg. v. 20).

"*terraces*" (E.V. marg. "*stairs*") in the Temple (2 Ch. ix. 11; 1 Ch. xvi. 16, 18).

Ps. lxviii. 4 (5). See note, p. 281.

Ps. lxxxiv. 5 (6) of the "*highway*" or "*steps*" in the pilgrimage of man to God. See note, p. 355 f.

√סבב *svv*;—used of the “encompassing” of Jericho. Virtually a service of *Dedication* (Jos. vi. 11).

Of the typology of the upward spiral stair-way in the Temple (Ezek. xli. 7).

Of the *Dedication* of the whole land (Zech. xiv. 10).

Of the *Encompassing* of the Altar (Ps. xxvi. 6).

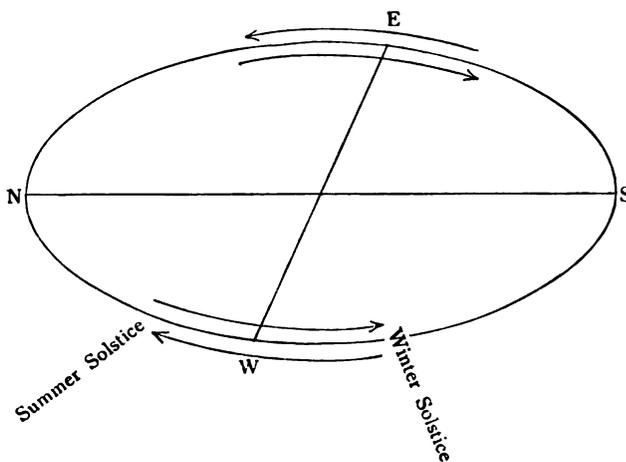
Another link connecting our *Songs of the Steps* with the steps in the Temple is the strange title given to each of those Psalms in the Targum, viz., “A Song which was said on the steps of the abyss (תְּהוֹמָא).” So far as I am aware this reference to the “abyss” (*tehom*) has never been explained; for the story, given somewhat differently in T. B. *Succa*, 53^a, and Jerus. *Sanh.* x. 2, respecting the flood of the lower waters which David reached in laying the foundations of the Temple, need not here be considered.

The fact is that Babylonian temples had a *tamtu* or “sea” which was an emblem of Tiamat, “the deep” (see King, *Seven Tablets of Creation*, lxxiv.). The “sea” in the Jewish Temple had, no doubt, its origin in the same symbolism.

Our problem, then, is to find some movement of the heavenly bodies which would suggest the symbolism of these steps and of a dedicated way, and also of the “steps of the abyss.” I suggest the following solution.

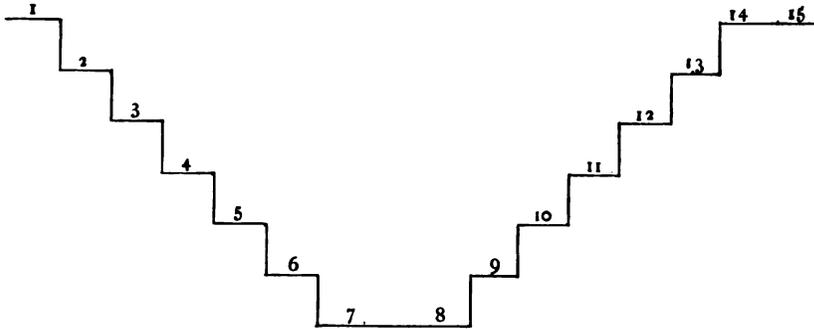
During the six months from the mid-summer solstice to the mid-winter solstice the rising and setting-points of the Sun on the horizon move further and further towards the south, i.e. as the Sun goes through six signs of the ecliptic there is a movement of his rising and setting-points towards the south.

During the other sixth months, i.e. from mid-winter to mid-summer, the rising and setting-points move in the opposite direction, towards the north, thus:—



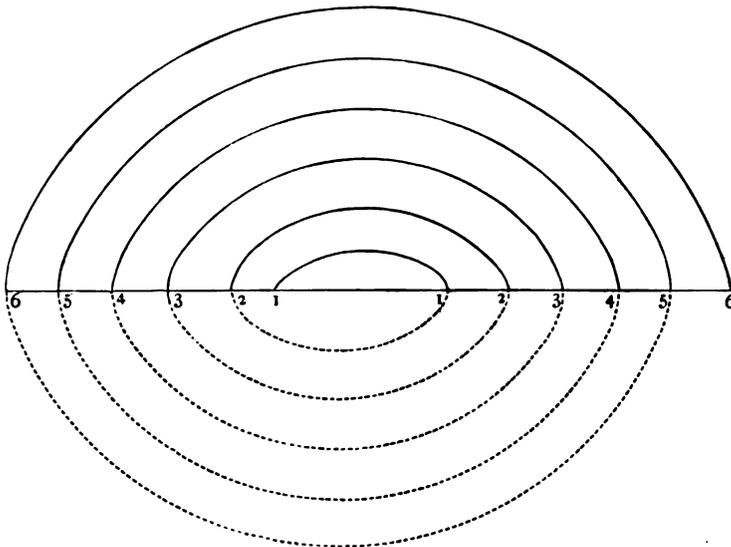
It is obvious that this double movement might be represented by two sets of six steps in opposite directions. But since each solstice is a turning point it would be natural to mark it by an extra step.

Thus we should have two sets of seven steps as follows :—



If our theory be correct we should expect a relation between the opposite steps, i.e. 1 and 14, 2 and 13, 3 and 12, etc. and since both 7, 8, and 14 represent a solstice or resting-point we should expect them to be associated with Sabbath thoughts of completion. These conditions are fulfilled in a striking manner in the Songs of the Steps (see Commentary).

This theory is confirmed by the meaning of *Hanucca*, which was the Feast of the Winter Solstice, and which signifies *Dedication* (cf. "*Henoc*," "Enoch," who walked the *dedicated way*). The other name of this Festival "*the Feast of Lights*," shews clearly its nature-origin as 'the birthday of the Sun' who at this season begins his six months of lengthening day.



In order to make this point clear we will represent it in another form. The apparent motion of the Sun is for six months in an increasing spiral and for six months in a diminishing spiral. Each night, according to Babylonian thought, he goes down into the abyss (*tehom*). If therefore we indicate his 'steps' not by days, but by months (i.e. by signs of the zodiac), his course may roughly be marked as in the last diagram, where the dotted line represents his course beneath the horizon, or, as the Babylonians would have said, beneath the waters.

His yearly course might then be indicated by the steps, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, i.e. by two sets of steps in opposite directions, and these 'steps' might well be called "*the steps of the abyss.*"

The reader will doubtless say that this might account for two sets of *six* steps but that it leaves the *seven* and *eight* steps unexplained. I answer that the *seven* 'Days' of Creation were developed from an earlier series of *six* (see Critical Comm.) and the *seven* days of Tabernacles (Deut. xvi. 15; 1 Kgs. viii. 65 f.) afterwards became *eight* days (2 Chr. vii. 8 ff.), and that in Ezekiel's vision-temple the outer court is reached by *seven* and the inner court by *eight* steps.

The fifteen Songs of the Steps form a collection complete in itself, though there is some doubt as to Ps. cxxxii. (see Commentary). They were certainly written for a Dedication Service, possibly for the Dedication of the Walls by Nehemiah. But since, as we have seen, the whole thought of a Dedication Service was founded upon Natural Religion, these Psalms lend themselves to many uses. They were used by the Levites as they stood on the 15 steps in the Temple on the night of the Water-drawing Festival at the Feast of Tabernacles (Graetz). This use was natural, since, as the Talmud says, the 15 steps 'corresponded with' the 15 Psalms.

They were used, as we have already seen, by the Station-men as they brought the offerings of Israel to the Temple. In later times these 15 Songs were appointed in the Jewish Church for Evening Service for the 15 Sabbaths before *Hanucca*, and, in the triennial cycle (see p. xii), this was their position. It is a singular fact that in the Greek Church they hold the same place, being appointed for Vespers 'in the fifteen weeks before Christmas' (Neal) which, of course, corresponds with *Hanucca*.

Jerome compares them to the ladder of Jacob (*Tract. de Ps. cxviii.* Morin), "Ego puto illud esse quod significat et Iacob scala"; and, alluding to the Divine blessing in the last Psalm of the group, he says, "Noli desperare, homo: in quinto decimo gradu Dominus supra est, intuetur te, dat auxilium."

St Ambrose comes still nearer to their original meaning when he says:—"Per quindecim anabathmorum psalmos Davidicos significabatur venturus sol justitiae, qui gradus quindecim veteris et novi testamenti illuminaturus esset

praesentiae suae lumine, quibus nostra fides ad vitam ascendit aeternam.”
(*Epist. CL.* 1, 26. Quoted by Mone, vol. I. 359).

Grünwald quotes an old Latin Hymn in which the first fifteen stanzas are based on the opening words of each of our fifteen Songs of the Steps, the 16th stanza being as follows :—

16 “ Patrem precor potentiae, principemque sapientiae
ut per gradus hos ter quinos possim conscendere caelos.”

Thus it will be seen that both Jewish and Christian tradition favour the interpretation that I have given of the Songs of the Steps, those Psalms marking steps in the pilgrimage of man to God ;—a thought of the earliest religions based upon a parable of Nature.

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THIRD COLLECTION.

PSALM XC.

The Psalm opens (*vv.* 1, 2) with a magnificent confession of that all-sufficing care whereby God has, in every age, been the Eternal Home for His People. But suddenly the scene is changed. We pass from the bright light of Eternity into the dark shadows of Time. Verses 3—10 might have been written by a heathen poet. They form a lamentation on the shortness and frailty of man's life *as seen from the world's standpoint, apart from God and Revelation*. Then, in four lines (*vv.* 11, 12), the Psalmist confesses the difficulty of tracing God's will and growing purpose in the world. Lastly (*vv.* 13—17), he prays that God would so visibly return in mercy to Israel that all might understand His growing purpose and realize His Love.

The Psalmist is evidently familiar with the "Song of Moses" (Deut. xxxii.), which he quotes in *v.* 13, and also with the "Blessing of Moses" (Deut. xxxiii.), to which he alludes in *v.* 1 (see note). But the "Song" and the "Blessing" belong to different dates and their juxtaposition is due to the author of Deuteronomy (see critical commentaries). It is therefore highly probable that our Psalmist knew the Book of Deuteronomy in its present form.

The title, which ascribes the Psalm to "*Moses the man of God*" (cf. Deut. xxxiii. 1), was probably due to an early editor who recognized the correspondence with this section of Deuteronomy.



PSALM XC.

God has been an Eternal Home for us in every age of the past.

1 O Lord^a, THOU^b hast become our dwelling-place
from generation to generation.

^a Adonai
^b Emphatic

2 Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
From eternity to eternity, Thou art, O^c God!

^c or *art God*

Yet (*a*) the shortness of man's life in the presence of God's Eternity! (Cf. Ps. xxxix.)

3 Thou bringest mortals back to dust;
And sayest, Return, ye sons of men.
4 Yet a thousand years in Thy sight
Are like a yesterday when past,
Or a watch in the night.

v. 1. "Thou hast become." Not merely "Thou art," or "Thou hast been." In every age, according to its need, there was a fresh *becoming* whereby God realized His promise, "I will become that which I will become" (Exod. iii. 14).

The Christian, in like manner, may look back through the centuries of Church history and see the fulfilment of the promise, "I am with you all the days..." (Matt. xxviii. 20).

"Our dwelling-place." The word "*habitation*" or "*dwelling-place*" is commonly used of the abode of God in Heaven (Deut. xxvi. 15, &c.) or in Zion (Ps. xxvi. 8). But here we have the deeper thought of God Himself as the "*dwelling-place*" of His People. This seems to be derived from Deut. xxxiii. 27, "*The God of old is (thy) dwelling-place.*" If we except Ps. lxxi. 3, where the text is corrupt, the only other passage is Ps. xci. 9, "*Thou hast made the Most High thy dwelling-place.*" Thus the two Psalms xc. and xci. might seem to form a pair, and both appear to be connected with the "Blessing of Moses" in Deut. xxxiii.

Ezekiel expressed the same idea in different words when he said:—"Thus saith the Lord God; Though I have set them afar among the Gentiles, and though I have scattered them among the lands, yet will I become unto them a Sanctuary for a little while in the lands where they are come" (Ezek. xi. 16). When the Temple no longer existed God would become all the more the Sanctuary for His People. This promise our Psalmist confesses to have been fulfilled throughout the Captivity. So when the temple of our body is destroyed He will be our "*dwelling-place*," a Sanctuary for a little while in the far-off land. Compare the use of this Psalm in the Burial Service.

The thought of God's power as a Creator, *vv. 1, 2*, is a rest to His creatures, and a pledge that He will complete His own Creation. Thus *vv. 1, 2* correspond with *vv. 16, 17*, and the Psalm ends on its key-note.

v. 2. The "*mountains*," in their way, are a "*refuge*" (Pss. xi. 1: lxxii. 3: cxxi. 1; Jer. iii. 23, &c.), and "*the earth and the world*" are a "*dwelling-place*" for man; but, before these were created, man existed as an eternal thought in the mind of God (Prov. viii. 22 ff.); God, therefore, and not the world, is man's true dwelling-place.

v. 3. The reference, in both members of the verse, is to Gen. iii. 19 (J), "*until thou return to the ground, for from it thou wast taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*"

The word we have translated "*dust*" is, however, not the same in the two passages. Possibly the Psalmist changed the word so as to give the double meaning of "*contrition*."

v. 4. "*Or a watch in the night*"—i.e. the timeless hours of sleep.

5 Thou sweepest them away;—they become (as) a sleep;
 In the morning, like grass, it sprouts;—
 6 [In the morning it blooms and sprouts]^a
 By even 'tis mown and withered.

^a Possibly a gloss

and (b) the frailty of man in the presence of God's Perfection!

7 For we come to an end through Thine anger^b,
 And are confounded through Thy displeasure.

^b v. 11

8 Thou hast set our iniquities^c before Thee,
 That which was hidden^d from us
 in the illumination of Thy Face.

^c cf. Numb. xiv. 34
^d Job xx. 11: cf. Ps. xix. 12 and xliv. 21

9 For all our days are confronted with Thy wrath^e;
 We end our years like a sigh^f.

^e v. 11
^f Job xxxvii. 2, Ezek. ii. 10

10 The days of our years, therein, are seventy years,
 And if, by great strength, they be eighty,
 Then their pride is but toil and vanity;
 'Tis quickly gone, and we take our flight^g.

^g Sept. differs

These (a and b) make it so hard for us to enter into His great purpose.

11 Who discerneth the might of Thine anger^h,
 Or (of) the wrathⁱ that befits Thy due fear?

^h v. 7

ⁱ v. 9

v. 5. "*Thou sweepest them away*"—i.e. as a flood. Thus, in the well-known hymn, the words are paraphrased,

"Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
 Bears all its sons away."

But the Septuagint read quite a different text, and it must be confessed that the thought of a *flood* is strangely abrupt if not out of place. The Sept., τὰ ἐξουθενώματα ἀνθρώπων ἐτη ἕσσονται (Vulg. *quae pro nihilo habentur, eorum anni erunt*), requires a text for which I cannot account.

v. 10. "*And we take our flight.*" Neale quotes (Beda, *Hist.* 11. 13) the well-known parable addressed by the heathen thane to Edwin of Northumbria:—"The present life of man, O King, may be likened to what often happens when thou art sitting at supper with thy thanes and nobles in winter-time. A fire blazes on the hearth, and warms the chamber; outside rages a storm of wind and snow; a sparrow flies in at one door of thy hall, and quickly passes out at the other. For a moment, and while it is within, it is unharmed by the wintry blast, but this brief season of happiness over, it returns to that wintry blast whence it came, and vanishes from thy sight. Such is the brief life of man."

v. 11. Though we "*come to an end through God's anger*" (v. 7) and our brief days are "*confronted with His wrath*" (v. 9) yet suffering alone does not necessarily teach us His meaning. Thus Browning makes Paracelsus say,

"Now, 'tis this I most admire—
 The constant talk men of your stamp keep up
 Of God's will, as they style it; one would swear
 Man had but merely to uplift his eye,
 And see the will in question characterized
 On the heaven's vault."

See the whole passage and compare the similar complaints of Job.

"*Or of the wrath that befits Thy due fear*"—Lit. "*And as Thy due fear so is Thy wrath.*" The "*fear of God*" is the reverence due to Him; it is almost synonymous with "*true religion.*" God's People, to whom He has revealed Himself, are judged more severely than the heathen (Amos iii. 2).

- 12 So teach us to number our days,
That we may store^a a heart of wisdom. ^a or *harvest*
- Oh that He would
shew us now some
foregleams of that
rising purpose!
- 13 Return^b, O YHVH, how long?
And let it repent^c Thee concerning Thy servants. ^b cf. Ex. xxxii. 12
^c Deut. xxxii. 36, Ps. cxxxv. 14
- 14 Satisfy us, in the morning, with Thy lovingkindness,
So shall we hymn and rejoice all our days.
- 15 Gladden us according to the days Thou hast afflicted us,
The years wherein we have seen evil.
- 16 Let Thy working appear unto Thy servants,
And Thy majesty upon their children;
- 17 And let the fair-beauty^d of the Lord^e our God be upon us;
And the work of our hands prosper it upon us;
[And the work of our hands prosper it.]^f ^d Ps. xxvii. 4
^e Adonai
^f Not in Sept.

v. 12. "That we may store" &c. Lit. "That we may bring in a heart of wisdom." The rendering of the E.V., "that we may apply (our) hearts unto wisdom," is doubtless derived from Prov. xxiii. 12, where however a preposition is used. The verb "bring in," though quite general, is used sometimes in the technical sense of "harvesting" (see 2 Sam. ix. 10; Neh. xiii. 15). We must give it this sense in the Psalm. Just as we speak of "the harvest of a quiet eye" so we may speak of the harvest of a wise heart.

The "heart of wisdom" is only attained by getting at the heart of things.

v. 13. "Return.... And let it repent Thee concerning Thy servants." The nearest parallels are Exod. xxxii. 12 (JE) where Moses prays, "Return.... And let it repent Thee concerning this evil against Thy People"; and Deut. xxxii. 36, "And He will repent Himself concerning His servants."

This last passage seems clearly to have been in the Psalmist's mind though he uses the verb in the *Niphal*, as in the former passage, instead of the *Hithpael*, as in Deuteronomy.

v. 16. God's "work," in the Psalms, always signifies the work that He does for His People (Pss. xlv. 1; lxiv. 9; lxxvii. 12; xcii. 4; xcvi. 9; cxi. 3; cxliii. 5). May this redeeming purpose become manifest.

"And thy majesty..." God is said to put on majesty when He reveals Himself either in Nature (Pss. xxix. 4; civ. 1) or in history (Ps. cxi. 3) or in signal acts of judgement (Is. ii. 10, 19, 21).

The Sept. read *V'hadrek*, "and guide" instead of *Vahador'ka* "and Thy majesty." Compare note on Ps. xlv. 4, p. 191.

v. 17. "And let the fair-beauty of the Lord (Adonai)..." The only other passage in which the word "fair-beauty" is applied to God is Ps. xxvii. 4 where the pilgrim prays "to behold the fair-beauty of YHVH."

God's working and God's majesty may become manifest to the mind of man, but His "fair-beauty" can only shine in the heart.

This is what St Paul calls "the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6).

The contrast in our Psalm between the illuminating Face of God's judgement (v. 8 ff.) and the "fair-beauty" of His Love (v. 16 f.) is very striking.

"And the work of our hands..."—"Your labour is not vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. xv. 58). Contrast v. 9, 10.

PSALM XCI.

Psalms xc. and xci. are related by the common thought of God as the "*dwelling-place*" of His People (xc. 1; xci. 9^b) and also by allusions to Deut. xxxii., xxxiii. (see marginal references). In both Psalms we must bear in mind the fact that God's dealings with the individual soul were only realized through His dealings with Israel as a Nation.

Our Psalm opens with a Divine Oracle in four lines (*vv.* 1, 2), each line containing a different Divine Name whereby to express the exaltation, the bounty, the security, and the confidence of the soul that "dwells in Him and He in it."

Then a second voice, which we may call the Chorus, sets forth in fourteen lines (*vv.* 3—8) the results that would ensue if the soul were thus to give itself wholly to God.

This is followed by one brief line (*v.* 9^a) in which the ideal Israelite claims this lot as his. The Chorus then blesses his choice and pronounces on him personally (*vv.* 9^b—13) a repetition of those blessings which in *vv.* 3—8 had only been conditional.

Lastly the Psalm closes, as it began, with a Divine Oracle, now in seven lines (*vv.* 14—16), in which God makes an individual and personal application to the trusting Soul of those blessings which in the former Oracle (*vv.* 1, 2) had only been potential.

PSALM XCI.

The Divine Voice.

The blessedness of fellowship with God, to which Israel is called!

1 He that dwelleth in the covert of the Most High^a
Shall abide under the shelter of Shaddai,
2 Saying^b unto YHVH, My Refuge^c and my Fortress,
My God, in Whom I trust.

^a or *most high covert*, cf. *v.* 9 and Targ.
^b See Sept. and Jerome
^c *v.* 9

v. 1. "*Covert.*" The thought of God as a *covert* or *hiding-place* for man is almost peculiar to the Psalms. The following passages in which the word is used in this sense will repay study:—Pss. xxvii. 5, "*He would cover me in the covert of His tent*"; xxxi. 20, "*Thou coverest them in the covert of Thy Presence*"; xxxii. 7, "*Thou art a covert for me*"; lxi. 4, "*I would shelter 'neath the covert of Thy wings*"; compare also cxix. 114.

"*The Most High.*"—This word must have the same meaning here and in *v.* 9^b. Unfortunately it is ambiguous. The adjective *elyōn* simply signifies *high*, *higher*, or *most high*, and is used of a *house* (1 Kings ix. 8, &c.) or of a *chamber* (Ezek. xli. 7; xlii. 5), or of a *court* (Jer. xxxvi. 10, &c.). Thus it is quite possible to translate "*He that dwelleth in the high (higher or most high) covert*"; indeed the Targum takes *elyōn* here and in *v.* 9^b in this sense.

But *elyōn* is also used as a Divine Name, "*the Most High.*" Though this name occurs frequently in the Psalms it is rare in other Books. The passages are Gen. xiv. (four times of the God of

Melchizedek); Numb. xxiv. 16 (on the lips of Balaam); Deut. xxxii. 8; Is. xiv. 14 (a late passage); Lam. iii. 35, 38. Now it is remarkable that *elyôn* is used, not only of God, but of Israel: thus, Deut. xxvi. 19, "And to make them most-high (*elyôn*) above all the Nations which He hath made."

Again, Deut. xxviii. 1, "YHVH thy God will make thee most-high (*elyôn*) above all the Nations of the earth." This promise is alluded to in Ps. lxxxix. 27, where the ideal Israel as God's firstborn is "a Most High to the kings of the earth."

In Daniel vii. 18, 22, 25, 27, "the saints of the Most High" should rather be translated "the most high saints," the reference being to the promise already quoted.

If, in all these passages, the context be studied, it will be seen that the promise is conditioned by a unique holiness and obedience. This suggests the Christ.

Thus we must either render,

v. 1. "He that dwelleth in the most high covert."

v. 9^b. "Thou hast made thy dwelling-place most high."

(See P.B.V., Aq., Sym., Targ., Jerome.)

Or

v. 1. "He that dwelleth in the covert of the Most High."

v. 9^b. "Thou hast made the Most High thy dwelling-place."

The latter rendering seems to be borne out by the parallelism and also by Ps. xc. 1; but, whichever be adopted, he who thus dwells is the ideal Israel, the "son" of God.

"Shall abide." This verb, in the *Kal*, is constantly used in the sense of "spending the night"; but it also occurs in the more general sense of "lodging," "abiding." In the present instance it is used in the reflexive voice (*Hithpael*), the only other case being Job xxxix. 28, where it is said of the eagle, "She dwelleth in the rock and maketh her lodging (there)." So, in our Psalm, the trusting soul is said to "make his lodging under the shelter of Shaddai." We must not, however, exclude the thought of *spending the night*, which, as we have seen, lies in the root-meaning of the word. Those who come to God's covert will find themselves safe in the night of sorrow (cf. *vv.* 5, 6). Those who seek only to do His will will find that He is doing theirs.

The Divine name *Shaddai* occurs first (Gen. xlix. 25) in the so-called "Blessing of Jacob" which critics assign to the times of Ahab (B.C. 878—857). It should be noted that the name is here closely associated with the thought of *blessing*,

"El Shaddai, may He bless thee!
With blessings of heaven above...,
With blessings of the breasts (*Shadaim*)," &c.

According to the author of the Priest-code (Exod. vi. 3) the name *Shaddai* marks the stage of Revelation to the Patriarchs (see Addis, *Documents of the Hexateuch*, Vol. II. p. 215). It seems evident that, in the eyes of this writer, the name denoted in some way the Giver of blessings; for in every case in which he uses it (Gen. xvii. 1; xxviii. 3; xxxv. 11; xliii. 14; xlviii. 3) in the Patriarchal period, he directly couples it with the thought of *temporal blessings*. Possibly he associated it with the root from which the Hebrew *shadaim*, "breasts," is derived. This being the case we need not stop to consider whether the author of P was correct in his derivation, nor need we consider another use of *Shaddai* which associates itself with the root *shdd*, "to destroy" (Is. xiii. 6; Joel i. 15); suffice it that, at the time when our Psalm was written, there was a tradition connecting the name with the *all-giving mother-love* of God.

In the Psalter *Shaddai* only occurs here and in Ps. lxxviii. 14 (see note, p. 283), and in both passages it has, I believe, this meaning of *All-bountiful*.

The *shelter* (or *shadow*) of *Shaddai* suggests the *shelter of wings* (Pss. xvii. 8; xxxvi. 7 note; lvii. 1; lxiii. 7; cf. lxi. 4). We picture the mother-bird protecting and feeding her young (see v. 4, note).

vv. 1, 2. May we not see in the order of the four Divine Names four successive stages of Revelation whereby man has been brought to trust in God? First as *Elyôn* (remote power), secondly as *Shaddai* (the Giver of temporal blessings), thirdly as *YHVH* (the God of the Covenant), and lastly as *my God* (the personal Friend)?

Second voice.

It would mean safety from all ills! (Cf. Job v. 19 ff., and Ps. xxxiv. 19.)

- 3 Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler^a,
And from the noisome pestilence^b.
4 With His pinions^c He shall cover^d thee,
And under His wings thou shalt find refuge;
His truth^e is shield^f and buckler^g.
5 Thou shalt not fear for terror by night,
Nor for arrow^h that flieth by day;
6 For the pestilence that stalketh in darkness,
Nor for destructionⁱ that wasteth at noonday.
7 A thousand^k may fall at thy side,
And ten thousand^k at thy right hand;
But it shall not come nigh thee.
8 Thou shalt merely behold with thine eyes,
And shalt see the reward of the wicked.

^a Ps. cxxiv. 7
^b *pestilence of malignity*
^c Deut. xxxii. 11
^d Ps. v. 11
^e Ps. lvii. 3, 10
^f Pss. v. 12: xxxv. 2
^g only here
^h Deut. xxxii. 23
ⁱ only here and Deut. xxxii. 24: Is. xxviii. 2
^k Deut. xxxii. 30

The voice of Israel.

Israel claims this fellowship.

Second voice.

That safety shall be thine. (Cf. *vv.* 3—8.)

- 9 Surely Thou, YHVH! art my Refuge^l!
Thou hast made the Most High^m thy dwelling-placeⁿ:
10 No evil shall befall thee,
Nor plague come nigh thy tent.
11 For He shall give His angels charge^o over thee,
To keep thee in all thy ways.
12 On their hands they shall bear^p thee up,
Lest thou dash^q thy foot against a stone.
13 Thou shalt tread upon lion and adder^r:
Thou shalt trample on young-lion and dragon^r.

^l *v.* 2
^m *v.* 1, or *most high*, *v.* 1, marg.
ⁿ Ps. xc. 1
^o Ps. xlii. 8
^p Numb. xi. 12
^q cf. Prov. iii. 23
^r Deut. xxxii. 33

v. 4. "With His pinions." A rare word.

The reference to Deut. xxxii. 11 is unmistakable. God's mother-love of Israel in the *Wilderness* is there compared to that of the eagle with its young,

"That spreadeth its wings, taketh it,
Beareth it up on its pinions."

This care of God for Israel implied a growing purpose (Exod. xix. 4 JE, with context, and cf. Deut. i. 31). The Psalmist rightly feels that this growing purpose, which he calls "*His truth*," is "*shield and buckler*."

"*He shall cover thee*." There is a brooding thought of *protection* in the verb which is used of the cherubim *covering* the mercy-seat (Ex. xxv. 20; xxxvii. 9; xl. 21: 1 Kings viii. 7: cf. Ezek. xxviii. 14, 16).

That care and guidance which in this verse is assigned to God is, in *vv.* 11, 12, assigned to His angels. Probably the Psalmist would not have seen much difference between the two thoughts.

v. 9^b. The P.B.V., "Thou hast made Thine house of defence (lit. dwelling-place) very high," has more or less the authority of Sept., Aq., Sym., Targ., Jerome. The objections to it have been considered under *v.* 1; if, however, any prefer this rendering they have only to read 9^b with 9^a as the utterance of Israel. The *second voice* would then begin with *v.* 10.

The Divine Voice.

God Himself confirms the double promise of safety (*vv.* 3—8, 10—13) and of blessedness. (*Cf. vv.* 1, 2.)

- 14 Because he hath set his love on Me, therefore will I deliver him ;
 I will set him on high because he hath known My Name.
 15 He shall call me^a and I will answer him ;
 I (Myself) am with him in trouble^b ;
 I will rescue him and bring him to honour.
 16 With long life will I satisfy him,
 And will shew him My Salvation^c.

^a Ps. l. 15^b Is. lxiii. 9 ;
Rom. xvi. 20^c Ps. l. 23

v. 12. "On their hands they shall bear thee up." The angels are here pictured as nursing fathers. Compare Numb. xi. 12, "As the nursing-father bears up the sucking child."

In Is. lxiii. 9 we read, "In all their affliction He was afflicted, while the Angel of His Presence saved them.....and He lifted them and bore them up all the days of old." It is singular that this passage should find another echo in the 15th verse of our Psalm.

We ought also to compare Deut. xxxiii. 27,

*"God of old is a dwelling-place ;
 And underneath are everlasting arms,"*

with the picture of the eagle in Deut. xxxii. 11 f.

v. 13. Compare Luke x. 19 ; Mark xvi. 18 ; Rom. xvi. 20. There is a fine sermon by Phillips Brooks on this subject called *The Safety and Helpfulness of Faith*.

vv. 14—16. The Divine Voice in these verses answers in inverted order to the Divine Voice in *vv.* 1, 2.

Thus, *v.* 14^a answers to "My God" (*v.* 2^b).

v. 14^b ,, "YHVH, My Refuge," &c. (*v.* 2^a).

v. 15 ,, "the shelter of Shaddai" (*v.* 1^b).

v. 16 ,, "the covert of the Most High" (*v.* 1^a).

v. 15. "I (Myself) am with him in trouble." The old-world religions recognized the pity of God ; thus of Osiris (*Book of the Dead*, cxiv., quoted by Mrs Gordon, *Temples of the Orient*, p. 305) it is beautifully said,

"His heart is in every wound."

But in the Old Testament the thought went deeper, implying, indeed, that solidarity between the life of Israel and of God which, carried to its logical conclusion, involved the Incarnation. Thus, "In all their afflictions He was afflicted, while the Angel of His Presence saved them" (Is. lxiii. 9). William Blake's poem *On another's sorrow* is a touching expression of the same deep thought ;

"He doth give His joy to all :
 He becomes an Infant small,
 He becomes a Man of Woe,
 He doth feel the sorrow too.

 Oh ! He gives to us His joy,
 That our griefs He may destroy :
 Till our grief is fled and gone
 He doth sit by us and moan."

The order of the thoughts in *vv.* 15, 16 may best be illustrated from the Passion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension of Christ (Neale).

vv. 15^a, 15^b are closely parallel with *vv.* 15^a, 23^b of the Asaph Psalm 1.

PSALM XCII.

The Title runs, "*A Psalm, a Song for the Sabbath Day,*" and though we cannot positively assert that the Psalm was written for the Sabbath, the fact remains that it was so used in the Temple worship of the Jewish Church; for, in T.B. *Rosh Ha-Shana* 31^a, where we have a list of the Proper Psalms for the seven days of the week, with reference to the "seven days" of Creation, this Psalm is assigned to the seventh day, and is said to refer to "*The day that is wholly Sabbath.*"

So in the Jewish Prayer-book, in the Service for the Sabbath morning, we read:

(All praise) "To God who rested from His works on the Sabbath Day;
He exalted Himself and sat on the Throne of His Glory.
With beauty did He robe the Day of Rest;
He called the Sabbath a 'delight.'
This is the praise of the Seventh Day,
That, in it, God rested from all His work.
And the Sabbath Day gives praise and says,
'*A Psalm, A Song, for the Sabbath Day.*
It is good to give thanks unto YHVH.'"

Jewish tradition, having once assigned the Psalm to the Sabbath-Day, would naturally place it upon the lips of Adam (see Targum and *Bereshith Rabba*, 22). Milton may have had this tradition in his mind when he made our first parents in Paradise sing the magnificent Hymn beginning

"These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good."

(See *Par. Lost*, v. 153—208.)

Certainly Dante must have known the tradition, for when, in his Vision, he has climbed the Mountain of Purgatorio and reached the terrestrial Paradise upon its summit, he sees a lovely Spirit-form gathering flowers and singing with such joy as moves him to enquire the cause, to which she answers,

"Strangers ye come; and haply in this place,
That cradled human nature in its birth,
Wondering, ye not without suspicion view
My smiles: but that sweet strain of psalmody,
'Thou, Lord! hast made me glad,' will give ye light,
Which may uncloud your minds."

(*Purg.*, xxviii. 76 ff., Cary's transl.)

Thus, according to Dante, Psalm xcii. is the Song of Paradise, the joy of Creation in the great Sabbath purpose of God. Certainly the Psalm lends itself most fully to these thoughts.

It opens with six lines (*vv.* 1—3), which remind us of Milton's description of the first Sabbath-Day.

"And, from work
Now resting, bless'd and hallow'd the seventh day,
As resting on that day from all His work,
But not in silence holy kept: the harp
Had work, and rested not; the solemn pipe,
And dulcimer, all organs of sweet stop,
All sounds on fret by string or golden wire,
Temper'd soft tunings, intermix'd with voice
Choral or unison :.....
Creation and the six days' acts they sung."

(*Par. Lost*, VII. 591 ff.)

The opening is followed by another six lines (*vv.* 4—6) in which the Psalmist gives the reason for his joy. It is because he has obtained an insight into the Sabbath-purpose of God. He sees this in two ways; (*a*) in the wonderful history of his Nation, (*b*) in the increasing purpose of the record of Creation (*v.* 4, note). Almost in the language of St Paul he expresses grateful wonder (*v.* 5) at "the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God" (Rom. xi. 33). But alas! all this is hidden from "*the brutish*" (*v.* 6).

The next portion of the Psalm (*vv.* 7—9) consists, not like all the others of *six*, but, of *seven* lines. This is indeed the centre of the Psalm, both in position and in thought. It is a Theodicy. It justifies the ways of God in relation to the seeming prosperity of the wicked. Just as in nature, to borrow the thought of Job xxxviii. 13, light takes hold of the four corners of the Earth so that all things that hate the light are shaken out of it, so our Psalmist sees the growing light of God's Sabbath-purpose casting out the evil, making it self-destructive, till all things that He has created be "very good." It should be noted that the argument here is identical with that of Psalm lxxiii. 16 ff. Indeed, the whole of Psalm lxxiii., the first Asaph Psalm, and its companion xlix., the seventh Korah Psalm, should be studied in connexion with our present Psalm.

The fourth portion of the Psalm (*vv.* 10—12) consists of six lines, in which, in sharp contrast with the fate of the wicked, the righteous (Israel) is seen to be growing as a tree, ever stronger and more fruitful.

The fifth, and last portion (*vv.* 13—15), also in six lines, gives the reason for this fruitful growth:—The tree is of God's planting, and is planted in His Sanctuary. The Psalm ends with a reference to the Song of Moses (Deut. xxxii. 4), setting forth the faithfulness of Israel's God.

PSALM XCII.

The joy of Sabbath
praise.

1 It is good to give thanks to YHVH,
To hymn to Thy Name, O Most High:
2 To tell of Thy lovingkindness in the morning,
And of Thy faithfulness in the night-season^a,
3 With the ten-string and with the lute,
With the harp-accompanied song.

^a lit. *in the nights*

I see the whole design:

(a) from His work in History,

(b) from His work in Creation.

(b₁) How marvelous the latter!

(a₁) How untraceable the former!

But the sot is blind to both.

4 For thou hast gladdened me, O YHVH, through thy work^b; ^b Is. v. 12: Ps. cxliii. 5

I glory in the operation^b of Thy hands.

5 How great are Thy works^c, O YHVH!

^c *operations, v. 4*

How deep beyond measure are Thy thoughts^d!

^d Cf. Rom. xi. 33

6 The brutish^e man cannot know^f,

^e Ps. xlix. 10: lxxiii. 22

And fools^g cannot understand this.

^f Ps. xiv. 4
^g Ps. xlix. 10

v. 2. "Lovingkindness" is purposely connected with "the morning," for it itself is morning-light, which breaks through the night (Pss. xxx. 5 (6), lix. 16 (17)) every morning (Lam. iii. 23); so "faithfulness" is also combined with the "night-seasons," for "amid the perils of the loneliness of the night it is the best companion, and nights of affliction are the foil of its verification" [Delitzsch].

v. 3. "With the ten-string." The only other passages in which this word "tenth" is used as a musical instrument are Pss. xxxiii. 2 and cxliv. 9, in both of which there is reference to the "New Song" which always commemorates a work of Redemption like unto that which called forth the "Song of Moses" (Exod. xv.) at the Red Sea (see note on Ps. xxxiii. 3, p. 140).

It is worthy of note that the Psalm ends with an allusion to the other "Song of Moses" (Deut. xxxii.) and that both these Songs of Moses were sung, with our Psalm, in the Sabbath Service of the Temple.

v. 4. "Thy work." The word *poal* is only used of the "work" or "doings" of God in one passage in the historical Books, that passage being Deut. xxxii. 4, "His work is perfect." It is however used in this sense in Is. v. 12, xlv. 9, 11; Hab. iii. 2.

In the Psalms it thus occurs eight times (Pss. xlv. 1, lxiv. 9, lxxvii. 12, xc. 16, xcii. 4, xcv. 9, cxi. 3, cxliii. 5) and always appears to denote the *Work of God in History*, i.e. in the Redemption of His People.

"The operation of Thy hands." This expression generally applies to the *works of God in Creation*. (See Pss. viii. 3, 6, xix. 1, xxviii. 5, note: cii. 25, cxi. 7, cxliii. 5.)

Thus we might paraphrase the whole verse as follows; "As light gladdens the heart (Prov. xv. 30; Ps. xix. 8) so Thou hast gladdened my soul with the perception of Thy great purpose of Redemption so that I can glory in Thy Creation as in a Paradise restored." Contrast v. 6.

v. 5. The inverted parallelism should be noticed. Thus:

5^a. "How great are Thy operations...!"

v. 4^b. "I glory in the operations..."

5^b. "How deep...are Thy thoughts!"

v. 4^a. "Thou hast gladdened me...through Thy work."

"How deep..." The depths of God are always depths of mercy (Pss. xxxvi. 6, lxxvii. 19). His "thoughts" embrace the end to which He is guiding His worlds (Ps. xxxiii. 11). His "purposes to usward" are "marvels" which "outnumber all recounting" (Ps. xl. 5, note context; cf. Jer. xxix. 11).

v. 6. "The brutish man." The man who is besotted (Ps. xlix. 10). A Psalmist confesses that he

Yes. Creation and History alike testify that evil is self-destructive. Good only can be eternal. (Cf. Job iv. v.: Ps. lxxiii.)

Israel has the growth and beauty of an ever-growing tree,

- 7 When the wicked spring as the grass,
And all the workers of vanity flourish,
It merely tends to their being destroyed for ever;
8 And Thou art on high^a for evermore, O YHVH.
9 For, lo, Thine enemies, O YHVH,
For, lo, Thine enemies^b perish^c;
And all the workers of vanity are scattered^d.
- 10 But Thou hast exalted mine horn like the antelope's^e,
My ageing is like (that of) the verdant^f olive.
11 But mine eye hath looked upon mine enemies,
Mine ears have heard (the fate) of evil-doers that were rising
against me.
12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree;
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

- ^a Pss. vii. 7:
lxviii. 18:
xciii. 4
^b Judges v. 31
^c Pss. x. 16:
xlix. 10:
lxxiii. 27
^d Job iv. 11
^e Deut. xxxiii.
17
^f v. 14: Ps.
lii. 8: Hos.
xiv. 8: Jer.
xi. 16

himself had been in danger of this spiritual blindness. "Then, as for me, I was brutish and could not know; Merely beast-like I became..." (Ps. lxxiii. 22).

The parallel is still closer when the context in Ps. lxxiii. is studied; since, in that Psalm also, the "brutish" heart is that which is incapable of tracing God's great Sabbath purpose in the works of Creation. See *Wisdom of Solomon*, xiii. 1.

The incapacity of the "brutish man" to understand Nature may be illustrated from Wordsworth's poem of *Peter Bell*.

But our Psalmist is thinking, not of the poet's eye for Nature, but of the spiritual man's capacity for seeing God's purpose in His works. The brutish man lacks this capacity and so he "cannot know" (cf. Rom. i. 20 f.).

"And fools..." The word *k'seel*, which, in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, is so often translated "fool," has in it a sense of giant-like impiety. Thus Orion is called *k'seel* (Job ix. 9; Amos v. 8).

In the Psalms it is only found in two other passages, viz.

Ps. xlix. 10, "The foolish and brutish perish together."
and Ps. xciv. 8, "Consider, ye brutish among the people;
And ye fools, when will ye be wise?"

Compare Jer. x. 8. Thus it will be seen that the word does not refer to mental but to spiritual deficiency.

vv. 7—9. The Psalmist feels that the problem of the seeming prosperity of the wicked must find a hint to its solution in the works of God in Creation;

"This world's no blot for us,
Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good."

Exactly as in the parallel Psalms xlix. and lxxiii. our Psalmist sets himself to face this problem.

Surely God's Sabbath purpose which (v. 4) had gladdened his heart must be traceable in God's world! Evil must become its own destruction. Thus, as he looks, he sees Nature's parable of rapid growth springing from "no depth of earth" and understands the end of wickedness (cf. Pss. xlix., lxxiii.).

v. 8. "And Thou art on high." See note on Ps. lxviii. 18.

v. 9. "Thine enemies perish." See Introduction to Pss. i., xxxvii. 20, and note on Ps. lxxiii. 27.

In all these passages we see evil working its own destruction.

v. 10. "My ageing," lit. "My growing old." The P.B.V., R.V., &c. render "I am anointed";

because rooted and
grounded in God.

- 13 They that are planted in the House^a of YHVH
Shall flourish in the Courts of our God.
14 They shall go on fruiting to old age,
Becoming green and verdant,
15 To shew that YHVH is upright^b,
My Rock^b—And no iniquity^b is in Him.

^a Ps. lii. 8,
note

^b Deut. xxxii.
4: cf. Zeph.
iii. 5

but the verb never signifies *to anoint*. We therefore follow the Sept., Sym. and Jerome (*senecta mea*) and read *b'lothi*, "my waxing old," as in Gen. xviii. 12.

"Like the verdant olive." The P.B.V., E.V., R.V., &c. render "with fresh oil"; but the adj. *raqnan* which occurs in seventeen other passages (one being *v.* 14 of the present Psalm) is always used of a tree as "green," "verdant," "flourishing"; never of oil as "fresh."

It is true that *shemen* signifies "oil," but *ets shemen* is the "oil-tree," i.e. "the olive" (Neh. viii. 15; Is. xli. 19, &c.). It is better therefore to read, with Sym., "like a green olive."

The life of Israel is not unfrequently compared with that of a tree, e.g., Is. lxxv. 22, "As the days of a tree are the days of My people." See Ps. lii. note. Thus, when the Psalmist says, "My ageing is like (that of) the verdant olive" he does but suggest that which he explains at greater length in *vv.* 11—14, viz. that God's people "go on fruiting to old age, becoming green and verdant" (*v.* 14).

Those who have seen the old olive-trees at Bordighera will understand how the olive, in particular, suggests the thought of rejuvenescence (cf. Ps. cxxviii. 3).

v. 13. "They that are planted...." Here again, exactly as in Ps. lii. 8, we must not think of literal trees planted in the Temple, but rather of men as "trees of righteousness, the planting of YHVH" (Is. lxi. 3, where however the words are different). The word "planted" reminds us that God is the planter of Israel: "Thus saith YHVH God, I also will take the highest branch of the high cedar...and I will plant it upon an high mountain.... In the mountain of Israel will I plant it..." (Ezek. xvii. 22 f.).

Thus Israel is not merely a tree growing, as it were by chance, but a "tree planted" or rather "transplanted" under the Gardener's care (Jer. xvii. 8; Ps. i. 3).

"In the House of YHVH." Sometimes Israel is said to be planted by God as a cedar on an "high mountain" (Ezek. xvii. 22) or as a vine on "a very fruitful hill" (Is. v. 1) or as "a tree by the watercourses" (Ps. i. 3; Jer. xvii. 8). But here, and in Ps. lii. 8, he is pictured as planted in the very "House (or home) of YHVH." Such a home must mean fruitfulness. We may change the metaphor and think not of God's trees but of God's guests, "full-fed from the rich-provision of His House" (Ps. xxxvi. 8).

In the days of Cyrus, to which we ascribe this Psalm, God had once more *planted* Israel in His own Home; while the sudden fall of Babylon (cf. *v.* 11) must have spoken hope even to the dullest heart.

v. 15. "Upright...Rock...iniquity." In the application of these words of God it is impossible not to recognize a triple allusion to Deut. xxxii. 4:

"The Rock, His work is perfect;
For all His ways are judgement,
A God of faithfulness, and without iniquity,
Just and upright is He."

PSALM XCIII.

An old Hebrew tradition (T.B. *Rosh Ha-Shana* 31^a) assigns this Psalm to the eve of the Sabbath, i.e. to the evening of the Sixth Day, "when God had finished His works of Creation and had begun to reign over them." The title of the Psalm in the Septuagint agrees closely with this tradition, "*For the day before the Sabbath, when the earth was inhabited.*" The Synagogue also appoints the Psalm for Friday. It would be foolish to assume that such an old tradition could be wholly without foundation.

The Psalm consists of four parts which closely correspond, Part I. with Part III., Part II. with Part IV.

Part I. consists only of two lines, which proclaim that God has become King on earth. This is answered by Part III. (vv. 3, 4), in which the thundering voices of rivers, seas, and floods proclaim His Kingship over all; though these voices only find their true meaning through man.

Parts II. and IV. trace this Kingship to (a) Creation, (b) Redemption, and (c) Eternity. Thus:

Part II.	Part IV.
(a) <i>Yea, the world shall be established that it cannot be moved.</i>	(a ₁) <i>Thy testimonies are verified exceedingly.</i>
(b) <i>Established is Thy Throne of old.</i>	(b ₁) <i>Holiness has beautified Thy House.</i>
(c) <i>Thou art from everlasting.</i>	(c ₁) <i>YHVH is for evermore.</i>

There is however this distinction, that, whereas Part II. regards the Kingship of God as an eternal fact, Part IV. regards the same ideas as gradually realized upon earth.

PSALM XCIII.

The Kingship of 1 YHVH is become King! He is enrobed* with pride; * Ps. civ. 1
God YHVH is enrobed!—hath girded Himself with strength.

v. 1. "*YHVH is become King.*" We must not translate "*YHVH is King,*" for then the wording of the Hebrew would have been different (as in 1 Sam. xii. 12; Jer. x. 10; Ps. xxix. 10, &c.), nor "*YHVH will be King*" (as in the Song of Moses (Ex. xv. 18)), but "*YHVH is become King,*" or, "*YHVH reigneth.*" When this form of the verb *mālak* is used of an earthly monarch it may either signify that "*he reigned*" or that "*he began to reign*" (1 Kings xv. 25; xvi. 8, 23, 29, &c.). Evidently when it is used of God it has this latter sense: God has "*begun to reign*" on earth, "*He is become King.*" The distinction is well expressed by Dante, *Inf.* 1. 127, "*He governs everywhere, and there He reigns. There is His City and His lofty Throne.*"

The phrase "*YHVH is become King*" occurs here for the first time in the Psalter, the other instances being Pss. xcvi. 10; xcvi. 1; xcix. 1: it is the key-note to a group of Psalms (xciii., xciv.—xcix.) which all set forth the coming of the Divine Kingdom and may be called the Psalms of the Divine Accession.

The only other passage in the Psalter is in the Elohist Korah Psalm (xlvii. 8), "*God is become King over the Gentiles.*" The parallel between Psalm xlvii. and the group that we are now considering is not

- as it is*
 (a) in Creation,
 (b) in Redemption,
 (c) in Eternity,
- Yea, the world shall be established^a that it cannot be moved^a; ^a Ps. xcvi. 10
- 2 Established is Thy Throne of old;
 Thou art from everlasting.
- as it is realized*
 unconsciously by
 Nature,
- 3 The floods have lift up—O YHVH—
 the floods have lift up their voice;
 The floods lift up their shout^b.
- 4 From^c the voices^d of waters many, mighty^e breakers,
 "Mighty on high is YHVH!"

^b doubtful word
^c or *More than*
^d *thunder*
^e Ex. xv. 10

confined to this one expression but is so close as to demand most careful study, see note p. 203. In our Introduction to Ps. xlvii. we have traced its connexion with the Feast of Trumpets in the Seventh Month, with the sound of the Seventh Trumpet (Rev. xi. 15) when "*the Kingdom of the World became the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ,*" and also with the Prayers in the Jewish Prayer-book for the first day of the Seventh Month, which make special mention of the Kingship of God upon earth.

Hebrew tradition dates the Kingship of God from the Song of Moses at the Red Sea (Ex. xv.). Thus the *Sh'moth Rabbah*:— "'Then sang Moses,' this is that which is written, '*Established is Thy Throne of old*'.....even though '*Thou art from everlasting*' Thou wert not seated on Thy Throne nor acknowledged by Thy universe until Thy sons sang the Song." The passage goes on to explain by the parable of a "king" who made war and triumphed, and his people made him "Augustus": even so God is King by Creation but He becomes Augustus by Redemption.

That the connexion between the "Song of Moses" and the Kingship of God is not a mere Rabbinic fancy may be seen from Exod. xv. 18, "*YHVH shall reign for ever and ever.*" This connexion explains Rev. xv. 3. See note on Ps. xcvi. 1.

"*He is enrobed with pride*"—Creation is the vesture of God. The poet uses the word "*pride*" rather than "*majesty*" because his thought of creation is identical with that of Ps. lxxxix. 9, "*Thou dost lord it over the pride of the sea; when his waves lift up themselves Thou layest them to rest.*" The same word for "*pride*" is used in both passages. That exhibition of self which in the creation is *pride*, is, in God, *revelation*. Creation is the first act in this self-manifestation, or glory of God (Ps. civ. 1 ff.). The second act was when "*He enrobed Himself in righteousness as a breastplate...*" (Is. lix. 17).

"*Yea, the world shall be established...cannot be moved.*" The whole of this line occurs in Ps. xcvi. 10, where it is directly associated with the Kingship of God. The Psalmist uses a *future* (or *imperfect*) where we might have expected a *past tense*, because the *establishing* of the earth is still going on (cf. Rom. viii. 19 ff.). When, however, he speaks of the Throne of God (v. 2) he uses the *past participle* because the *Kingship of God* has already begun among men, "*Thy Throne is established...*"

v. 3. The word we have translated "*their shout*" is only found here. The root signifies "*dust*," we might therefore possibly translate, "*their spray*" or "*their foam*," as Coleridge says of mountain torrents,

"Who gave you your invulnerable life,
 Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy,
 Unceasing thunder, and eternal foam?"

But, after all, translation in such a case is but a guess; the word (*dōkee*) is probably onomatopoeic and denotes a sound such as waves make in clashing together. There is no justification for the translation "*their waves*" (E.V. and R.V.). The parallelism seems to require a word denoting sound. Cf. Ps. xcvi. 7 f.

v. 4. "*From the voices...*" The prefix which signifies "*from*" may also have the sense of "*more than*": thus the R.V. translates, "*Above the voices of many waters.*" (So too, in substance, E.V. and P.B.V.) But surely it is something of a bathos to say that God is more mighty than the waves of the sea! I therefore prefer (with Sept., Vulg., Jerome) to give the prefix its more natural meaning of "*from*."

"*voices.*" The plural properly denotes "*thunder*" (Exod. ix. 23, 28, 29, 33, 34; xix. 16; xx. 18; 1 Sam.

consciously by man, 5 Thy testimonies are verified exceedingly;
 (a₁) in Creation,
 (b₁) in Redemption, Holiness has beautified Thy House;
 (c₁) in Eternity. YHVH is for evermore*.

* length of days

xii. 17 f.; Job xxviii. 27; xxxviii. 25). If we bear this fact in mind we may translate "voices," and so maintain the connexion with "voice" in v. 3. The river-floods with one voice proclaim their King, and from the manifold thunder of ocean's mighty voices there rises the one cry, "Mighty on high is YHVH." The Targum also makes the voices of the floods rise in song and praise to God. Contrast the unfortunate translation of the P.B.V.

These voices have become articulate in Rev. xix. 6, R.V., "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth."

v. 5. "Thy testimonies":—The word "testimony" is sometimes translated "witness," e.g. Gen. xxi. 30; xxxi. 52; Josh. xxiv. 27, when visible objects, such as pillars and stones, are "witnesses" to a covenant or agreement. Our Psalmist regards all creation as a standing witness to God's Covenant with Israel (cf. notes on Pss. xix. 1^b; cxi. 7; lxxxix. 37, where we have the same references to nature as in verses 5^a, 1^o of our present Psalm).

"Thy testimonies are verified exceedingly":—To say that God's testimonies "are very sure" scarcely expresses the meaning of the verb; they are "verified" (1 Kings viii. 26) by the experience of man (2 Pet. i. 19, R.V.).

There is a fine passage in Browning's *Paracelsus* shewing how the inarticulate sounds of creation find their true meaning through man,

"man, once descried, imprints for ever
 His presence on all lifeless things: the winds
 Are henceforth voices, wailing or a shout,
 A querulous mutter or a quick gay laugh,
 Never a senseless gust now man is born."

The whole passage should be read.

"Holiness has beautified Thy House"—God's "House" is much more than His "Temple." The parallel line (v. 2^a) speaks of His "Throne" as established; just as of David it is said "And thy house shall be sure for ever.....thy throne shall be established for ever" (2 Sam. vii. 16) so our Psalm, speaking of the Kingdom of God among men, says, "Thy Throne is established," "Holiness has beautified Thy House." The "House of God" is "the Church" (1 Tim. iii. 15), i.e. His Kingdom, which beginning in the hearts of men is to extend to all created things. This Kingdom is adorned by holiness, "Ye shall be holy for I...am holy" (Lev. xix. 2; cf. Jer. ii. 3; Zech. xiv. 20 f.).

These two thoughts of Creation and Redemption (nature and man) we have already traced in the preceding Psalm.

To the Psalmist, God's choice of Israel, to the Christian, the Incarnation, is the starting-point from whence the Glory radiates through time and space.

Delitzsch and others take *na'vah* as an adjective as in Ps. xxxiii. 1 and translate "Holiness becometh Thine House." But it is better to take it as past *Pf'el* of the irregular verb *naah*, "to be beautiful" (see Gesenius' grammar).

"YHVH is for evermore"—Literally "for length of days." The expression seems more applicable to human life than to the Eternity of God (Prov. iii. 2, 6); it is, however, used three times of the ideal Israel or of the Messianic King, viz. Ps. xxi. 4, "A length of days to all eternity," Ps. xxiii. 6, "I am housed in the House of YHVH for ever and ever," Ps. xci. 16, "With long life will I satisfy him."

Thus when we compare v. 5^a "YHVH is for length of days" with v. 2^b "Thou art from everlasting" we see at once that, whereas the earlier part of the Psalm treats of God as He is in Himself, the latter portion deals with His Kingship as realized upon earth.

PSALM XCIV.

Psalm xciv. has many points in common with the Alphabetical Psalms and the "Wisdom" literature (see Additional Note). The middle point of the Psalm is correctly marked in the Septuagint by *διάψαλμα* at the end of *v.* 15. It is worthy of note that the first two lines of the first half begin with the letter *Aleph*, while the first two lines of the second half begin with the letter *Mem*, which was regarded as the middle letter of the alphabet (see on the Alphabetical Psalms, p. 41). There are, also, other indications of alphabetical arrangement, though in its present form the Psalm is not alphabetical.

The two halves of the Psalm are of unequal length, the first having four Parts, while the second half has only two.

All the Parts, with the exception of the first, consist of eight lines each.

We may analyse the Psalm as follows:—Part I. (*vv.* 1—3), 'The God who promised (Deut. xxxii. 35) a day of "*avengement and requital*" for His People hath "*shone forth*" as King (Deut. xxxiii. 2, 5). May His coming bring that "*recompense*" of which the Prophet speaks' (Is. xxxv. ; lix. 18 ; lxvi. 6).

With Part I. corresponds Part V. (*vv.* 16—19), thus:—'Yes, indeed! no other helper could suffice.'

Part II. (*vv.* 4—7) corresponds with Part VI. (*vv.* 20—23), thus:

Part II. 'The world-powers work every kind of wrong and oppression and think that they can act with impunity.'

Part VI. 'Shall Israel be tempted to envy such violence (*v.* 20 f.) seeing that Israel's "Rock" (*v.* 22) is not like their rock (cf. Deut. xxxii. 31), and that Israel knows, both from Nature (*vv.* 8—11) and from Revelation (*vv.* 12—15), that God is ever bringing violence to its own destruction?'

Parts III. and IV. also correspond. Thus: Part III. (*vv.* 8—11) 'Surely those who think to do evil with impunity are without excuse! Nature itself should teach them otherwise' (cf. Wisd. xiii. 1 ff., a fine passage that influenced St Paul in Rom. i. 18 ff.).

Part IV. (*vv.* 12—15). 'But Israel, taught by God's Law, has the higher blessedness of understanding God's great purpose, in the certainty of which he can afford to wait.'

The argument in Parts III. and IV., from the works of Creation and from Providence, should be compared with that of Pss. xci. and xcii.

The old Jewish liturgy, which appointed Ps. xcii. for the *Seventh Day* and Ps. xciii. for the *Sixth Day*, appointed Ps. xciv. for the *Fourth Day* (T.B. *Rosh Ha-Shana* 31^a). Jewish tradition also associates our Psalm with the *Fourth Month* (T.B. *Taq'nith* 29^a), i.e. with the month *Tammuz*, in which the Temple was destroyed (Jer. xxxix. 2 ; Zech. viii. 19). The fact is that the seven "Days" of Creation have a more direct reference to the seven months of the Jewish year than they have to the seven days of the week. The observance of the fast of Tammuz had its origin in natural religion before it became associated with the destruction of the Temple.

The Psalm is well suited for use on a fast-day, and in the Latin Church was appointed for Good Friday.

PSALM XCIV.

Maranatha! The
Divine King is at
hand! (Cf. *vv.* 16—
19.)

The Kingdom of
Violence oppresses
God's People as if
there were no God!
(Cf. *vv.* 20—23.)

- 1 The God of "vengeance"^a, YHVH,
The God of "vengeance" hath "shone forth"^b!
- 2 Lift^c up Thyself, Thou Judge of the earth,
Render a recompense^d unto the proud.
- 3 How long shall the wicked, O YHVH,
How long shall the wicked exult^e?
- 4 They babble, they talk arrogancy^f,
All (these) evil-doers^g speak falsely.
- 5 They crush Thy People^h, O YHVH,
And afflict Thine Heritage^b.
- 6 They slay the widow and the stranger,
And murder the fatherless.
- 7 And they say, Yah doth not see,
Nor doth the God of Jacob consider.

- ^a Deut. xxxii. 35
^b Deut. xxxiii. 2
^c Ps. vii. 6; Is. xxxiii. 10
^d Is. xxxv. 4; lix. 18; lxvi. 6; Ps. xxviii. 4
^e Jer. l. 1
^f Pss. xxxi. 18; lxxv. 5; 1 Sam. ii. 3
^g Ps. xcii. 7, 9
^h *v.* 14

1. "vengeance," lit. "avengements." The plural here does not denote the greatness of the vengeance but the manifold forms that it might take (Ezek. xxv. 17). In the Psalter the word is used, in the singular, of Divine "vengeance" in Pss. xviii. 47 (48); lxxix. 10; cxlix. 7. It is, as we might naturally expect, frequently used by Prophets who had experienced the Captivity. In the present group of Psalms we have traced frequent allusions to the so-called "Song of Moses": it is therefore interesting to note that the masculine form of the word occurs three times in the "Song."

Thus:—Deut. xxxii. 35, "To Me (*belongeth*) vengeance" (cf. Rom. xii. 19; Heb. x. 30).

v. 41, "I will render vengeance to Mine enemies."

v. 43, "And will render vengeance...."

The true meaning of Divine "vengeance" has been well expressed by W. Law, "The Spirit of Love," p. 66, "He alone knows how to overrule the disorders of Nature, and so to repay evil with evil, that the highest good may be promoted by it. To say, therefore, that vengeance is to be reserved to God, is only saying in other words, that all the evils of nature are to be reserved and turned over to the Love of God, to be healed by His Goodness. And every act of what is called Divine Vengeance, recorded in Scripture, may and ought, with the greatest strictness of truth, to be called an Act of the Divine Love."

If such a conception was beyond the horizon of the Psalmist it is, none the less, the message his words are intended to convey to us.

"Hath shone forth." Sept. ἐπαρρησιόσατο, "hath openly appeared" (Vulg. badly, "libere egit"). It is possible to translate the Hebrew verb as an imperative, "Shine forth," "Shew Thyself" (P.B.V., E.V., R.V.), but the form of the word *hophîq*, and the authority of the Septuagint, incline us to take it as a *past tense*. The verb is only found in the Psalter in two other passages, once as a *past*, viz. Ps. l. 2, "From out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shone forth (*hophîq*)" and once as an *imperative*, Ps. lxxx. 1 "Thou Cherub-throned, shine forth (*hophîq*)." See notes. The past tense (*hophîq*) also occurs in the "Blessing of Moses" (Deut. xxxiii. 2) "He shone forth from Mount Paran." In all three instances a Divine Advent or Theophany is implied.

It is a suggestive fact that the two lines of *v.* 1 contain allusions to the "Song of Moses" (Deut. xxxii.) and to the "Blessing of Moses" (Deut. xxxiii.). We have had occasion to note the same fact in Pss. xc., xci., and xcii.

v. 4. "They babble." See Ps. lix. 7 where the word is used of apostates and false prophets. It

Though natural religion ought to convince us that God is taking note (cf. Ps. xcii. and Job iv.).

Revealed religion teaches Israel the meaning of his afflictions (cf. Ps. xci. and Job v. 17 ff.).

- 8 Consider, ye brutish among the People ;
 And ye fools, when will ye be wise ?
 9 He that planteth the ear, doth He not hear ?
 He that frameth the eye, doth He not see ?
 10 He that chastiseth^a the Nations, doth he not convict^b ?
 (Even) He that teacheth^a men knowledge ?
 11 YHVH knoweth the thoughts of men,
 For they^c are but a breath^d.
 12 Happy is the man whom Thou chastisest^e, O Yah !
 And teachest^e him out of Thy Law ;
 13 To give him quietness out of evil days^f,
 While the pit is being digged for the wicked^g.
 14 "For YHVH will not forsake His People^h,"
 Nor will He desert His heritageⁱ.
 15 For Judgement will turn again to Righteousness,
 And, in its train, all those who are right-hearted.

^a v. 12
^b or argue

^c i.e. men
^d or vanity,
 Ps. xxxix. 5,
 11
^e v. 10

^f Ps. xlix. 5

^g the restless

^h 1 Sam. xii.
 22

ⁱ Jer. xii. 7 ;
 2 Kings xxi.
 14

denotes the abundant outgush of speech, as of water, and may be used either in a good (Ps. lxxviii. 2, cf. cxix. 171; cxlv. 7) or in a bad (Prov. xv. 2, 28; Ps. lix. 7) sense.

"speak falsely." The *Hithpael* of the verb *amar* "to speak" only occurs here. The E.V. and R.V. translate "boast themselves"; the Targum renders "speak words of shame." But it is well known that the *Hithpael* often has the sense of *pretence*. Thus the verb "to be rich" in the *Hithpael* signifies "to pretend to be rich" (Prov. xiii. 7). I therefore prefer to render, "they speak falsely," or, "they play the speaker" (cf. "feigned words" 2 Pet. ii. 3).

v. 8. "Consider." To decide whether God "considers" you have yourselves only to "consider" this.

"Ye brutish among the People." *The People*, standing thus in the *singular* with the *def. article*, can scarcely mean anything else than the People of Israel.

That practical Atheists should have been found among the People of God gives us a hint as to the date of the Psalm (see *Introd.* to Psalm lxxiii.).

The words "brutish" and "fools" occur together in Pss. xlix. 10; xcii. 6, where see notes.

There is however this difference, that in the present Psalm the word "brutish" is in the *plural* and is pointed as if it were the participle of the verb *bgar*.

There is, in the original, a forcible ring in the line, "b'nu boqrim baqm."

v. 10. "He that chastiseth.....doth He not convict." The verbs are almost synonyms. Both imply that *correction* which brings the argument home. For the former see Hos. x. 10; Pss. xxxix. 11; cxviii. 18, and, for the latter, Job v. 17; Prov. iii. 12. But the latter word is sometimes used in the sense of "to argue" or "to reason" (Job vi. 25; xiii. 3; xv. 3). This would, perhaps, give the best meaning in the present context; so that we might paraphrase,—'He who, in His Providence, brings home to nations the fruit of their doings, doth not He argue?'

v. 11. "men," lit. "man," i.e. Mankind; considered here, and in v. 10^b, as distinguished from Israel. Thus St Paul, quoting this verse (1 Cor. iii. 19), substitutes another word which fairly expresses the meaning:—"The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain." Except for the substitution of this word St Paul has quoted from the Septuagint.

According to strict grammar the pronoun *they* is here masculine in the Hebrew and must therefore refer to "men" and not to "thoughts" (feminine). Man (apart from God) is "vanity" (or a mere "breath"). See Pss. xxxix. 5, 6, 11; lxii. 9; cxlv. 4.

The argument of vv. 9—11 may be thus expressed:—The Designer of the ear and of the eye must

Yes—God Himself
must come! Mean-
while He is my present
Help, my future Hope.
(Cf. *vv.* 1—3.)

- 16 Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers?
Who will take his stand for me against the workers of vanity?
17 Unless* YHVH had been my Help
My soul had soon dwelt in Silence:
18 When I say, My foot hath slipped,
Thy lovingkindness, O YHVH, upholds me:
19 In the multitude of my inmost thoughts^b
Thy consolations have delighted my soul.

^a Pss. cxix. 92:
cxxiv. 1, 2;
cf. xxvii. 13

^b Ps. cxxxix.
23 only

have perceptions larger than the instruments He designed. He who gave intelligence to man must have an intelligence compared with which the finite intelligence of His frail instrument man is as nothing! The Infinite must comprehend the finite.

12. "*Happy is the man whom Thou chastisest...and teachest...*". The allusion to *v.* 10 is unmistakable. It is there said that God "*chastiseth*" and "*teacheth*" the nations of the world. Such chastening is, of course, for their good, yet, being unrecognized, it is without joy. But Israel, knowing the fatherly hand (Deut. viii. 5), can say, "*Happy is the man whom Thou chastisest, O Yah! And teachest him out of Thy Law.*"

There is a close parallel in Job v. 17 (see context):

"Lo! happy is the man (enosh) whom God correcteth."

The speech of Eliphaz (Job iv., v.) has much in common with the present Psalm and the group to which it belongs (see additional note).

v. 13. There is in the Hebrew an antithesis between the words which we have rendered "*quietness*" and "*wicked*" which may best be seen from the following passages:—Is. lvii. 20, "The *wicked* are like the troubled sea when it cannot *be quiet*"; Job xxxiv. 29, "*He giveth quietness* and who *can cause unrest?*"

It will be noted that just as the *teaching* comes "*out of the Law*," so the *quietness* comes "*out of evil days*" (Is. xxxii. 17). These are two of God's lesson-books. There is a suggestive paronomasia between *hashküt*, "*quietness*," and *shahath*, "*the pit*"; he who does not find the *quietness* finds the "*pitfall*."

v. 14. "*Forsake*." "*Cast off*" (E.V. and R.V.) is too strong, and indeed another Hebrew word would have been used (see Ps. xlv. 9 note).

God "*forsakes*" His People to bring home their sin (Is. ii. 6; Jer. vii. 29, xii. 7, xxiii. 33, 39; Ps. lxxviii. 60). When this hiding of God's Face has done its work the Prophet can say "*YHVH will not forsake His People*" (1 Sam. xii. 22).

"*Nor will He desert*." The same applies to the synonym which we here translate by "*desert*." When God's People "*desert*" Him He "*deserts*" them, but, in more hopeful times, like those of Ezra and of the second Isaiah, we read, "*Our God hath not deserted us*" (Ezra ix. 9); "*For a small moment have I deserted thee but with great mercies will I gather thee*" (Is. xlv. 7; cf. xlix. 14, lxii. 4). Hence I infer that our Psalm, in spite of the sadness of *vv.* 3—6, 20 f., belongs to an age when the national outlook was by no means dark.

The allusion to *v.* 5 must be noted. To all outward appearance God's "*People*" are "*crushed*," and His "*heritage*" "*afflicted*," yet in reality He does "*not forsake His People nor desert His heritage*."

v. 15. "*Judgement*" is the sterner aspect of God's Love which may be manifested in *chastisements* (*v.* 12), and *evil days* (*v.* 13), and even in seeming *desertion* (*v.* 14); but all such discipline, humbly followed, leads to "*Righteousness*," i.e. to the victorious vindication of God's way on earth. (See the use of this word in the second Isaiah.) Thus the Law leads to the Gospel, John Baptist to Christ. "*And, in its train*," lit. "*And after it*" (i.e. after *judgement*); compare the argument in Wordsworth's "*Ode to Duty*" where the "*Stern Daughter of the Voice of God*" is seen by obedience to wear "*The Godhead's most benignant grace*."

v. 16. The words for "*wicked*," "*wickedness*" in Hebrew are so many that it is not possible to distinguish them accurately and consistently in an English translation.

The kingdom of violence, self-destroyed, makes way for the Kingdom of God. (Cf. *vv.* 4—7.)

- 20 Should the throne of Malignity^a have fellowship with thee, ^a Ps. xci. 3
 Which frameth Trouble^b by statute? ^b Ps. lv. 10
 21 They band against the soul^c of the righteous, ^c or *life*
 And condemn the innocent blood.
 22 But YHVH hath become to me my high Tower,
 And my God (hath become) the Rock of my refuge.
 23 For He hath brought back upon them their own guilt,
 And through their own wickedness He will cut them off.
 [YHVH, our God, will cut them off^d.] ^d not in Sept.

The word which we here translate “*evil-doers*” occurs nine times in the Psalter, the passages most nearly parallel to the present verse being Ps. xxxvii. 1, 9,

“*Fret not thyself about the evil-doers...*
 “*For evil-doers shall be cut off.*”

And, especially, Ps. xcii. 11,

“*Mine ears have heard (the fate) of evil-doers that were rising against me.*”

Again, the two words which we here translate “*workers of vanity*” occur sixteen times in the Psalter, and are not uniformly translated. The following passages should be consulted: Pss. xiv. 4, lix. 2, 5, lxiv. 2; and, especially, Ps. xcii. 7, 9,

“*And all the workers of vanity flourish...*
 “*And all the workers of vanity are scattered.*”

Evidently there is a connexion of thought between Pss. xcii. and xciv.

v. 19. “*Thy consolations.*” These consolations spring from natural and from revealed religion (*vv.* 8—11 and 12—15). They afford a growing “*delight*” which contrasts with the brief “*exultation*” of the wicked.

v. 20. Should Israel, whose seat is “*in the Covert of the Most High*” (Ps. xci. 1), have any fellowship with “*the throne of Satan*” (Rev. ii. 13)?

The meaning of the word which we render “*Malignity*” (or “*Mischief*”) will best be seen from Ps. lii. 2, note.

The Throne of Malignity (Mischief) is the Kingdom of Violence as opposed to the Kingdom of God.

This “*Kingdom*” “*frameth Trouble by Statute,*” i.e. the “*laws*” of that Kingdom—if the term law can be applied to that which is lawless—all tend to misery and trouble and self-destruction (Job iv. 8, Pss. vii. 14, 16, x. 7, 14, lv. 10).

Additional Note.

If we examine the Speech of Eliphaz (Job iv., v.) with the parallel passages in the Psalms we shall find that a large proportion of these parallels are to be found in the Alphabetical Psalms, while, of the rest, no less than six are found in the present group of Psalms (*viz.* in Pss. xc., xci., xcii., xciv.).

In the following list, which is fairly complete, the Alphabetical Psalms have been placed in italics. The context should be studied.

- | | |
|---|--|
| Job iv. 7. “Who is he that hath perished being innocent?
Or where are the upright that have been cut off?” | <i>Ps. xxxvii. 25. “I never saw a righteous man forsaken....” Cf. v. 28.</i> |
| Job iv. 11. “The strong-lion perisheth for lack of prey....” | <i>Ps. xxxiv. 10. “Young lions may need and may hunger. But....”</i> |

- Job iv. 20ff. They (i.e. men) are crushed before the moth,
From morning to evening they are broken in pieces.
Without heeding they are continually perishing.
- Job v. 2.
- Job v. 3. "I have seen the fool striking root (as a tree) but suddenly...."
- Job v. 4. "His children are far from safety."
- Job v. 9. God "Who doeth great things and unsearchable."
- Job v. 12f. "He bringeth to nought the plots of the crafty...."
- Job v. 13. "He taketh (√ לכר) the wise in their own craftiness."
[Quoted by St Paul, 1 Cor. iii.]
- Job v. 17. "Lo! happy is the man whom God correcteth."
- N.B. The next verse alludes to the Song of Moses (Deut. xxxii. 39).
- Job v. 19-23. The security of the righteous hidden in God from famine, death, war, sword, pestilence, wild beasts and every other danger.
- Job v. 25. "And thou shalt know that thy seed shall be great."
- Ps. xxxix. 11. "Thou makest, like the moth, his delights to melt away."
- Ps. xc. 3. "Thou bringest mortals back to dust."
Cf. vv. 5f.
- Ps. xxxvii. 20. "But the wicked perish like the beauty of the meadows &c.," cf. vv. 1, 2, 38.
- Ps. xxxiv. 21.
- Ps. xxxvii. 35f. "I have seen the wicked...outspreading like a verdant native tree. But one passed—and, lo, he was gone!" Cf. v. 10.
- Ps. cxix. 155. "Safety is far from the wicked."
- Ps. cxlv. 3. "His greatness is unsearchable." (Only here in Psalter, but frequent in Job.)
- Ps. xxxiii. 10. "YHVH bringeth to nought the counsel of the heathen, He frustrateth the thoughts of the nations."
- N.B. Ps. xxxiii., though not actually alphabetical, has the characteristics of the Alphabetical Psalms. See p. 139.
- Ps. ix. 15. "In this net of their hiding their own foot is taken (√ לכר)."
- Ps. xciv. 12. "Happy is the man whom Thou chastisest, O Yah."
- N.B. The context alludes to the Song of Moses (Deut. xxxii. 36).
- Ps. xci. 3-8. Closely parallel in thought.
- Ps. cxii. 2. "Mighty on earth shall his seed become."

All these parallels are parallels of thought rather than language; they do not suggest quotation on either side, but they do suggest a common school of thought and, very probably, a common date; in other words we are led to conclude that the present group of Psalms is related to the "Wisdom" literature, to Job, and to the Alphabetical Psalms.

It would seem from St Paul's double quotation (1 Cor. iii. 19f.) that he recognized some relation between the Speech of Eliphaz and Ps. xciv. Thus:—

1 Cor. iii. 19f. Ὁ δρασσόμενος τοὺς σοφοὺς ἐν τῇ πανουργίᾳ αὐτῶν
καὶ πάλιν
Κύριος γινώσκει τοὺς διαλογισμοὺς τῶν (σοφῶν) ὅτι εἰσὶν μάταιοι.

The first quotation is from the Speech of Eliphaz in Job v. 13, where it agrees with the Hebrew מִן הַחֲכָמִים בְּעֵרְמָה לִכְרֹם but differs from the Sept. ὁ καταλαμβάνων σοφοὺς ἐν τῇ φρονήσει.

The second quotation is from Ps. xciv. 11 (Sept. xciii. 11), and is identical with the Septuagint except that St Paul substitutes σοφῶν for ἀνθρώπων.

Now it is a remarkable fact that, in the Speech of Eliphaz, almost immediately after the passage which St Paul has quoted (Job v. 13) there occurs another (Job v. 17) which is practically identical with the next verse (v. 12) of Psalm xciv.

Thus: "Lo! happy is the man (enosh) whom God correcteth." (Job v. 17.)
"Happy is the man (gever) whom Thou chastisest, O Yah." (Ps. xciv. 12.)

PSALM XCV.

Graetz points out the fact that the six Psalms (xcv.—c.) form a closely connected group (cf. marginal references), and that the joyous appeals to all created things to join in the chorus of praise for Israel's redemption remind us of the Second Isaiah (e.g. Pss. xcvi. 11 f.; xcvi. 1; xcvi. 7 f. with Is. xliv. 23; xlix. 13; lv. 12). He also considers it probable that Ps. xciii. belongs to this group (cf. xciii. 1 with xcvi. 10; xcvi. 1; xcix. 1 and xciii. 5 with xcix. 5). Thus we have a group of six (or seven) Psalms all bearing on the thought of the Kingship of God, and suggesting the six (or seven) Days of Creation. Pss. xcv.—xcix. were used in the Synagogue on Friday evening as an introduction to the Sabbath Psalms xcii., xciii. (Dr Schiller-Szinessy in the *Prayer-Book Interleaved*, p. 257; cf. Grünwald), thus indicating the unity of a larger group.

There is nothing more common than the development of a six or seven-list into a ten-list (see p. 328). I therefore suggest that a group of six (or seven) Creation-Psalms was expanded into the ten Psalms xci.—c. This is borne out by the fact that, of the seven Psalms of Creation used for the seven days of the week in the Temple, no less than three were taken from this group, viz. xcii. for the *seventh* day, xciii. for the *sixth* day, xciv. for the *fourth* day, while the Asaph Psalm lxxxi., which is closely parallel with Ps. xcv., was appointed for the *fifth* day, and the Asaph Psalm lxxii., which treats of God judging the heathen gods, and is therefore parallel with Ps. xcvi., was used on the *third* day. The Elohist Korah Psalm (xlvi.), which treats of the holiness of God in Zion (cf. Ps. xcix.), was appointed for the *second* day; while Ps. xxiv. (*the conditions and blessedness of fellowship with God*), which may be compared with Ps. xci., was the Temple Psalm for the *first* day. Thus of the Temple Psalms for the Days of Creation all seven have their counterparts, if they do not actually occur, in the group xci.—c.

I do not suggest that these Psalms were actually written for the Days of Creation, i.e. as Proper Psalms for the days of the week, but if, as I believe, they were written for the Dedication of Zerubbabel's Temple, it might well happen that "Psalms of the Dedicated Way" might follow the order of Creation in such a way as to make them suitable for the days of the week. See *Introd. to Korah and Asaph Psalms*, Part II. p. xiii., and especially *Introd. to the "Songs of Degrees"* at the beginning of Part III.

The great Invitatory Psalm (xcv.) of the Jewish and Christian Church clearly belongs to the joyous period of the second exodus (from Babylon). The Refrain or central thought, "*To-day, if ye would hear His voice,*" belongs much more to the Promise than to the Warning (see notes). Yet the Psalmist was conscious that the height of opportunity must ever measure a corresponding depth of loss. The mistake of the first exodus might easily be repeated in the second; he therefore ends (vv. 8—11) with a Divine voice of warning (cf. Hebrews iii., iv.). The whole structure and thought of the Psalm are closely parallel with those of Ps. lxxxi., which, as we have seen, was the Proper Psalm for the fifth day of the week.

PSALM XCV.

<i>Invitatory.</i> Let us pay homage to God our King (cf. Ps. c.)	1 O come, let us hymn ^a unto YHVH : Let us shout ^a unto the Rock of our salvation.	^a Ps. lxxx. 1
	2 Let us come before His Presence with (the) thanksgiving, Let us shout unto Him with songs ^b .	^b Ps. cxix. 54
	3 For YHVH is (the) great God ^c , And (the) great King over all gods ^d .	^c <i>El</i> ^d <i>Elohim</i>
as the Creator of the world,	4 In His hand are the depths of the earth ; And the heights of the mountains are His.	
	5 His is the sea, and He made it ; And His hands formed the dry land.	
as the Shepherd of Israel.	6 O come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before YHVH our Maker :	
	7 For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture ^e , and the sheep of His hand.	^e Pss. lxxiv. 1 : lxxix. 13 : c. 3

v. 1. "Let us shout." The translation of A.V. and R.V. ("Let us make a joyful noise"), though somewhat better than that of the P.B.V. ("Let us heartily rejoice"), loses the leading thought of the original, which implies the shout of a people in the presence of its King. See notes on Pss. xvii. 1 ; lxvi. 1 ; lxxx. 1. It will be seen from these passages that the word would be specially applicable for the Feast of Trumpets, where the leading thought was the Kingship of God on earth. See also Pss. xcvi. 4, 6 ; c. 1. There must have been more vigour than music in the Temple worship when the noise of a storming party could be compared with the Service on a Feast-day (Lam. ii. 7).

v. 2. "Let us come before." The word has sometimes the signification of "anticipate," Old English "prevent" (e.g. Pss. xxi. 3 ; lix. 10, &c.). It is used of Israel's Morning Prayer which "awaits" God (Ps. lxxxviii. 13) ; but the passage which is nearest in thought to our Psalm is Mic. vi. 6, "Wherewith shall I come before YHVH...shall I come before Him with burnt offerings?" i.e. What sacrifice or present shall I bring to God?

"with (the) thanksgiving." On the *Sacrifice of thanksgiving* see notes on Ps. l. 14, 23. It should be observed that the *thoda* or "Thanksgiving" was essentially a Service of Song, doubtless accompanied with sacrifice, but tending more and more to spiritual worship.

The "Thanksgiving" (*thoda*) was specially connected with the Dedication of the Temple (Ezra iii. 11), and found its fullest expression in the *Hodu-Psalms* (Pss. xcvi. ; c. ; cv.—cvii. ; cxviii. ; cxxxvi.). The present Psalm may possibly have been written for the Dedication of the Second Temple.

v. 3. "over all gods." The fall of Babylon before Cyrus, B.C. 538, must have seemed the fall of heathenism. Cf. Ps. xcvi. 4 f.

v. 4. At the beginning of this verse the Septuagint strangely interpolates a line from the preceding Psalm *v. 14*^a.

vv. 4, 5. The superiority of Israel's God consists in the fact that He is the Creator of the worlds. Cf. Ps. xcvi. 4 f. with Jer. x. 10 ff. It will be noted how the thought of *Creation* runs through the present group of Psalms.

v. 7. "His pasture," i.e. "His shepherd-care." See Ps. lxxiv. 1, note, p. 309. In the Psalter the word is only found in the "Asaph" Psalms (twice) and in the present group, viz. here and in the closely parallel passage Ps. c. 3.

The Midrash quotes Ezek. xxxiv. 31, "And ye, My flock, the flock of My pasture, are men."

God is waiting; if
Israel were but ready
(cf. Ps. lxxxi. 11).

The Voice of God.

Those who insist on
sight come short of
God's rest.

TO-DAY, IF^a YE WOULD HEAR HIS VOICE !

- 8 Harden not your heart, as at Meribah^b,
In the day of Massah^c in the wilderness:
9 When your fathers proved^d Me,
They tested^e Me, yea, they saw My work.
10 For forty years I loathed a generation,
And said, A people of erring heart are they,
And they^f have not known My ways ;
11 When^g I swore in My wrath,
They shall not enter into My rest.

^a or *Oh that*

^b *Contention,*
Ps, lxxxi. 7

^c *proving*

^d or *tempted*

^e Ps. lxxxi. 7

^f *emphatic*

^g v. 9

"*To-day, if ye would hear His voice.*" Jewish tradition regards these words as referring to what comes before. Thus: Rashi, "'*To-day*' (meaning) in this present world, '*if ye would hear His voice,*'" i.e. the Redemption would come now if men were but ready. So too Aben Ezra, "And the meaning of '*To-day*' is connected with '*Come, let us worship,*' &c. If it be in your heart to hear His voice worship Him to-day." In the Yalkut on the Psalm, R. Levi says, "If Israel only observed the Sabbath aright immediately Messiah would come and they would be redeemed, as it is written '*To-day, if ye would hear His voice.*'" The words are also quoted (T.B. *Sanh.* 98^a) in the story of Messiah waiting at the gates of the City: He promises the Rabbi that He will come "*To-day,*" but Elijah explains that "*To-day*" means "*To-day, if ye will hear His voice*" [see my translation of Yalkut on Zechariah, p. 49 f.].

Thus the Refrain must be not only read as an Invitatory with *vv.* 1, 2, 6, but also as suggesting the infinite possibilities of the Divine Sabbatismos (cf. Heb. iv. 9), "Blessings are plentiful and rife, more plentiful than hope." The fact that, in the Synagogue, the Psalm was used to introduce the Sabbath worship will add weight to this thought and will help to explain the argument in Hebrews, chapters iii., iv.

Psalm lxxxi., an Asaph Psalm, is closely parallel. But though, according to the structure of our Psalm, the Refrain connects itself rather with the Promise which precedes than with the Warning which follows, still the fact of such an outstanding promise "to enter into His Rest" suggests the caution "lest any should seem to have come short of it" (Heb. iv. 1), as indeed, to some extent, all must do. Thus the Sept. has coupled the Refrain with the words of God which follow, thereby losing the chief beauty of the Psalm. The writer to the Hebrews seems to justify this division by quoting the Septuagint, but recognizes the true meaning of the Psalm by distinguishing between the *Sabbath purpose* of God (*σαββατισμὸς* iv. 9), which corresponds with the unlimited promise of "*To-day,*" and the "(*place of*) *God's rest*" (*κατάραυσις*), which corresponds with the last verse of our Psalm and indicates one stage only in the onward recurring progress towards the Sabbatismos (see Deut. xii. 9; 1 Kings viii. 56; Is. lxvi. 1; Ps. cxxxii. 14, Hebrew and Septuagint).

v. 8. "*Meribah...Massah.*" The stories of the "*temptation*" in the Wilderness form one of the most difficult problems of criticism, and are further complicated by the fact that the word "*tempt*" may imply either a "*proving*" for good or a "*tempting*" for evil. The following passages will repay study:

(i) The "*Blessing of Moses,*" Deut. xxxiii., possibly as early as 780 B.C., where of the tribe of Levi it is said,

"Thy Thummim and thy Urim be for the man, thy godly one,
Whom thou didst *prove* at *Massah*,
With whom thou *contendedst* at the waters of *Meribah.*"

Here the context seems to shew that it was man (? Moses) and not God that was *proved*, though it is impossible now to say to what event the writer alludes (see Driver).

(ii) Ps. lxxxi. 7, "I test thee at the waters of *Meribah*," where God tries Israel for Israel's good. This is an Elohist (Asaph) Psalm and agrees with the Elohist passage Exod. xv. 25^b (see note p. 346), where God "proves" the people at Marah.

(iii) Exod. xvii. 2 and 7 (probably by J), "And Moses said to them, Why do ye *contend* with

me? why do ye *prove* YHVH?..... And he called the name of the place *Massah* (*proving*) and *Meribah* (*contending*) because of the *contending* of the Children of Israel and because of their *proving* YHVH, by saying, Is YHVH in our midst or not?"

This version of the story makes *Meribah* refer to the *contending* with Moses, and *Massah* to the *proving* of God, both referring to one event, at Rephidim, *at the beginning of the Wilderness journey*.

(iv) Numb. xx. 13, a difficult passage (probably by E) in which *Meribah* is placed *in Kadesh* with another version of the smitten rock.

"These are the waters of *Meribah*, because the Children of Israel *contended* with YHVH, and He shewed Himself holy among them."

(v) Deut. xxxii. 51, "Because ye (Moses and Aaron) trespassed against Me...at the waters of *Meribah-Kadesh* in the wilderness of Zin." (Cf. Numb. xx. 24; xxvii. 14, both by P.)

(vi) Deut. vi. 16, "Ye shall not *prove* YHVH your God as ye *proved* Him at *Massah*."

(vii) Deut. ix. 22, "And at Taberah and at *Massah* and at Kibroth-hatta'avah ye became the cause of wrath to YHVH."

From the critical study of these passages we gather that the oldest tradition placed the *Massah-Meribah* temptation quite early in the Journeyings, while a later tradition identified *Meribah* with a similar event at Kadesh, on the border of the Promised Land. Our Psalm follows the earlier tradition in so far as it unites *Massah* and *Meribah*, but differs from that tradition in that it places the trial at Kadesh (see notes on *vv.* 9—11).

vv. 9—11. "they saw My work...They shall not enter into My rest." The reference is to Numb. xiv. 20 ff. (JE), where, on the intercession of Moses, God pardons the people at Kadesh, but insists that those who *have seen His works* shall not see the *Promised Land*: "And YHVH said, I have pardoned according to thy word: but as surely as I live, and as surely as the whole earth shall be filled with My glory, so surely none of the men *who saw My glory and My signs* which I did in Egypt and in the Wilderness, and yet have proved Me these ten times and have not hearkened to My voice, *shall see the land* which I swear unto their fathers."

v. 10. "I loathed a generation." This verb is used by Ezekiel (vi. 9; xx. 43; xxxvi. 31), in the *Niphal*, of the *loathing* of self-reproach, and in Pss. cxix. 158, cxix. 21, in the *Hithpoel* of the *grief* felt by the righteous in the presence of sin. In our Psalm, where it occurs in the *Kal*, we might paraphrase, "I bore with loathing." For the whole period of forty years God bore with this evil generation.

"And they." The emphatic pronoun suggests that others, e.g. Caleb, would enter into the promised rest.

n. 11. "My rest." The form of the word implies rather a *place of rest* than the rest itself (see Ps. cxxxii. 8, 14). The journeying in the Wilderness is a parable of Israel's history: at every stage the Ark went before "to search out a rest (i.e. a *resting-place*)," Numb. x. 33; but, at every resting-place, from the Wilderness to Zion, it could still be said "ye are not yet come to the rest" (Deut. xii. 9). "There remaineth therefore a rest (Sabbatismos) to the people of God" (Heb. iv. 9), a rest of which all former *resting-places* were but stations on the road. Thus the last verse of the Psalm corresponds with the Refrain in *v.* 7; the failure (*v.* 11) was finite and stands as a warning; the Promise (*v.* 7) is infinite and remains as a hope.

PSALM XCVI.

The Psalm falls into three Parts. In the first Part, which consists of twelve lines, Israel is invited to sing a second "Song of Moses" for the recent deliverance from Babylon which has established the supremacy of Israel's God (*vv.* 1—6).

The second Part consists of five lines (*vv.* 7—9^a) adapted from Ps. xxix. 1, 2. In these five lines the Nations of the World are bidden to recognize the Kingship of YHVH and to come into His courts with offerings. The tone of these lines suggests the Dedication Service of Zerubbabel in the seventh month B.C. 536 (cf. Ps. xlvii. 9, note, p. 203).

The third Part, like the first, has twelve lines (*vv.* 9^b—13) in which the circle of the "New Song" widens to embrace all created things in heaven and in earth. Thus the Psalm exactly agrees with the order of the "New Song" in Rev. v. 8—14, the only difference being that, in our Psalm, the second circle consists of "*the families of the Gentiles,*" while in the Revelation it consists of "*angels.*" It should however be noted that Ps. xxix. 1, 2, from which the second Part of our Psalm has been adapted, was in later times supposed to refer to angels. Thus :

"Give unto YHVH, ye sons of God [i.e. *angels*, Targ.],
Give unto YHVH glory and strength,
Give unto YHVH His Name's due glory,
Worship YHVH with hallowed pomp."

The "Song of Moses" in Deut. xxxii. v. 8 (see Sept.) connects, in like manner, the sons of God, or angels, with the Gentiles, and it must be remembered that the "Song" in Deut. xxxii. finds an echo in the whole group of Psalms that we are now considering.

The Chronicle writer has inserted the greater part of our Psalm (1 Chr. xvi. 23—33) between the first fifteen verses of Ps. cv. and the closing verses of Ps. cvi., stating that the whole Psalm thus compounded was given by David to the sons of Asaph for use at the Dedication Service of the Ark. This, though not historically correct, is interesting as proving that the Psalm was recognized as a Dedication Psalm in the time of the Chronicle writer (cf. Ezra iii. 11). I suggest that the present group of Psalms was composed for the Dedication of the Altar in the seventh month B.C. 536. (See note on v. 4, and *Additional Note* at the end of this Psalm.)

PSALM XCVI.

Part I.

Let Israel sing a
second Song of Moses
(cf. Rev. v. 8—10).

- 1 "Sing ye unto YHVH a New Song^a;"
Sing ye unto YHVH, all the earth.
- 2 Sing ye unto YHVH, bless ye His Name ;
Tell the good news^b of His salvation from day to day.
- 3 Declare "among the nations His glory^c,"
Among all the peoples His wondrous works^d.
- 4 "For great is YHVH, and supremely worthy of praise^e."
He is held in reverence^f above all gods.
- 5 For all the gods of the peoples are no-gods^g,
While YHVH made the heavens.
- 6 Splendour^h and Majesty^h are before Him ;
Strength and beauty are in His Sanctuary.

^a Is. xlii. 10^b Is. lii. 7 :
lx. 6^c Is. lxxvi. 19^d Ps. lxxv. 1,
note.^e Ps. xlviii. 1^f Ps. xlvii. 2^g Sept. *demons* :
cf. Ps. xcvi.
7^h Ps. xlv. 3

vv. 1 ff. The following references to the Second Isaiah should be carefully noted, with their context :—

- (a) Is. xlii. 10. "Sing unto YHVH a New Song...
...the sea and the fulness thereof."

[Compare Psalm, *vv.* 1 and 11 ; also Ps. xcvi. 1.]

(b) Is. lii. 7. "...the teller of good news, the proclaimer of salvation, who saith unto Zion, *Thy God hath become King.*"

Is. lx. 6. "...they (i.e. the far-off Nations) all come, bearing gold and incense, and telling the good news of the praises of YHVH."

[Cf. Psalm, *vv.* 2 and 10^a.]

(c) Is. lxxvi. 19. "And they shall recount *among the Gentiles My glory.*"

[Cf. Psalm, *vv.* 3, 10^a.]

(d) Is. lv. 12. "*And all the trees of the field shall clap (their) hands.*"

Is. xlv. 23. "*Sing, O ye heavens.....O forest and every tree therein.*"

[Cf. Psalm, *vv.* 11, 12.]

If in these passages from the Second Isaiah the context be studied, it will be seen that the standpoint is exactly that of our Psalm ; the Kingship of God, established by a Theophany, is to embrace the Gentiles.

v. 1. "*a New Song.*" The passages in the O.T. in which we read of "*a New Song*" are Pss. xxxiii. 3 ; xl. 3 ; xcvi. 1 ; xcvi. 1 ; cxliv. 9 ; cxlix. 1 ; Is. xlvii. 10. All these passages belong, I believe, to the same period and refer to the same event, viz. to the exodus from Babylon. The *New Song* implies, in every case, a reference to "the Song of Moses" as the *Old Song*. But the "Song of Moses" may be either the Song at the Red Sea (Exod. xv. 1—18) or the Song ascribed to Moses on the borders of the Promised Land (Deut. xxxii.). The Song in Exod. xv. is a triumphant acknowledgement of the Kingship of God, while the Song in Deut. xxxii. sets forth (a) God's choice of Israel (*vv.* 7—14), (b) Israel's idolatry and the terrible consequences (*vv.* 15—28), followed by (c) the victorious mercy of God (*vv.* 28—43). Now this Song was to be read every year in the seventh (Sabbath) month as "*a witness*" (Deut. xxxi. 9—13, 19 ff.), i.e. it was to assure Israel of the Sabbath-purpose of God, that the "calling of God is without repentance," that (in the words of Browning)

"a sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched ;
That, after Last, returns the First,
Though a wide compass round be fetched ;
That what began best, can't end worst,
Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst."

Part II.

Let the Gentiles
join the Song (cf.
Rev. v. 11, 12).

- 7 "Give unto YHVH," ye families^a of the peoples,
"Give unto YHVH glory^b and strength^c."
8 "Give unto YHVH His Name's due glory;"
Bring the Thankoffering and come into His courts.
9 "Worship YHVH with hallowed pomp."

^a Ps. xxii. 27

^b v. 3

^c v. 6

It may be noted that in Exod. xv. and in Deut. xxxi., xxxii. the Hebrew word for "Song" is the *fem.* form *Shirah*, whereas wherever the "New Song" is spoken of, the *masc.* form *Shir* is always used. The Midrash Rabbah (on Exod. xv.), alluding to this fact, regards the "New Song" as the Song of the World to come: cf. Rev. v. 9; xiv. 3; xv. 3.

In the Psalms the "New Song" often rejoices in the call of the Gentiles (e.g. Pss. xl. 3; xcvi. 1, 3, 7f., 10, 13; xcvi. 2 ff.). This fact confirms us in the conclusion that the group of Psalms we are now considering belongs to the early Persian period.

v. 4. "For great is YHVH," &c. This line is identical with Ps. xlviii. 1. It should be noted that Ps. xlviii. is one of those Korah Psalms which have such a close correspondence with the present group of Psalms (see p. 203) and which we have already ascribed to the same occasion, viz. to the Dedication of the Altar of Zerubbabel in the seventh month of the year 536 B.C. (See p. 200.)

"He is held in reverence." Cf. Ps. xlvii. 2, another Korah Psalm of the same group. The word must sometimes be translated "terrible," and is specially used of those works in history whereby God brings home to the Nations His Divine Kingship. See notes on Pss. lxxv. 5; lxxvi. 3.

v. 5. "no-gods." The word *Eleel*, generally in the plural *Eleelim*, is rightly translated "idols" in Isaiah. It seems also to have the same signification in Ezekiel (xxx. 13) and in the Priest-code (Lev. xix. 4; xxvi. 1). There are, however, one or two passages which hint at another meaning. Thus:—Is. xix. 1—3, "Behold, YHVH rideth upon a swift cloud and cometh to Egypt, and the *Eleelim* of Egypt shall be moved before Him.... And the spirit of Egypt shall be made empty within it.... And they shall seek unto the *Eleelim*, and unto the mutterers, and to those that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards." The context here suggests that the *Eleelim* were connected with the gods of the underworld.

Again, Jer. xiv. 13, "They (i.e. the prophets) prophesy unto you a lying vision, and a divination, and an *Eleel*, and a deceit of their own heart."

It is impossible that *Eleel* should here signify either "idol" or "no-god." It must be some deception of the spirit-world; indeed the Sept. translates it by *olwloqpara*.

Another important passage is Job xiii. 4, "But, as for you, ye are all hatchers up of lies, ye are all *roph'èè Eleel*." The E.V. translates these last words "physicians of no value." Cf. the use of *Eleel* in Zech. xi. 17, where, however (see verse 15), the text should probably be read *Eveel*, "foolish."

From these passages I infer that, in certain cases, *Eleelim* might be translated "demons." Cf. 1 Cor. x. 19f., "What say I then?...that an idol is anything? But (I say), that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice *they sacrifice to devils, and not to God.*"

St Paul here quotes Deut. xxxii. 17, a chapter which, as we have already seen, has deeply influenced our present group of Psalms; I would therefore translate, with the Septuagint,

"For all the gods of the Gentiles are demons,
While YHVH made the heavens."

The only other passage in the Psalter in which the word is found is in Ps. xcvi. 7.

The Korah Psalms lxxvi. 8 ff. and lxxxix. 6 in like manner contrast the "gods" of the Nations with the God of Israel, following the Song of Moses (Exod. xv. 11). The Korah Psalms belong to the same period as the present group. The fall of Babylon and her many gods before the purer religion of Persia naturally suggested the coming of God's Kingdom (cf. Is. xli. 23f.).

Part III.

Let all created things join in the Chorus of the New Song (cf. Rev. v. 13, 14).

- Be ye in birth-pangs^a at His presence, all the earth.
 10 Say ye among the nations, "YHVH is become King^b;"
 "Yea, the world shall be established that it cannot be moved."
 [He shall right the peoples with equity.]
 11 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
 Let the sea thunder^c with all "the fulness thereof^d;"
 12 Let the field exult, with all that therein is;
 Yea, all the forest trees shall sing for joy,
 13 Before YHVH—for He cometh^e!
 For He cometh to judge^f the earth.
 [He shall judge^f the world with righteousness^g,
 And the peoples with His faithfulness.]

^a Ps. cxiv. 7;
 Mic. iv. 10
^b Ps. xciii. 1

^c Ps. xcvi. 7
^d Is. xlii. 7

^e Ps. xcvi. 9
^f or *right*
^g Ps. xcvi. 9

vv. 7—9^a. These lines are practically identified with Ps. xxix. 1—3; there are, however, two important variations which we indicate by italics, thus:—

Ps. xxix. 1—3.

Give unto YHVH, *ye sons of God*,
 Give unto YHVH glory and strength,
 Give unto YHVH His Name's due glory,
 Worship YHVH with hallowed pomp.

Ps. xcvi. 7—9^a.

Give unto YHVH, *ye families of the peoples*,
 Give unto YHVH glory and strength,
 Give unto YHVH His Name's due glory,
Bring the Thankoffering and come into His Courts,
 Worship YHVH with hallowed pomp.

In Ps. xxix. the "*sons of God*" were either the angels (Targ.) representing the Nations, or the representatives of *Israel*; e.g. the "station-men" who, as representing the whole People, brought the firstfruits in festival procession to the Temple. But in Ps. xcvi. the address is, not to the representatives of *Israel*, but to the representatives of the *Gentile world*; therefore he says "*ye families of the peoples*." These, who are themselves the firstfruits of the *Gentile world*, are bidden to "*bring the Thankoffering and come into His Courts*."

The "*Thankoffering*" (*minḥah*) is the "meal-offering" or "pure offering" (Mal. i. 11) which is often associated with the offering of the Gentiles (Pss. xlv. 12; lxxii. 10, and especially Is. lxvi. 20 with Rom. xv. 16).

v. 9^b. "*Be ye in birth-pangs*." The plural form of the verb shews that the Psalmist was thinking, not so much of "*all the earth*" as, of all the things that earth contains, especially the trees (*v. 12*). The verb is often used of the pain of *travail*. Our Psalmist is evidently alluding again to Ps. xxix. where (*vv. 8, 9*) the word is twice used: "The voice of YHVH *casteth* the wilderness *in birth-pangs*"... "The voice of YHVH maketh the oaks *to cast their birth*" (see p. 124). For the poetical thought we may compare Tennyson's *Maud*, III., "And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove through the air," or Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*,

"The sea-blooms and the oozy woods, which wear
 The sapless foliage of the ocean, know
 Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
 And tremble and despoil themselves..."

But in the Psalms the thought implies the birth-pangs of a new Creation at the Presence of God; see Pss. lxxvii. 16; xcvi. 4; cxiv. 7; Hab. iii. 10, where the same verb is used. In these passages the *waters*, the *earth*, and the *mountains* are in pangs, but in our Psalm and in Ps. xxix., from which it is derived, the thought culminates with the *trees*.

v. 10. "*Say ye*..." The two *imperatives*, "*Be ye in birth-pangs*," "*Say ye*," lead us to suppose that those addressed are all created things, with special reference, as in Ps. xxix., to the *trees of the*

forest. In an earlier Psalm of the present group the voices of the *waters* had proclaimed the Kingship of God :

“From the voices of the waters...(the cry goes up)
Mighty on high is YHVH.” (Ps. xciii. 4.)

On which the Bereshith Rabba (v) says, “At the beginning of the Creation of the world the praise of God only rose to Him from the waters.” But in the present Psalm the Chorus of Creation is pictured as all the voices from *heavens, earth, sea, fields, and trees*, exactly after the manner of the Second Isaiah, e.g. Is. xlv. 23, “*Break forth in ringing-song ye mountains—(thou) forest and every tree therein.*”

Is. lv. 12, “*All the trees of the field shall clap their hands.*” It is not merely that all Nature feels God’s Advent (Ps. lxxii. 16 notes) but because the Second Isaiah has already pictured the nations of the world as costly trees built into the Temple of God : “*The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir and the plane and the sherbin together, that I may glorify the place of My Sanctuary*” (Is. lx. 13).

The trees, then, represent the noblest of the nations (Is. x. 17—19 : Ezek. xvii. 22—24 ; xxxi. 3 ff.). Thus on v. 12, “*All the forest trees*” Rashi’s brief note is, “*All the rulers of the nations.*”

This being so I conclude that vv. 9^b—13 do not merely express in a poetical figure the joy of Nature, but that all these voices, of heavens, earth, sea, fields, and trees, represent the glory and beauty of the Gentile world that is being brought to recognise the Kingship of God (cf. Rom. viii. 19).

Justin Martyr asserted that the original reading of this line contained the words “*a ligno,*” i.e. “*Say ye among the Nations the Lord reigneth from the tree.*” This reading, which was popularised in the Hymn of Fortunatus, “*Vexilla regis prodeunt,*” is commonly supposed to be an addition by a Christian writer. It is singular that it should occur in a Psalm in which the *trees* take so prominent a part. May it possibly have originated in a gloss יְשׁוּבָה לַיהוָה? Thus :—“*Say ye* (Chron. ‘*Let them say*’) *among the peoples* [gloss ‘*from the trees*’] *YHVH is become King.*”

The Hebrew word for *trees* being a noun of multitude (Is. x. 19) might be rendered “*from the trees*” or “*from the tree.*”

v. 10^b. “*Yea, the world shall be established...*” This line has already occurred in Ps. xciii. where, as here, it is associated with the Kingship of God in Creation. When the Sixth Day’s work was done God saw all that He had made and behold it was “*very good*” (Targ. טוֹב מְאֹד, *ordinatum valde*); so, at last, the world must be “*established*” (Targ. יָסֵד). Thus, “*After Last returns the First.*”

v. 10^c. “*He shall right the peoples...*” This line is omitted in the text of 1 Chron. xvi. It interrupts the sense and is possibly a gloss introduced from Ps. xcvi. 9. Compare also the two last lines of v. 13, which are also omitted in Chronicles. The order of the lines in Chronicles is also somewhat different. Thus :—

“Be ye in birth-pangs at His presence, all the earth.
Yea the world shall be established that it cannot be moved :
Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice :
Let them say among the nations, “YHVH is become King :”
Let the sea thunder with all the fulness thereof ;
Let the field exult, with all that therein is ;
Yea the forest trees shall sing for joy,
Because of the presence of YHVH,
For He cometh to judge the earth.”

I venture to think that this text, giving as it does an unbroken picture of the joy of Nature, is better than that given in the Psalter.

vv. 11^b—13. These lines are almost identical with Ps. xcvi. 7—9. It should, however, be noted that whereas that Psalm speaks of the *sea, the world, the floods, the mountains*, our present Psalm deals with the *heavens, the earth, the sea, the fields, the trees*. The general thought is developed in Rev. v. 13f., where the whole chorus of created things joins in the “*New Song*” to the Lamb.

Additional Note on the Title of Psalm xcvi.

The Title given to this Psalm by the Septuagint is suggestive:—*ὅτε ὁ οἶκος ᾠκοδομεῖτο (οἰκοδομεῖται) μετὰ τῆν αἰχμαλωσίαν.* Jerome renders this, "*Quando domus aedificabatur post Captivitatem.*" I suggest that this Title was given because the Psalm was recognised as a Dedication Psalm, *i.e.* as originally written for the dedication of the Second Temple and therefore suitable for the seventh month, which was the Dedication month (Gen. viii. 4: 1 Kings viii. 2: Ezek. xl. 1 ff.: Ezra iii. 1—7). St Jerome preached on this Psalm on the Dedication Festival of the Holy Cross, taking the title, as we might say, for his text. After alluding to the Cross ("Crux enim ipsius columna est generis humani: in ipsa columna aedificata est domus ejus. Ego crucem dico, non lignum¹, sed passionem," &c.), he concludes, "Ceterum quia nunc encaeniorum dies est..." On these words Morin comments, "Festum Encaeniorum in ecclesia Hierosolymitana die tertia decima Septembris amplissimo apparatu quotannis agebatur, et per septem continuos dies Crux Domini peregrinis ostendebatur ex omni fere terrarum orbe illuc occurrentibus. Quam equidem causam Hieronymo fuisse crediderim tantis praeconiis ipsam Crucem et loca sancta extollendi." [*Anecdota Maredsolana*, Vol. III., p. 139.]

It could scarcely have been an accident that the Empress Helena (A.D. 335) should have fixed on the seventh month (Sept. 13) for the dedication of her Church of the Holy Cross at Jerusalem. Evidently she chose the Dedication month. Neither can it be an accident that the anniversary of that Dedication should have been observed, as Morin states, for seven days from the 13th of September. It thus practically synchronized with the Feast of Tabernacles, itself originally, I believe, a Dedication Feast.

It is true that the Feast of Dedication (*Hanukka*) was held at the end of the 9th month, *i.e.* at the winter solstice, but it is also true that the 7th month was the month of Dedication and that the Feast of *Hanukka* was practically a repetition of *Tabernacles* (see p. 126), and is called by that name (2 Mac. i. 9).

The fact that St Jerome interprets the Title with reference to the Feast of Dedication leads us to compare the Psalm with Psalm xxx., where the Title both in the Hebrew and in the Greek distinctly refers to the Dedication of the Temple. Thus:—

מוֹטוֹר שִׁיר חֲנֻכַּת הַבַּיִת לְדָוִד ψαλμὸς ᾠδῆς τοῦ ἐγκατασκευαστοῦ τοῦ οἴκου, τοῦ Δαυεὶδ.

We also learn from Jewish tradition that Psalm xxx. was used by the Levites in the Processional Service of the offering of the dedicated firstfruits in the Temple, and also at the Dedication of the north wall of Jerusalem in the times of Agrippa [*Shebuoth* 14^a, quoted by Graetz, p. 60f.].

Psalm xxx. is closely related to Ps. xxix., which we know to have been used on the Feast of Tabernacles. Ps. xxix. gives us the Seven Voices of the year, leading up to the seventh month, in which the Feast of Tabernacles was held. The very movement of the Seasons is a Dedication Procession. In the offering of the dedicated firstfruits man does but offer of that which God first gave in the teeming months. The close relation between our Psalm and Ps. xxix. has already been indicated in the notes.

¹ Is this an allusion to the disputed reading "Dominus regnavit a ligno," v. 10?

PSALM XCVII.

Psalm xcvi. consists almost entirely of quotations especially from the Korah and Asaph Psalms (see marginal references). But though it has little originality it has great power and beauty. The recent fall of Babylon suggests to the writer the immediate fulfilment of the prophecies of the Second Isaiah.

It seems to our Psalmist that God is about to take to Himself His great power and to reign upon earth.

In verses 1—6 he pictures the effect of such a Theophany upon nature, in language consecrated to him by many hopes.

Then (*vv.* 7—9) he lovingly dwells on the effect of this Divine Advent in the world of man. All the Gods of the nations bow in reverence.

Zion rejoices. Every knee bows to the One Lord.

I agree with Delitzsch that the Psalm properly ends here. The lines which follow (*vv.* 10—12) have no connexion in thought with the earlier verses and are different also in style: indeed they remind us of the maxims of the alphabetical Psalms (cf. *v.* 10, with Pss. xxxiv. 22 ff.; xxxvii. 17, 28, 40, also *v.* 11 with Ps. cxii. 4, and *v.* 12 "*Memorial-Name*" with Ps. cxii. 4).

PSALM XCVII.

The Kingship of God revealed in a Theophany (cf. Pss. xviii.: l.: lxxviii.: lxxvii. 16 ff. with notes).

1 YHVH is become King! let the earth rejoice^a;

Let the many isles be glad^a.

2 Cloud^b and thick-darkness^b are round about Him:

"Righteousness and Judgement are the basis of His throne^c."

3 A fire^d goeth before Him;

And it burneth^d all round His foes.

^a *v.* 8 and Ps. xcvi. 11

^b Joel ii. 2:
Zeph. i. 15
^c Ps. lxxxix. 14

^d Joel ii. 3

v. 2. "*Cloud and thick-darkness.*" The Old Testament pictures God as *dwelling in the thick-darkness* (1 Kings viii. 12; Ex. xx. 21) and the great "Day of the Lord" as a day of "*Cloud and thick-darkness*" (Zeph. i. 15; Joel ii. 2). When God reveals Himself the *thick-darkness* becomes His robe as the cloud is the robe of the sun. "*So He bowed down the Heavens and came, With the thick-darkness under His feet*" (Ps. xviii. 9).

"*Righteousness and Judgement are the basis of His throne.*" This quotation from the Korah Psalm lxxxix. is suggestive. In that Psalm the words refer to the Covenant of Creation as a pledge of the Covenant with David (see pp. 371—573). The Writer to the Hebrews (i. 5 f.) connects these two Psalms together. "*I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son* (2 Sam. vii. 14, cf. Ps. lxxxix. 26 f.). And when He again bringeth in the '*First-born*' (Ps. lxxxix. 27) into the world He saith, *And let all the angels of God worship him*" (Ps. xcvi. 7).

Compare also the *Additional Note* at the end of this Psalm.

v. 3. "*His foes.*" Wellhausen suggests a similar Hebrew word which would signify "*His steps.*" This is tempting but there is no authority for it.

- All creation confesses its God.
- 4 His "lightnings lit up the world^a;"
Earth saw, and was in throes^b.
- 5 The mountains melted like wax at the Presence of YHVH;
At the Presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
- 6 "The Heavens proclaim His righteousness^c,"
And all the peoples have seen His glory.
- Idolatry falls before Him.
- 7 Ashamed are they that serve the graven images,
That boast themselves of no-gods^d;
Worship Him, all ye gods^e.
- 8 "Zion heard and was glad,
And the daughters of Judah rejoiced,
Because of Thy judgements^f," O YHVH.
- 9 For Thou, YHVH, art "Most High over all the earth^g:"
Thou art "supremely exalted^h" above all gods.
- ^a Ps. lxxvii. 18
^b Pss. xxix. 8f.: lxxvii. 16: xcvi. 9
^c Ps. l. 6
^d or *demons*. Ps. xcvi. 5 note
^e Sept. "*His angels*," cf. Heb. i. 6
^f cf. Ps. xlvi. 11
^g Ps. xlvi. 2
^h Ps. xlvii. 9. cf. Ps. xcvi. 4

v. 4. "*And was in throes*." We must not translate "*trembled*" (E.V., R.V.) but, with Aquila and Rashi, "*was in throes*" or "*birthpangs*." The marginal references, with notes, should be consulted (see pp. 324 f., 408).

v. 7. "*Worship Him*." So Sept., Syr., Jer., &c.: but Delitzsch and Baethgen would read the verb as a *past* or *historic present* and translate, "*All the gods have worshipped Him*." This reading has the authority of the Targum which paraphrases "*And all the worshippers of idols bow down before Him*." Tradition, however, is in favour of the *imperative*.

"*All ye gods*." The word *elohim*, "*gods*," is here explained by *ēlelim*, "*demons*" in the preceding line. Compare note on Ps. xcvi. 4, which is the only other passage in the Psalter in which the word *ēlelim* occurs. We must, of course, give to the word *demon* its original significance which differed little from that of *angel*. Thus the Sept. translates "*All (ye) His angels*." So too Aben Ezra.

When the Psalmist says "*Worship Him, all ye gods*" he pictures to himself the fall of idolatry, and the homage which the "*gods*," or "*angels*," of the Nations must now pay to the one God. His conception is not unlike that of Mrs E. B. Browning, in *The Dead Pan* (quoted by Neale):

"By the love He stood alone in,
His sole Godhead rose complete;
And the false gods fell down moaning,
Each from off his golden seat—
All the false gods with a cry
Rendered up their deity—
Pan, Pan was dead."

The introduction of a line almost identical with these words of our Psalm in the Vatican text of the Septuagint version of Deut. xxxii. 43 and the quotation in Hebrews i. 6 is discussed in an *Additional Note*.

v. 8. This verse is copied, almost word for word, from the Korah Psalm xlvi. 11, the only difference being that our Psalmist uses the past tense.

The reference is interesting as another example of the close connexion between the present group of Psalms and the Korah Psalms. See note on Ps. xlvii. 8, p. 203.

v. 9. In this verse we have again two allusions to the Korah Psalm xlvii.

Final exhortation.
(Perhaps a later addition.)

10 Ye that love YHVH, hate evil ;
He keepeth the souls of His saints ;
He delivereth them from the hand of the wicked.
11 Light is sown^a for the righteous ;
And gladness for the upright in heart.
12 "Be glad, ye righteous, in YHVH^b ;"
"And give thanks to His holy Memorial-Name^c."

^a or *sprung up*

^b Ps. xxxii. 11

^c Ps. xxx. 4

v. 11. "Light is sown..." Not in the sense of the poets (e.g. Virg. iv. 584, "Et jam prima novo spargebat lumine terras"; or even Lucr. II. 210,

"Sol etiam summo de vertice dissipat omnes
Ardorem in partes, et lumine conserit arva;")

cf. *Paradise Lost*, v. 3); but rather, as Aben Ezra says, in the sense that a great harvest springs from a small sowing (cf. Ps. cxvii. 6).

Our Poet has reminded us that

"All creation is one act at once,
The birth of Light."

v. 12. "And give thanks...Memorial-Name." These words are quoted from Ps. xxx. which tradition assigns to the Feast of *Hanucca* (see *Additional Note on Ps. xcvi.*). The English translation "Give thanks" fails to picture the festive processions of the thank-offering (see notes on Pss. l. 23, xcv. 2, pp. 220, 402).

If this Psalm were used for the season of *Hanucca*, which was also called the Feast of Lights, a special meaning would be seen in the words of v. 11, "Light is sown for the righteous."

The Feast of *Hanucca* (Winter Solstice) was the birthday of the sun.

We have independent ground for connecting the present group of Psalms with the Korah Psalms and with the Feast of *Hanucca*.

Additional Note on Psalm xcvi. 7.

In Deut. xxxii. 43 the Hebrew and Greek texts are as follows:—

Hebrew.	Sept. (Vat. text).
הַרְנִינוּ נְיִים עֲמוֹ	(a) εὐφράνθητε οὐρανοὶ ἅμα αὐτῷ,
	(b) [καὶ προσκυνήσατ' αὐτῷ υἱοὶ θεοῦ.]
	(a ₁) εὐφράνθητε ἔσθ' μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ,
	(b ₁) [καὶ ἐνισχυσάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ.]

It is evident that the two lines which I have marked (a), (a₁) arose from two renderings of the existing Hebrew text.

Thus (a) would require

הַרְנִינוּ שְׂמִים עֲמוֹ

And (a₁) would require

הַרְנִינוּ נְיִים (עִם) עֲמוֹ

The two lines (b), (b₁) must also have arisen from a common text, not found in the Hebrew, since υἱοὶ θεοῦ and ἄγγελοι θεοῦ would both be represented by בְּנֵי אֵל

Thus (b) would require

וַיִּשְׂתַּחֲוּ לֹ בְנֵי אֵל (cf. Ps. xcvi. 7).

And (b₁) would require

וַיִּתְחַזְּקוּ לֹ בְנֵי אֵל (cf. 1 Sam. iv. 9; 1 Chr. xix. 13, Heb. and Sept.).

Of these two readings (h_1) is undoubtedly the more original, and is therefore to be preferred. I suggest that the original Hebrew text ran thus:—

הרנינו נִיִּים עִמּוֹ
וַיַּחֲזִקוּ לוֹ כָּל בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים

We should then have the same reference to the "Nations" and "the Sons of God" (or "angels") at the end of the Song as is found by the Septuagint in the 8th verse, "When the Most High gave the Nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He fixed the borders of the Nations according to the number of the Angels of God."

The Hiphil of רָנַן has generally, perhaps always, a causative sense (Job xxix. 13; Ps. lxxv. 8 (9), and (?) Ps. lxxxix. 1 (2)), consequently הרנינו נִיִּים עִמּוֹ ought strictly to be translated, "O ye Nations, cause His People to rejoice," though it might also be rendered, "Rejoice, ye Nations, (with) His People." In any case, as Driver says, "The nations are invited to congratulate Israel on possessing a God like Jehovah." This being so, what is more natural than that the "Sons of God," or "Angels," who preside over these Nations, should be invited to pay reverence to the One true God from whom (v. 8) their power had been derived? "And let all the sons of God strengthen themselves in Him."

The best comment would be found in the Korah Psalms (e.g. Ps. xli. 1 f.) where the Nations are bidden to rejoice in the realised kingship of God.

If this be correct the quotation by St Paul, in Rom. xv. 10, "Rejoice ye Nations with His People," is justified by the whole context as the original meaning of Deut. xxxii. 43.

The other clause, which we have marked (h), is generally supposed to be the origin of the quotation in Heb. i. 6: "And whensoever He shall again have brought in the First-born into the world (of that time) He saith, *And let all the angels of God worship Him.*"

First we note that this supposed quotation does not *exactly* agree either with (h) or (h_1) which follow the Vatican text, though it is true that it agrees with the reading of the Alexandrine text.

Secondly there is no reference in Deut. xxxii. to the introduction of the First-born into the world.

Thirdly, in Hebrews i.—v. all the other quotations, fifteen in number, are from the Psalms, since even in quoting 2 Sam. vii. 14 the writer is thinking of Ps. lxxxix. 26 f. I conclude therefore that the quotation is from the Hebrew of Psalm xcvi. 7, "Worship Him, all ye gods."

This Psalm belongs to a group of Psalms whose subject is the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth (הַמְלִיכָה הַבָּרִא). The coming of this Kingdom is the "bringing of the First-born into the World." It is true that these Psalms speak not of the coming of Messiah but of the coming of YHVH; but, in using the word "First-born," the Writer to the Hebrews is thinking of the promise to the ideal David in Ps. lxxxix. 26 f., "He shall call me 'Thou art my Father,'...I, too, will appoint him (My) First-born, a Most High to the kings of the earth." Thus the Messianic hope looked for a restored Kingdom of "David" and the Title of Ps. xcvi. runs thus in the Septuagint, τῷ Δαυίδ, ὅτε ἡ γῆ αὐτοῦ καθίσταται.

The Writer to the Hebrews did but combine two converging lines of prophecy, and his thought might be paraphrased thus; "In the (Korah) Psalm lxxxix. 26 f. the David of the future is called by God 'My First-born,' and in another kindred Psalm which treats of the reign of God upon earth (and which tradition associates with the restored Kingdom of David) it is said, 'Worship Him, all ye gods' (or 'all ye angels of His' Sept.); this which the Psalm applies directly to God will be seen at last to find its fulfilment in the reign of His First-born." ὅταν δὲ πάλιν εἰσαγάγῃ τὸν πρωτότοκον εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην, λέγει καὶ προσκυνήσάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι Θεοῦ. I suggest that the Writer to the Hebrews recognised the close relation, which certainly exists, between the present Psalm and the (Korah) Psalm lxxxix. Compare note on v. 2.

PSALM XCVIII.

Psalm xcvi. is so closely related to xcvi. that one introduction might serve for both.

All that is not derived from Ps. xcvi. is borrowed from the Second Isaiah : yet borrowed as poets borrow.

The Psalm is familiar to us as the *Cantate Domino*.

In the P.B. revision of 1552 it was allowed as an alternative to the *Magnificat* with which it contains much in common (*vv.* 1—3; see Blunt, *Annotated Book of Common Prayer*, p. 34). It should also be compared with the *Nunc Dimittis*. If in the present group of Psalms the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has seen the *bringing in of the Firstborn into the world* (Heb. i. 6), then we should expect that such Hymns as the *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* would, even if unconsciously, follow parallel lines of thought.

This Psalm, like all the Psalms of the present group, expresses the "earnest expectation of the Creation."

PSALM XCVIII.

Hail to the Divine
Conqueror from E-
dom! (Cf. Is. lxiii.
1—5.)

1 "Sing ye unto YHVH a New Song^a,"

^a Is. xlii. 10:
Ps. xcvi. 1

For He hath done wondrous things :

His own right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him
the victory^b.

^b or *salvation*,
v. 2

2 YHVH hath made known His salvation ;

Before the eyes^c of the Nations He hath revealed His^c
righteousness.

^c Is. lii. 10

3 He hath remembered His lovingkindness (to Jacob^d),

^d See Sept.

And His faithfulness to the House of Israel^e :

^e cf. Is. liii. 7

All the bounds of the earth have seen the salvation of
our God.

v. 1. "Wondrous things." The word implies that which is so *marvellous* as to be almost *beyond belief* (Zech. viii. 6; Gen. xviii. 14; Job xlii. 3, &c.). In the Psalms it is often applied to the *wonders* which accompanied the first deliverance from Egypt (Pss. xl. 5 (6); lxxviii. 4, 11, 32; cv. 2, 5; cvi. 7, 22). The Exodus from Babylon was naturally pictured by Prophets and Psalmists in the colours of the first Exodus. Just as the first *wonders* called for the Song of Moses (Ex. xv. 11) so the unlooked for and almost inconceivable deliverance from Babylon now calls for a "New Song." The Christian application is given in Rev. xv. 3 f., see note on Ps. lxxxvi. 8 f., p. 363.

"His holy arm hath gotten Him the victory." Lit. "hath wrought salvation for Him." The Psalmist is freely quoting from Is. lix. 16, cf. lii. 10 and lxiii. 5.

v. 2. "His salvation," "His righteousness." Here, as in the writings of the Second Isaiah, God's "salvation" is, primarily, the *victory* of God on behalf of His People; "All the ends of the earth shall

- The homage of mankind (cf. Ps. c.).
- 4 "Shout ye unto YHVH, all the earth^a:"
Break forth, and sing, and hymn!
- 5 Hymn unto YHVH with the harp;
With the harp and the "voice of hymnody^b;"
- 6 With trumpets and voice of the cornet^c;
Shout ye before the King, YHVH!
- The homage of all created things (cf. Ps. xcvi.).
- 7 "Let the sea thunder with all the fulness thereof^d:"
The world, and the dwellers therein.
- 8 Let the floods clap their hands^e;
Let the mountains sing together,
- 9 "Before YHVH—for He cometh to judge the earth^f:"
"He shall judge the world with righteousness
And the Peoples with^g equity."
- ^a Ps. c. 1: cf. lxvi. 1
- ^b Is. li. 3
- ^c Pss. xlvii. 5 (6): cl. 3
- ^d Ps. xcvi. 11
- ^e Is. lv. 12
- ^f Ps. xcvi. 13
- ^g Ps. xcvi. 13

see the *Salvation* of our God" (Is. lii. 10). "*Salvation*" and "*righteousness*" are used as synonyms Is. li. 5 f., "My *righteousness* is near, My *salvation* is gone forth..." "My *salvation* shall be for ever and my *righteousness* shall not be abolished"; Is. lvi. 1, "My *salvation* is near to come and My *righteousness* to be revealed."

But though the primary thought of *Salvation* is *victory*, yet this victory was to be wrought through such a Divine Advent that "all flesh should see the *Salvation* of God" (cf. Is. xl. 5 with lii. 10 and Luke iii. 6). Thus, in God's Providence, the way was prepared for the Christian meaning of the word *Salvation*.

v. 3. The parallelism requires the words "*to Jacob*" which are found in the Septuagint. *Jacob* and *Israel* are mentioned together in Is. xlv. 23 to which our Psalmist refers in the next verse. See note.

v. 4. "*Break forth*." Only here and in the late portions of Isaiah, where, as here, it is coupled with *singing* (Is. xiv. 7; xlv. 23; xlix. 13; lii. 9; liv. 1; lv. 12). Perhaps, of these passages, the one nearest to our Psalmist's thought is xlv. 23, "Sing, O ye heavens; for YHVH hath done (it): Shout, ye lower parts of the earth; *break forth* into singing ye mountains, thou forest and every tree therein: for YHVH hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel." We have already seen that these words of the Second Isaiah influenced Ps. xcvi. (p. 408 note).

v. 6. "*With trumpets and voice of the cornet*." Unfortunately while the Hebrew has two words for *trumpet* the English has but one. The *ḥazōzērah* is especially the trumpet used by the Priests (Nu. x. 2—10, &c.). It is frequent in Chronicles but only here in the Psalter. The more general word *shōphar*, which we have been obliged here to translate by "*cornet*," is the *Trumpet* of Sinai (Ex. xix. 16, 19; xx. 18), the *Trumpet* of battle, the *Trumpet* of New Year and of the final Victory of God: see notes on Pss. xlvii. 5; lxxx. 3. The relation of Ps. xlvii. to the present group of Psalms is worthy of special study.

vv. 7—9. See notes on Ps. xcvi. 11—13.

PSALM XCIX.

The previous Psalm ended with the thought of God as the *Coming One*, "*For He cometh*" (v. 9). The present Psalm takes up this thought and views it in the light of Isaiah's Vision (Is. vi.). As there the "*posts of the door reeled*" so here "*earth reels*" at His Presence (v. 1, note), while the three-fold "*Holy*" of the Seraphim is echoed in the three-fold refrain of the Psalm.

In the three Stanzas there is an evident progression of Revelation. Stanza I. shews God as "*the great and terrible*" ruling over the Nations of the world. Stanza II. shews Him as the *Lover of justice* who has wrought *justice and righteousness in Jacob*. Stanza III. reveals Him as the *Answerer of prayer*, who was a *forgiving God* even while He was compelled to punish.

Thus the three Stanzas correspond with the three stages of Revelation represented by the Divine Names *El*, *Elohim* and *YHVH* respectively. On the significance of these Names see Ps. l. 1, note, p. 216. It would be contrary to truth to see in these stages of Revelation a statement of the doctrine of the Trinity; but it would also be contrary to truth not to see in them a preparation for that doctrine. The historical sequel to our Psalm is Rev. iv. 8, where the Living Creatures, who typify the sum total of creation, "*rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*"

PSALM XCIX.

The Kingship of
God as revealed in
the Name *El*.

- 1 "YHVH is become King^a," the Peoples tremble^b;
He is throned on (the) Cherubim, the earth reels;
- 2 YHVH is great in Zion^c;
Exalted is He over all the Peoples.
- 3 They thank Thy Name, the great and terrible^d;
"HOLY IS HE."

^a Pss. xciii. 1 :

xcvi. 10 :

xcvii. 1

^b Is. lxiv. 2

^c Ps. l. 1

^d Neh. i. 5 : iv.

14 : ix. 32

v. 1. "*The Peoples tremble.*" The same verb elsewhere describes the effect of a Theophany on the earth (Ps. lxxvii. 18 (19)), on the mountains (Ps. xviii. 7 (8); Hab. iii. 7), on the depths (Ps. lxxvii. 16 (17)). We must not therefore press the sense of *fear*. The verb may also signify "*to be angry*" (Sept. Vulg.) as in Ps. iv. 4 (5), and in this sense the writer of Revelation seems to have interpreted it. Thus:—"We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art and wast; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power and hast become King. And the Nations were wroth, and Thy wrath is come..." (Rev. xi. 16 ff.). This allusion, coupled with the words, "*The Kingdom of the world is become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ*," shews how St John, following no doubt a Jewish tradition, interpreted our Psalm.

"*The earth reels.*" Instead of the doubtful word *tānuq*, which only occurs here, read *tānuq* (Is. vi. 4; xxiv. 20).

The Kingship of
God as revealed in
the Name *Elohim*.

- 4 May the King be strong that loveth justice;
THOU^a hast established equity;
THOU^a hast wrought justice and righteousness in Jacob.
5 Exalt ye YHVH our God,
And bow down at the footstool of His feet;
"HOLY IS HE."

^a Emphatic

The Kingship of
God as revealed in
the Name *YHVH*.

- 6 Moses and Aaron among His Priests;
And Samuel among those that call upon His Name;
(Such) call upon YHVH and HE^b answers them.
7 In a pillar of cloud He speaks with them;
They kept His testimonies, and a statute He gave them.
8 O YHVH, our God, THOU^b didst answer them;
A forgiving God Thou wast to them,
And One that took vengeance on their wrong-doings.
9 Exalt ye YHVH our God,
And bow down at His holy Mountain;
"FOR YHVH OUR GOD IS HOLY."

^b Emphatic

v. 4. "May the King be strong" or "The King is strong." Instead of *וַי*, which makes no sense, I propose to read *וַי*, "May he be strong"; as it is said of God, in a closely parallel passage, "Thy hand is strong" (Ps. lxxxix. 13 (14), see context. Compare also Ps. ix. 19 (20)).

The emphatic *Thou*, twice in *v. 4*, reminds us also of Ps. lxxxix. 9—13.

v. 6. "Moses...Aaron...Samuel." All three were men of intercession. (For *Moses* see Exod. xv. 25 (J); xvii. 9 ff. (E); xxxii. 11 ff. (JE); xxxiii. 12 ff. (JE); Nu. xi. 2 (JE); xiv. 13 ff. (JE), &c. For *Aaron*, Nu. xvi. 46 ff. (P). For *Samuel*, 1 Sam. vii. 8 ff.; xii. 18 ff.; xv. 11). "Moses and Samuel" were recognised by Jeremiah as the typical men of intercession (Jer. xv. 1). Intercession implies Atonement.

"And HE answers them." The pronoun is emphatic, as in *v. 8*, since the thought is directed, not to the Saints who "call," but to the good and "forgiving God" who "answers."

v. 7. "In a pillar of cloud." Compare the "covert of thunder" Ps. lxxxix. 7. The words must be interpreted as in Eccles. xxiv. 4, where Wisdom says, "I dwell in high places, and my throne is in the pillar of cloud."

In J the Pillar of Cloud is a Divine Guide and Shield for the whole People (Ex. xiii. 21). In E it descends and stands at the door of the Tent to speak with Moses (Ex. xxxiii. 7—11; Nu. xii. 5, cf. Deut. xxxi. 15), while P extends the earlier thought of J, making it a Covering of Glory for the Tent of Meeting and a Guide for the journeys of the People (Ex. xl. 34 ff.; Nu. ix. 15 ff. See Carpenter and Battersby on Ex. xiii. 22). Thus Poetry, which is ever truer than what prosaic men call *fact*, prepared the way for the doctrine of the Shekinah.

"And a statute He gave them." The words may either signify that they kept "a statute (that) He gave them" or that "He gave them a statute." I prefer the latter; and would illustrate from Exod. xv. 25^b (E), "There (i.e. at Marah) He gave them a statute...and there He proved them." In this passage (see context) "statute" does not refer to laws or ordinances, but rather to that "allotted portion" (Prov. xxx. 8; xxxi. 15; Ezek. xvi. 27; Job xxiii. 12) which is the test of faith.

Just as in *v. 6*, the saints call but it is God who answers; so here, "they keep His testimonies, and He gives them all things convenient for them."

If this interpretation be correct we have a close parallel in Ps. lxxxix. 7, "I answer thee in the covert

of thunder; I test thee at the waters of Meribah," and also in Ps. xcv. 8, in both of which passages there is an allusion to Ex. xv. 25^b (see notes pp. 346, 403).

v. 8. "A forgiving God." *El nosē*. The verb here used for "forgive" signifies also "to bear," or "carry." It is used in the Revelation of God's Name to Moses (Ex. xxxiii. 7, cf. Nu. xiv. 18), to which our Psalmist seems to allude.

"And One that took vengeance..." This also is expressed in the Name revealed to Moses Ex. xxxiii. 7, "...and One that will by no means hold guiltless." *Forgiveness* does not necessarily imply exemption from consequences of wrong-doing. It was not so in the history of the Chosen People (Amos iii. 2). Neither was it so in the lives of men like Jacob, Moses, Eli, David. The "vengeance" is part of the "forgiveness" and springs from the jealousy of Love.

PSALM C.

The *Jubilate* fitly closes the Psalms of the Kingdom. In it the Kingdom of the World is become (the Kingdom) of our Lord, and all the Earth is bidden to thank Him for the great Redemption He has wrought.

The Seven *imperatives*, "Shout ye," "Serve ye," "Come ye," "Know ye," "Come ye," "Thank ye," "Bless ye," sound like trumpet-calls.

The Psalm has much in common with Ps. xcv. and also with Ps. xcvi. (see marginal references and notes): thus the *Venite, Cantate Domino, and Jubilate*, are closely related members of the same group of Psalms which picture the Coming of the Kingdom of God on Earth.

PSALM C.

Let all the World confess Him in	1 "Shout ^a ye unto YHVH, all the Earth ^b ."	^a Ps. xcv. 1
	2 Serve YHVH with gladness: Come before Him with ringing-joy.	^b Ps. xcvi. 4
His special choice of Israel.	3 Know ye that YHVH, He is God: HE ^c hath made ^d us, and His we are; His People, and flock of His pasture ^e .	^c Emphatic ^d Ps. xcv. 6 ^e Ps. xcv. 7
Let all the World thank Him for	4 Come into His gates with (the) Thanksgiving ^f , His courts with Praise: Thank ye Him and bless His Name.	^f Ps. xcv. 2
His Promises ful- filled.	5 "For YHVH is good; His Lovingkindness is for ever ^g "; And His Faithfulness ^h from age to age.	^g Pss. cvii. 1: cxviii. 1, 25: cxxxvi. 1 ^h Deut. xxxii. 4: Pss. xxxvi. 5: lxxxix. 1 ff.

v. 1. "Shout ye." The E.V. and R.V. "Make a joyful noise" is feeble, and loses all the associations of the original word, which is constantly used of the *shout* of a People in the presence of its King or on some great occasion, as when the foundations of the Temple were laid (Ezra iii. 11). It is used of the *shout* of the "Sons of God" at the Creation of the world (Job xxxviii. 7).

It is also used by the Second Isaiah, "*Shout ye lower parts of the Earth...for YHVH hath redeemed Jacob*" (Is. xliv. 23).

The word is characteristic of the present group of Psalms, see Pss. xcv. 1, 2; xcvi. 4, 6; and also of the Korah and Asaph Psalms. See notes on Pss. xlvii. 1, 5; lxvi. 1; lxxi. 1.

"*Shout ye...all the Earth.*" The verb in the *plural* the noun in the *singular* exactly as in Ps. lxvi. 1 (see note).

The sum total of created things is bidden, in man, to acclaim the Author of Israel's Redemption as when all the Sons of God shouted for joy over the Birth of the Worlds (cf. Ps. xcvi. 4—6 notes).

The Midrash on this verse suggests that the thanksgiving is that of all the Nations of the Earth and quotes Is. xlv. 23, "*Unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.*"

v. 3. The Writer seems, once more, to have in mind the Song of Moses (Deut. xxxii. 6, 15, 18); Israel is there rebuked as the foolish nation that had forgotten the God and Father who had made it, and had suffered the consequences. This folly is not to be repeated, "*Know ye that YHVH, He is God: He hath made us and His we are; His People, and flock of His pasture.*" These last words are identical in thought with Ps. xcv. 7, but our Psalmist, though he has the warning of Deut. xxxii. and of Ps. xcv. 8 ff. in his mind, does not dwell upon it but passes on to Thanksgiving. There is however this difference that, whereas in Ps. xcv. the warning is addressed to *Israel*, the warning note, "*Know ye,*" is, in the present Psalm, addressed to "*All the Earth.*"

"*And His we are.*" Lit. "*and to Him we (are).*" The Hebrew *lo*, "*to him*" is identical in sound with *lo*, "*not,*" with which word it is often confused. Thus two other renderings have arisen, viz. "*and not we*" (Sept., E.V., and P.B.V.), and "*when we were not,*" i.e. *when we were not yet in existence* (Sym. and Rashi). Jerome, however, rightly translates, "*ipse fecit nos, et ipsius sumus.*" The Psalmist is probably alluding to Is. xliii. 1.

"*His pasture.*" The only passages in the Psalter in which this word is found are in the present group (xcv. 7: c. 3) and in the Asaph Psalms (lxxiv. 1 note; lxxix. 13). In this fact we have one more indication of the close relationship which exists between the groups.

v. 4. "*Come into His gates with (the) Thanksgiving.*" The "*Thanksgiving*" (*thoda*) here and in the parallel passage, Ps. xcv. 2 (see note p. 402), has a definite meaning, which may best be gathered from the following passages where it occurs:—Jer. xvii. 26, "*And they shall come from the cities of Judah...bringing the Thanksgiving (E.V. Sacrifices of praise) into the House of YHVH*"; Jer. xxxiii. 11, "*The voice of them that say, Thank ye YHVH of Hosts; 'for YHVH is good; for His lovingkindness is for ever' as they bring the Thanksgiving into the House of YHVH.*" See also note on Ps. l. 14, 23, pp. 219 f.

The Title of our Psalm is "*A Psalm for (the) Thanksgiving.*"

v. 5. "*For YHVH is good; His Lovingkindness is for ever.*" It is evident from Jer. xxxiii. 11 (quoted above) that these words were of frequent use in public worship when the Thanksgiving processions entered the Temple: thus they occur in the Hodu Psalms (cvii. 1; cxviii. 1, 25; cxxxvi. 1). No doubt this formula was used at the foundation-laying of the Second Temple (Ezra iii. 11), but when the Chronicle-writer (c. 300 B.C.) puts it in the lips of the Sons of Asaph at the Dedication of Solomon's Temple (2 Chr. v. 13; vii. 6) he is unconsciously transferring a custom of his own days to the distant past.

"*And His Faithfulness...*" The *Lovingkindness* of God refers rather to His Nature and property to have *mercy*, while His *Faithfulness* has reference to His Covenants, culminating in the Covenant with David. See especially Ps. lxxxix., where the word occurs seven times (vv. 1, 2, 5, 8, 24, 33, 49). Ps. xcvi. 3 confesses that, in the Redemption from Babylon, God had already "*remembered His Lovingkindness and Faithfulness to the House of Israel.*"

PSALM CI.

The joyous Psalms of the Kingdom, which close with Ps. c. have pictured the Divine Advent: but now a different note is sounded:—How shall the Church be prepared for His Coming? (Mal. iii. 1—6). Israel feels that the promises to “David” (Ps. lxxxix. 1—37) are being fulfilled; therefore, speaking as the ideal David, he declares his resolve to make ready a People prepared for the Lord. Thus the Title, which assigns the Psalm to “David,” is not without significance. The division of the Psalm into verses is misleading and must be ignored.

Stanza I, *vv.* 1—2*a*, expresses the resolve to sing and meditate on that “Perfect Way” which alone can unite earth and heaven, man and God. Here we must, by all means, compare Pss. xv. and xxiv. This Stanza is followed by the brief prayer “*When wilt Thou come unto me?*”

The remainder of the Psalm consists of six resolves, whereby Israel, adopting as it were the personality of “David,” declares his intention of putting away all evil, so that God might dwell in His City. These resolves are related (*a*) to (*a*₁), (*b*) to (*b*₁), (*c*) to (*c*₁). See marginal notes.

At first sight these resolves might seem to savour of the Pharisee, or at least to interfere with the cherished rights of the individual to sin as much as he pleases provided only that he avoids those sins which the Law punishes as crimes. We have yet to learn that “*thou*,” in the Decalogue, refers not primarily to the individual but to the community. Our Psalm, if rightly understood, expresses the thought of St Paul, who probably alluded to it when he said (1 Cor. v. 12 f.), “*Do not ye judge them that are within?*” (cf. note on *v.* 5).

The Psalm, which has been called “the Mirror of Kings,” is used for the Accession Service: but, though it may be applied to such an occasion, its proper subject is not the putting away of *crime* through the action of a *Judge*, but the putting away of *sin* through the Advent of a *Saviour*.

PSALM CI.

My desire. 1 I would sing^a of Lovingkindness^a and Justice, unto ^a Ps. lxxxix. 1
Thee, O YHVH:
2 I would strike the harp with intent on the Perfect Way.

vv. 1—2^a. The Hebrew scholar will note the three *optatives* which mark this Stanza as distinct from all that follows.

The allusion to Ps. lxxxix. 1 should be observed, since it explains, what would otherwise be a difficulty, the fact that “*Lovingkindness and Justice*” refer to God, whereas the subject of the Psalm seems to be taken up with the good resolutions of a king. From Ps. lxxxix. 1 we learn that this “*Lovingkindness*” implied the promises of God to the ideal David.

v. 1. We must leave the punctuation of the Hebrew, which probably arose from an imaginary reference to David (1 Sam. xviii. 14), and follow the order of the Sept. and Symmachus.

v. 2. “*I would strike the harp with intent on the Perfect Way.*” Lit. “*I would strike the harp, I would*

My Prayer.	When wilt Thou come unto me?	
(a) I will walk in this Perfect Way myself.	I will walk in the perfectness ^a of my heart in the midst of my house.	^a Ps. lxxviii. 7 ²
	³ I will not set before mine eyes a thing ^b of Belial ^b :	^b Ps. xli. 8
(b) I will put away evil from my own life.	I hate the doing of apostasy; To me it shall not cleave.	
	⁴ A froward heart shall depart from me; Wickedness I will not know.	
(c) I will put away evil in others.	⁵ Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I destroy. Him that is lofty of eyes and proud of heart I cannot abide ^c .	^c 1 Cor. v. 11: ² Thess. iii. 6

play-wisely on the Perfect Way." Sept. *ψαλω και συνησω εν ψδη [ρδδφ] αμωμω.* Vulg. "*Psallam et intelligam in via immaculata.*" The Psalmist declares that *the Perfect Way* is to be the subject of his song. Sym. well translates *μελωδησω, εννοησω οδον αμωμων.*

Of the two Hebrew verbs, both in the *optative*, the second has almost the force of an *adverb* (Baethgen). I have therefore translated it "*with intent.*" It implies singing *with understanding*, making melody in the heart. See note on Ps. xlvii. 7, where the two verbs occur in the same sense.

The P. B. V., "*O let me have understanding...*," has at least the merit of observing the force of the *optative*, but the E. V. and R. V., "*I will behave myself wisely...*," though it follows the Masoretic punctuation, must be rejected as contrary to the structure of the Psalm and to the oldest versions.

In 2 Chr. xxx. 22 the word is used of the Levites as being "*well skilled*" (R. V.) in the Service of YHVH, where, however, we must understand by *skill* the skill of the heart.

v. 2^a. "*The Perfect Way.*" The word "*perfect*" when applied to a *sacrifice* is translated "*without blemish.*" When it refers to a man (e.g. Noah, Gen. vi. 9; Abraham, Gen. xvii. 1) it implies that *whole-hearted sincerity* which can make a human life acceptable to God. Deut. xviii. 13 requires this of Israel, "*Thou shalt be perfect with YHVH thy God,*" where the context shews that "*perfection*" consisted in freedom from all heathen practices. Israel claims for himself this *perfection* in Ps. xviii. where the word occurs four times (vv. 23, 25, 30, 32). Thus according to the standard of some Psalms those who are "*perfect in the way*" are those "*That walk in the Law of YHVH*" (Ps. cxix. 1). A higher moral standard is reached in Pss. xv. and xxiv. because the question there arises of fitness for dwelling in God's Presence. Thus though the words of Christ in Matt. v. 48 seem almost identical with those of Deut. xviii. 13, there are ages of development between the two.

v. 2^b. "*When wilt Thou come unto me?*" These words have seemed to some commentators (e.g. Wellhausen) to interrupt the sense, whereas they give the key to the whole Psalm.

It is strange to find Rashi reading the verb as 3 s. fem. and interpreting, "When will it (*i.e.* the Perfect Way) come unto me."

v. 3. "*A thing of Belial.*" The same expression occurs in Ps. xli. 8, where it denotes some *grievous crime.*

"*Apostasy.*" Lit. "*a turning aside.*"

v. 4. The Hebrew words which here are translated "*Him I cannot abide*" may, by a simple change of the vowel points, be rendered "*with him I will not eat.*" In this way they have been taken by the Sept. and Vulgate. St Paul may have had this rendering in his mind when he wrote 1 Cor. v. 11, especially as he uses the same Greek word *συνεσθιειν.*

(a₁) My servants shall be those that walk the Perfect Way.

6 Mine eyes are to the faithful of the Land, that they may dwell with me.

He that walketh in the Perfect Way^a, he shall be my minister^b.

^a v. 2^{ac}: cf. Ps. xv. 2
^b or *servant*

(b₁) I will put away evil from my household.

7 There shall not dwell^c in the midst of my house^d a worker of fraud.

There shall not abide before mine eyes^e a speaker of lies.

^c *be established*
^d v. 2^e
^e v. 3^a

(c₁) I will put away evil from the Church of God.

8 Morning by morning I shall destroy all the wicked of the land;

Cutting^f off, from the City of YHVH, all the doers of iniquity^g.

^f Ps. xxxiv. 16
^g cf. Rev. xxii. 15

v. 8. "*Cutting off.*" The word is often applied to excommunication.

"*The wicked of the land.*" Rashi rightly explains this as "*the wicked ones of Israel.*"

The whole Psalm implies a judgment, not on those that are without, but on those that are within. Since the Church as the City of God is, at last, to embrace all mankind this putting away of sinners from the Church must finally imply the putting away of sin from the world.

PSALM CII.

This Penitential Psalm consists of two Parts so distinct that they might, with advantage, be regarded as separate Psalms.

In the first Part (*vv.* 1—22) the Afflicted-one cries to God (*vv.* 1—11) out of deep distress using the language of Job, Lamentations, and of those Psalms most influenced by Jeremiah (see margl. references). He contrasts his short life with the Eternity of God, and upon this contrast bases an appeal (*v.* 12 f.) exactly in the manner of Lam. v. 19 which he quotes with one word changed. From the fact of God's Eternity he argues the Eternity of God's choice of Zion till, in the Vision of Prophecy, he sees her already rebuilt and the Gentiles gathered in (*vv.* 13—17). He is so sure of this consummation of all his hopes that in *vv.* 18—22 he gives thanks to God for this great Redemption in language that recalls the Second Isaiah. Here the first Part of the Psalm ends.

The second Part begins (*v.* 23 f.) once more as a cry of the Afflicted-one; once more we have the same contrast between the short life of the Afflicted-one and the Eternity of God; once more we have the same allusion to Lam. v. 19. We might have expected, from analogy, that *vv.* 25 ff. would draw an assurance, from God's Eternity, of the Eternity of the Afflicted Servant, and in this sense the Writer to the Hebrews seems to have quoted these verses. In any case Part II. ends like Part I. with the certainty that God's children will share His Life (*v.* 28).

PSALM CII.

Part I.

The lament of the
Afflicted-one.

- 1 O YHVH, hear^a my prayer,
And let my cry come unto Thee. ^a cf. Ps. lxi. 1
- 2 "Hide^b not Thy Face from me" in the day^c of my distress^c:
Incline to me Thine ear;
In the day^d when I call^d, "speedily^e answer me."
^b cf. Pss. xxii. 24 : xxvii. 9
^c Ps. lix. 16
^d Ps. lvi. 9
^e Ps. lxi. 17
- 3 For my days are ended^f like smoke,
And my bones are burned^g like fire-wood. ^f cf. Job vii. 6
^g Job xxx. 30
- 4 Smitten like the grass and withered is my heart:
For I forget to eat my bread.
- 5 By reason of the voice of my groaning
My bones^h cleave^h to my flesh. ^h Lam. iv. 8 :
Job xix. 20
- 6 I am like a pelican of the wilderness;
I am become like an owl of the ruins.
- 7 I watch and mournⁱ like the bird
That sitteth alone on the house-top. ⁱ Is. xxxviii.
14 : lix. 11
- 8 Mine enemies reproach^j me all the day long;
They that boast over me point their curses with me. ^j Ps. xliv. 16,
note
- 9 For I have eaten ashes like bread,
And have mingled my drink with weeping:
- 10 Because of Thine indignation and wrath;
For Thou hast taken me up and cast me down.
- 11 My days are like a declining shadow;
And I^k—like the grass^l—I am withered!

^k Emphatic
^l v. 4

The Title runs as follows:—"A Prayer of an afflicted-one when he is overwhelmed (cf. Pss. lxi. 2; lxxvii. 3; cxlii. 3; cxliii. 4; Is. lvii. 16; Jon. ii. 7), and poureth out his plaint before YHVH." On the word *qnee* "afflicted-one" or "poor" see Hastings' Dictionary *s.v.* "poor." The word is in the Psalms E.V. translated "poor" 22 times and "afflicted" 9 times. Probably in every case it would have been better to use the latter word. In Ps. xviii. 27 the word is applied to Israel as "the Afflicted People" (cf. Is. xlvi. 10, liv. 11). So Rashi also interprets the Title of our Psalm:—"A Prayer of the afflicted i.e. Israel, since they are the Afflicted People."

This interpretation best explains the Psalm as a whole, but it does not exclude the application to the individual, since all that applies to Israel has a fulfilment in Christ, and all that is fulfilled in Christ has an application to the individual Christian.

v. 3. "Like fire-wood." Instead of *k'mokēd*, "like a hearth." The Septuagint seem to have read *k'mo kash*, "like stubble" or "like fire-wood." The Sept. use the rare word *φρόγιον* which is the same as *φρόγαρον* which is used to translate the Hebrew *kash* (Is. xl. 24; xli. 2; xlvi. 14; Jer. xiii. 24). In other passages it seems to denote *dry twigs*. In Acts xxviii. 3 the word is used of the bundle of *sticks* collected by St Paul. Probably the Hebrew *kash* should not be restricted to *stubble*.

"Are burned." Only twice in the Psalter, viz. here and Ps. lxi. 3 where we have translated, "my throat is dried."

<p>God is Eternal; therefore also Zion!</p> <p>See the signs of the times.</p> <p>In His eternal thought it is already done.</p>	<p>12 "But THOU^a, O YHVH, abidest for ever"; And Thy Memorial-Name^b is from age to age.</p> <p>13 THOU wilt arise, wilt have pity upon Zion; For it is the time for shewing her mercy. For the Season^c has come.</p> <p>14 For Thy servants shew favour to her stones; And feel mercy for her dust.</p> <p>15 And the Nations^d shall fear the Name of YHVH, And all the Kings^d of the earth Thy Glory.</p> <p>16 For YHVH hath built up Zion; He hath appeared in His Glory;</p> <p>17 He hath turned Him to the prayer of the Desolate; And hath not despised^e their prayer.</p>	<p>^a Emphatic</p> <p>^b Ps. xxx. 4, note</p> <p>^c <i>Mo'ed</i></p> <p>^d Is. lxii. 2</p> <p>^e Ps. xxii. 24</p>
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v. 5. There is no authority for the P.B.V. rendering "My bones will *scarce* cleave to my flesh."

v. 7. "I watch and mourn." The text reads "I watch and become," but we must certainly (with Beer, Baethgen and others) make a slight change substituting the verb *hgh*, "to mourn" (used of birds Is. xxxviii. 14; lix. 11) for *lyh*, "to become."

"Like the bird." There is no justification whatever for the translation "sparrow." The word occurs 39 times and is always translated "bird" or "fowl" except here and in Ps. lxxxiv. 3.

"That sitteth alone." So Tennyson says of the linnet:—

"And one is sad; her note is changed,
Because her brood is stol'n away."

v. 8. "They that boast over me." Cf. Pss. v. 5; lxxiii. 3; lxxv. 4.

"Point their curses with me." Lit. "swear (or curse) by me": i.e. when they wish to curse anyone they can find nothing more terrible to say than "God make thee like this one." Cf. Is. lxxv. 15. This was the bitterest drop in the cup of Israel's sufferings, that those very sufferings should seem to the heathen a sign of God's rejection. Cf. Lam. iii. 60—63.

v. 11. "And I." Instead of the wicked being withered like grass (Ps. xxxvii. 20) it is I, the Servant of God, that am withered! cf. *vv.* 3, 4.

v. 12. "But Thou." There is an exact parallel in Lam. v. 19 where, after a lamentation over the fallen state of Israel, we get the same appeal by contrast "Thou, O YHVH, abidest for ever; Thy throne is from age to age." These words are identical with v. 12 of our Psalm except that "Thy throne" takes the place of "Thy Memorial-Name." God's "Throne" is eternal (Ps. xciii. 2; cf. xcvii. 2) so He grants to "David" an eternal "Throne" (Pss. xlv. 6; lxxxix. 4, 29, 36; cxxxii. 11).

In like manner God's "Memorial-Name" is eternal (Pss. cii. 12; cxxxv. 13; Exod. iii. 15) so He grants to the "Righteous Man" an eternal "Memorial-Name" (Ps. cxii. 6 with cxi. 4, note p. 43). Our Psalmist argues thus:—Israel is God's "Servant" and, as such, is partaker of His Eternity.

v. 13. On this verse Jerome well says, "Ex hoc versiculo manifestum est quod ex persona Sion dictus est iste psalmus, et non ex persona prophetarum."

"The Season." The important word *Mo'ed*, "set time," "Season," "Feast," has been discussed in notes on Pss. lxxiv. 8; lxxv. 2. These "Seasons" of the Jewish Church were felt to be signs of the coming Redemption, consequently they were times of special expectation. I therefore infer from this verse that the Psalm was written for one such Season; possibly for "the *Mo'ed of the month Abib*" (Ex. xxiii. 15; xxxiv. 18) i.e. for the Season of the Passover, which, as it commemorated the first Redemption from Egypt, suggested also the final Redemption.

v. 14. The allusion seems to be to some such event as that recorded in Zech. vi. 9—15 marking a newly awakened interest in the rebuilding of Jerusalem on the part of the more wealthy Jews of Babylonia. Compare v. 15 with Zech. vi. 15. Or a visit of Nehemiah may have suggested the words.

vv. 17, 18. The parallels in these verses to the thought and language of Ps. xxii. 24, 31 should be carefully considered.

- Bind up the testimony for it is sure.
- 18 This shall be written for a later age;
And a People (new) created^a shall praise Yah.
- 19 For He hath looked out from His holy height;
YHVH from heaven hath looked on the earth:
- 20 To hearken to the Captives' groan^b;
To set free those appointed to death;
- 21 To declare, in Zion, the Name of YHVH;
And His praise in Jerusalem:
- 22 While the Peoples are being gathered^c together,
And the Kingdoms to serve YHVH.
- Part II.*
- The Afflicted-one asks life of God.
- 23 He hath afflicted^a my strength in the Way!
He hath shortened my days!
- 24 I say, "My God^b, take me not away in the half of my days:
From age to age are Thy years.
- God's answer to Messiah as interpreted in Heb. i. 10.
- 25 Of old Thou hast founded the earth;
And the heavens are the work of Thy hands.
- 26 They^c shall perish, but Thou^c shalt endure:
And they all shall wax old as a garment;
As a vesture shalt Thou change them and they change;
- 27 But Thou art He,
And Thy years shall not end.
- 28 The children of Thy servants shall abide;
And their seed shall be established before Thee."

^a cf. Ps. xxii.
3¹

^b Ps. lxxix. 11

^c Is. lx. 4

^a Sept. differs

^b *Eli*, Ps.
xxii. 1

^c Emphatic

v. 25. "Of old." The Hebrew word never signifies "In the beginning" but always "in times past" (Deut. ii. 10, &c.), "beforetime" (Josh. xi. 10, &c.), or "in old time" (Deut. ii. 20, &c.). Probably even the Septuagint who translate *κατ' ἀρχάς*, and not *ἐν ἀρχῇ* as in Gen. i. 1, intended to mark a distinction, the only other passage in which they use this phrase being in Ps. cxix. (cxviii.) 152 where it represents the Hebrew *kedem* "of old." Consequently when the Sept. is quoted in Heb. i. 10 we ought not to translate "Thou, Lord, in the beginning," &c. (R.V.).

v. 25—27. It is not easy to see why these words should have been quoted by the Writer to the Hebrews (Heb. i. 10) as spoken by God to Christ. Such an argument would have had no weight unless, in the Writer's time, there already existed a Jewish interpretation which saw in these verses God's answer to the Messiah's prayer for life (*v. 24*; cf. Ps. xxi. 4). All the materials for such an interpretation seem to have existed in the Wisdom literature in which, more and more clearly, a quasi-Divine being is recognised as the Artificer of the worlds. (See Prov. viii. 22 ff.; Wisd. ix. 9; Eccclus. xxiv. 9; Jerus. Targ. and Bereshith Rab. on Gen. i. 1, &c.). But there is no proof that this Logos or Wisdom was identified in O.T. times with the Messiah. It certainly might seem as though *v. 27* were an answer to the prayer in *v. 24*. Whether this were in the Psalmist's mind or no it is clearly authorised for us by the Writer to the Hebrews.

v. 27. "Thou art He." The translation "Thou art the same" (E.V.; R.V.; P.B.V.) unfortunately obscures the allusions to the Second Isaiah where the pronoun *He* is thus used of God:—xli. 4 "I YHVH, the First and with the Last, I am He." Compare also xliii. 10; xlvi. 4; xlviii. 12 and Deut. xxxii. 39. If these passages be studied it will be seen that the pronoun "He" has a force and dignity of self-existence which would be very inadequately represented by paraphrasing it "the same." The Writer to the Hebrews twice claims this Title for Christ (Heb. i. 12; xiii. 8).

PSALM CIII.

This Psalm will best be understood if we regard it as the *Magnificat* of Israel's very soul, which blesses God for the new-born hopes of the Return from Babylon (*vv.* 1—5).

The Psalmist (*vv.* 6—8) dwells lovingly on the Revelation of God's Attributes to Moses, as developed (*v.* 9) by the Second Isaiah and by Jeremiah. He then (*vv.* 10—14) turns to his own time and confesses how abundantly these Attributes of Fatherly Love have been manifested to his Nation. (Compare *vv.* 12—14 with *vv.* 3—5.)

This being so he is not afraid (*vv.* 15, 16) to admit to the full that utter nothingness of man which had filled Job with something like despair (Job vii. 10, cf. Ps. xc. 9 f.). But, for our Psalmist, this very frailty of man only gives him a larger claim upon that "*Lovingkindness of YHVH (which) is for ever and ever*" (*v.* 17 f., cf. *v.* 13 f.). Thus the Psalm ends (*vv.* 20—22), as it begins, with benediction.

PSALM CIII.

The returning prodigal thanks God for

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| | 1 Bless YHVH, O my soul: | |
| | And all that is within me (bless) His holy Name. | |
| | 2 Bless YHVH, O my soul: | |
| | And forget not all His dealings ^a . | * or <i>benefits</i> |
| (a) Forgiveness, | 3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquity; | |
| (b) Healing, | Who healeth all thy diseases; | |
| (c) New life, | 4 Who redeemeth thy life from the Pit ^b ; | |
| (a ₁) The robe and ring, | Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and compassion; | ^b Job xxxiii. 18, 24, 28, 30: Jon. ii. 6 (7): Ps. xvi. 10 |
| (b ₁) Youth restored, | 5 Who satisfieth (thee) with fair beauty, | |
| (c ₁) Life ever new. | (So) thy youth renews itself like the eagle's. | |

v. 1. This verse suggests the opening verse of the Magnificat. See also *v.* 17.

v. 2. "*And forget not*"—cf. Rudyard Kipling's *Recessional*.

"*His dealings.*" The word is often applied to the *recompense* that God pays to the enemies of Israel (Is. lix. 18; lxvi. 6; Jer. li. 56, &c.): but here it signifies the *loving dealings* of God with His People (Ps. xiii. 6; cxvi. 7); we might therefore render "*His benefits,*" but since the *verb* is used in *v.* 10, "He hath not *dealt* with us after our iniquities," it is better to preserve the connexion by rendering here "*His dealings.*" The loving dealings of God are set forth in the six lines that follow.

vv. 3—5. These six lines suggest the story of the Prodigal Son. The reader will see that the last three correspond with the first three, line by line, so that (a) is crowned with (a₁), (b) with (b₁), (c) with (c₁).

v. 5. "*Who satisfieth (thee) with fair beauty.*" Lit. "*Who satisfieth* (cf. Ps. cxlv. 16; Is. lviii. 10, 11) *thy (f.) beauty with fairness.*" The Heb. word which in E. V., P. B. V., R. V. is translated "*thy mouth*" never has this meaning; it always signifies "*ornament*" or "*beauty*" or "*pride*" (Ps. xxxii. 9). In Ezek. xvi. 7 it is used to denote the *full ripeness of womanly beauty* (Sym. κόσμον γυναικῶν). This is, I believe, the meaning in the present passage in which the pronouns shew that the "Soul" is pictured as *feminine*.

The other word which generally signifies "*good*" or "*goodness*" is often used of the *goodliness* of man (Exod. ii. 2, &c.) or the *fairness* of woman (Gen. xxiv. 16, &c.). Thus, Hos. x. 11, "her *fair neck,*" marg. "*the beauty of her neck.*"

- He revealed Himself as the Merciful One, to Moses (Exod. xxxiii. 12—23, xxxiv. 6—9)
- 6 YHVH is a worker of righteous^a acts,
And of judgements for all that are oppressed.
- 7 He made known His ways unto Moses,
His deeds^b unto the Children of Israel.
- 8 Compassionate and Gracious is YHVH,
Long-suffering and of great Kindness.
- and to the Prophets of the Captivity.
- 9 He "will not alway contend^c"
"Nor keep (His anger) for ever^d."
- The Return from Captivity has shewn the length and breadth and depth and height of
- 10 He hath not done with us according to our sins;
Nor dealt^e with us according to our iniquities.
- 11 For as the Heaven is high above the earth,
So hath His Lovingkindness prevailed^f over them that
fear Him.
- Forgiveness,
- 12 Far as the East is from the West,
So far hath He set our sins from us.
- Fatherhood,
- 13 As a father is compassionate over his children,
So YHVH is compassionate over them that fear Him.
- Restoring love.
- 14 For He^g is mindful of our framing^h;
He remembereth that "dust we areⁱ."
- 15 As for frail man, his days are as grass;
He flowereth as a flower of the field;
- 16 A wind but passeth over it, and it is gone;
And "the place thereof shall know it no more^k."
- 17 But the Lovingkindness of YHVH is for ever and ever
over them that fear Him^l,
- And His Righteousness for children's children;
- 18 For those that keep His Covenant,
And remember His Statutes to do them.
- ^a Judg. v. 11
^b Pss. lxvi. 5: lxxvii. 12: lxxviii. 11
^c Is. lvii. 16
^d Jer. iii. 5, 12
^e z. 2
^f Ps. cxvii. 2
^g Emphatic
^h Gen. ii. 7
ⁱ Gen. iii. 19
^k Job vii. 10
^l vv. 11, 13

Our text implies that God abundantly fills the soul with all the graceful beauty of the opening bloom of life. That which to the form is *beauty* to the soul is *goodness*.

"*Thy youth...like the eagle's.*" The Second Isaiah (xl. 31) has a somewhat similar comparison, "*they shall renew (their) strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles.*" There are various legends as to the way in which the eagle renews its strength, but there is no proof that such thoughts were in the Psalmist's mind.

v. 7. "*He made known His ways unto Moses.*" There is a distinct allusion here and in v. 8 to the section Exod. xxxiii. 12—23; xxxiv. 6—9 (probably by J), where Moses asks, as an assurance of God's favour, "Make known to me, now, Thy ways," and is answered by the Revelation of the Name of YHVH as "*A God full of Compassion and Gracious, Long-suffering, and plenteous in Kindness and Truth....*"

"*His deeds unto the Children of Israel.*" God's Revelation to Moses was a personal revelation of character: but to the People He appealed by His wonders. "*If ye believe not Me, believe the works*" (St John x. 38).

v. 9. "*Nor keep....*" The verb is once (Lev. xix. 18) translated "*to bear a grudge.*" Our Psalmist

As in Heaven so on Earth His Kingdom comes.	19 As for 'YHVH, in Heaven hath He founded His throne, And His Kingdom ruleth ^a over all.	^a v. 22
Angels.	20 Bless ye YHVH, ye His Angels ^b ; Ye mighty-ones of strength that fulfil His word. [That hearken to the voice of His word] ^c .	^b Ps. cxlviii. 2 ^c Probably a gloss
Worlds.	21 Bless ye YHVH, all ye His Hosts ^d ; Ministers of His, that fulfil His pleasure.	^d Gen. ii. 1
All created things.	22 Bless ye YHVH, all ye His Works; In all places of His rule ^e .	^e v. 19
My soul.	Bless YHVH, O my soul.	

seems to be thinking of Jer. iii. 12, "*For I am merciful, saith YHVH, I will not keep (anger) for ever.*"

v. 10. The beautiful Prayer in the Jewish Morning Service for the Monday and Thursday fasts quotes this verse, and also v. 13, but changes the *past* tense into the *future*. So too our Litany, borrowing probably from the Jewish Prayer Book, reads:

*"O Lord, deal not with us after our sins
Neither reward us after our iniquities."*

v. 11. The waters of the Flood "*prevailed*" (Gen. vii. 18, 19, 20, 24) over the highest mountains for destruction:—The Blessing on Joseph (xlix. 26) "*prevailed*" above all blessings "unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills":—but no earthly measure can avail for the Grace of God, for, "*As the Heaven is high above the earth so hath (God's) Lovingkindness prevailed over them that fear Him.*"

The text does not imply merely a comparison of height, "As Heaven o'er earth, high mercy o'er them leans" (Keble), but such a prevailing Flood of Mercy that where sin abounded Grace does now much more abound.

vv. 14—17. The thought does not rest upon the frailty of man but upon the overmastering Loving-kindness of God. Though "all flesh is as grass" yet "the Glory of the Lord shall be revealed" (Is. xl. 6—8). See also Ps. cii. vv. 11, 12.

v. 14. This verse covers both the Creation and the Fall:—Gen. ii. 7 (J), "and YHVH God framed the man (of) *dust* from the ground."

Gen. iii. 19 (J), "For *dust thou art* and unto dust shalt thou return."

In Browning's poem, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, the image of God, as the Potter, framing man, is suggestively worked out.

The Jewish Prayer to which we have already (v. 10) alluded has the words, "*We are the clay, and Thou art our Framer (or Potter), and we are all of us the work of Thy hands.*"

v. 17. Note the connexion with vv. 11, 13. The words are almost identical with those of the Magnificat, "*His mercy is on them that fear Him, throughout all generations.*" Cf. note on v. 1.

v. 21. "*His Hosts.*" God's *Hosts* do not here refer to the Angels but to the *worlds*, as in Gen. ii. 1.

v. 22^{ab}. We have here a "*Benedicite, Omnia Opera*" which is expanded in the next Psalm, and, more fully, in Ps. cxlviii. Compare also Rev. v. 13.

v. 22^c. Even in the Chorus of praise from Angels, Worlds, and all created things, there would be a gap if Man were to be silent. Cf. Browning's poem of *The Boy and the Angel*:

"God said, 'A praise is in mine ear;
There is no doubt in it, no fear:
So sing old worlds, and so
New worlds that from my footstool go.
Clearer loves sound other ways:
I miss my little human praise.'"

PSALM CIV.

This Psalm develops the thought with which the preceding Psalm has closed. It is based upon the "Six Days" of Creation as given in the Priest-Code (Gen. i.). There is however this important difference that, whereas Gen. i. purposes to relate in prose the order of life's first beginnings, our Psalmist, with a poet's instinct, recognises Creation as an eternal work which is still going on and which all points to a "far-off Divine event," viz. the completion of God's joy in His works. This being so he sees no inconsistency in regarding animals, birds and men as being already in existence on the Third Day. We might analyze the Psalm as follows:—

vv. 1, 2. The First Day, like the first month in Spring, is filled with the promise of the birth of Light.

vv. 3, 4. The Second Day reminds us how God makes the very elements of destruction contribute to the conservation of the earth.

vv. 5—18. The Third Day, like the third month, is "the gift of seed." It reminds us how (*a*) God has taken the waters, which were once the winding-sheet of a dead earth, and made them countless rills of blessing to birds and beasts and men. (*b*) It also reminds us how God made the dry land thus to become the bountiful seed-plot of corn and wine and oil.

vv. 19—23. The Fourth Day, like the fourth month (the month of the summer solstice), tells God's good purpose in darkness as well as in light, while it points to the final triumph of light (*v.* 22 note).

vv. 24—30. The Fifth Day, like the fifth month (which even in the nature-religion of Babylonia was dedicated to Istar as the bona dea of fertility), tells of the infinite variety of God's "creatures" and of His care for all their needs.

vv. 31—35. The Sixth Day sums up the growing purpose of the whole Creation, viz. that this bountiful God may rejoice, at last, in a world from which all evil has been expelled.

The Psalm is well fitted for use on Whitsunday for which it is appointed in our Church.

If the reader will verify the marginal references he will see that the Psalmist was deeply influenced by the Book of Job.

The Hymn of Adam (*Paradise Lost* v. 154--207) should also be read with this Psalm and with Ps. cxlviii.

PSALM CIV.

DAY I.

Light (Gen. i. 3—5).

- 1 Bless YHVH, O my soul.
 O YHVH, my God, Thou art become very great;
 Thou art clothed in splendour and majesty.
 2 Covering Thyself with light as with a garment;
 "Stretching out the heavens^a" like a curtain.

^a Is. xl. 22

DAY II.

Firmament (Gen. i. 6—8).

- 3 Who flooreth^b His upper-chambers in^c the waters;
 Who maketh the clouds His chariot;
 Who walketh upon the wings of the wind:
 4 Making His angels^d out of winds,
 His ministers out of flaming fire^d.

^b 2 Chr. xxxiv.

11
^c or *with*
 (Vulg.)

^d Heb. i. 7

vv. 1, 2. The creation of Light is a parable of Revelation. He who "dwells in the Light which no man can approach unto" (1 Tim. vi. 16) becomes to us "*very great*" when, in the shadow of His uncreated Light, we see light. He then "*covers Himself with light as with a garment.*"

"*Stretching out the heavens like a curtain.*" The Psalmist seems to be quoting Is. xl. 22; though, by using a different word for "*curtain,*" he carries our thoughts to the curtains of the Tabernacle. On the symbolism of the Tabernacle and its curtains (Exod. xxvi.) see s.v. *Tabernacle* in Hastings' *Dict.*

vv. 3, 4. Here we have the work of the "Second Day."

The *Firmament*, which, in Gen. i. 6—8, is described as forming a division between the upper waters of Heaven and the lower waters of the atmosphere, is here pictured as the flooring of Heaven. Compare Job xxxvii. 18 "*Dost thou with Him beat thin the clouds, which are firm as a molten mirror?*" The clouds and winds and fiery vapours, which once wrapped this earth in dim confusion, became, at God's Second Word, His messengers and ministers for man's good. The thought in *v.* 3^a is closely parallel with Amos ix. 6, just as *v.* 32 is parallel with Amos ix. 5.

v. 4. Though many interpretations are possible, owing to the fact that the Hebrew word for *wind* and *Spirit* is the same, yet the primary thought in the Psalmist's mind is the work of the wind on the "Second Day." Just as, after the Deluge, "God made a *wind* to pass over the earth and the waters asswaged" (Gen. viii. 1), so, on Creation's Second Day the winds were God's agents in dividing the waters from the waters. Our Psalmist probably alludes to Job xxvi. 8 ff. "*He bindeth up the waters in His thick-clouds; so that the cloud is not rent under them.....By His power He clove the sea; and by His understanding He smote through Rahab, with His wind which beautifieth the Heavens.*" So too in the Babylonian story it is through the agency of the wind that Merodach conquers the Dragon of Chaos.

As, on the Second Day, the "*winds*" and "*flaming fire*" first prepared the earth, so now, in gentler-wise, they sustain it; for, as Shelley says:

"...the winds and sunbeams, with their convex gleams,
 Build up the blue dome of air."

Thus the wind and fire are Nature's parables of the ministrations of God's Spirit.

Lancelot Andrewes, in a prayer for the second day of the week, follows Jewish tradition in assigning the creation of angels, winds, waters, vapours (Jer. x. 13) to the "Second Day" (*Preces Privatae*, Brightman's translation, p. 56).

DAY III.

(a) Earth from the waters (Gen. i. 9, 10).

He makes the waters a blessing.

- 5 He founded the earth upon her bases^a,
That she should not be moved for ever and ever.
- 6 With the Deep as with a garment^b Thou hadst covered it; ^b Job xxxviii. 4 ff.
The waters stood above the mountains. ⁹
- 7 At Thy rebuke they flee;
At the voice of Thy thunder they hasten away—
- 8 Mountains rise, valleys sink—
To the place Thou hadst founded for them.
- 9 A bound^c Thou didst place^c that they should not pass^c, ^c Jer. v. 22; cf. Job xxxviii. 10
That they should not turn again to cover the earth.
- 10 Who sendeth forth springs into the channels;
Among the mountains they take their course.
- 11 They give drink to every beast of the field;
The wild asses quench their thirst.
- 13 He giveth drink^d to the mountains from His upper-chambers^e; ^d v. 11
The earth hath her fill^f from the fruit of Thy works. ^e v. 3
^f v. 16, 28

v. 5 ff. In Gen. i. the Third Day is, as we may say, a double day, since it contains two Words of Creation ("And God said"), each being closed with the formula "And God saw that it was good."

Thus the first half of the Third Day (Gen. i. 9, 10) relates the *gathering together of the waters*, while the second half (Gen. i. 11—13) speaks of the growth of *grass, herbs and trees from the dry land*.

It will be seen that our Psalmist exactly follows this division.

v. 6. There is no allusion here to the Deluge. The Deep which covered the earth was the winding-sheet of the waters of Chaos. Cf. Job xxxviii. 8 ff.

v. 9. The *thought* is exactly that of Job xxxviii. 10 f., "When I assigned unto it My decree, and fixed bars and doors, And said, Hitherto shalt thou come and no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." But the *language* is more closely parallel with Jer. v. 22, where God says that He "placed the sand as a bound for the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass."

v. 13. "He giveth drink to the mountains." The same verb is used as in v. 11. The streams give drink to the beasts while God Himself gives drink to His mountains.

"The fruit of Thy works." If God be the "Husbandman," man, His son, must also be a worker. See next verse.

"The earth hath her fill," i.e. "is satisfied." This verb is used three times in this Psalm:—The earth (v. 13), the trees (v. 16), the teeming creatures of the seas (v. 28), are all "filled," to the utmost of their capacity, by God. As another Whitsunday Psalm says, "Thou openest Thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing" (cxlv. 16).

v. 14. Grass grows for the cattle without any toil on their part; but, to man, the gift of seed implies labour. ("Mox et frumentis labor additus," *Georg.* i. 150, quoted by Kay.) The "curse" of labour, rightly understood, is man's dignity. There is a quaint story to this effect in the Midrash, as follows: When Adam heard his sentence, "Thorns and thistles...and thou shalt eat the herb of the field" (Gen. iii. 18), he said to God, What? Shall I and the ass eat out of one crib? But when God added, "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread" (Gen. iii. 19) immediately he was content.

In labour man cooperates with God (v. 13).

"Rejoice, we are allied
To that which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe."

(b) Grass, seed, trees
(Gen. i. 11—13).
He makes the dry
land a blessing.

14 He maketh grass^a to grow for the cattle ;
And herb for the labour of man.
So as to bring food out of the earth ;
15 And wine that may gladden the heart of man^b.
So as to make (his) face shine with oil ;
And food that may sustain the heart of man^b.
16 The trees of YHVH have their fill ;
The cedars of Lebanon which He hath planted.
17 On them the fowls of heaven dwell ;
And from among the foliage they give their song^c.
18 There the birds make their nests ;
The stork (too) whose home is the firs.
19 The high mountains are for the wild goats ;
The rocks are a refuge for the conies^d.

^a Job xxxviii.
27

^b *frail man*

^c lit. *voice*

^d Prov. xxx.
26

DAY IV.

The lesser and
greater Lights (Gen.
i. 14—19).

He makes darkness
and light to be bless-
ings.

19 He made the moon for the Seasons^e.
The sun knoweth his going down^f.
20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night ;
Wherein all the beasts of the forest creep forth.
21 The young lions roar for their prey,
And for seeking their meat from God^g.
22 The sun arises, and they withdraw,
And lay them down in their dens.
23 Man goeth forth to his work,
And to his labour until the evening.

^e *Festivals*

^f *place of set-
ting*

^g cf. Job
xxxviii. 41

"So as to bring food out of the earth." The very ancient Jewish benediction before food, "*Blessed art Thou, YHVH, that bringest food out of the earth,*" is founded on this verse.

It is very probable that these words were used by our Lord when 'He took the bread and gave thanks.'

v. 12. Most commentators agree that this verse has been displaced. It can scarcely have come after v. 11. For though the translation of the P.B.V., "*Beside them,*" is possible, yet the mention of "*the foliage*" in 12^b would be strangely abrupt in such a context.

It may be noted that the Sept. and Vulg. read "*Among the rocks*" instead of "*Among the foliage.*" Probably the Sept. mistook רִמְסֵי for רִמְסֵי (see Job xxx. 6 ; Jer. iv. 29), while the Vulgate merely followed the Septuagint.

v. 19. On the Fourth Day the two great Lights were created "*for signs and for seasons,*" i.e. to mark the Festivals which, in the early Jewish Church, were all ruled by the Seasons of the year.

Our Psalmist mentions the moon before the sun because, throughout the Psalm, he is tracing the movement from darkness to light.

v. 21. The Hebrew implies that the roar of the lion has a double significance. Partly it is a result of hunger ; partly it is a prayer.

v. 22. "*The sun arises, and they withdraw.*" Lit. "*they are withdrawn.*" The daily succession of light to darkness is regarded by our Psalmist's favourite Author (Job xxxviii. 13) as a parable of the extinction of evil. See note on v. 35.

DAY V.

The Sea and all its creatures (Gen. i. 20—23).

He makes it teem with life and joy.

- 24 How manifold are Thy works, O YHVH!
 In wisdom hast Thou made them all!
 The earth is full of Thy creations.
- 25 This sea, too, great and wide-expanded;
 Wherein are things creeping innumerable,
 Creatures small as well as great.
- 26 Where the ships move along;
 Leviathan^a, too, Thou hast formed to sport therein.
- 27 These all are expectant unto Thee;
 To give them their meat in its season^b.
- 28 Thou givest to them—they gather it;
 Thou openest Thine hand—they are filled with good.
- 29 Thou hidest Thy Face—they are troubled;
 Thou gatherest in their breath—they expire,
 And return again to their dust.
- 30 Thou sendest forth Thy spirit^c, they are created,
 And Thou renewest the face of the ground.

^a Job xli. 1
(xl. 25)

^b cf. Ps. cxlv.
15 f.

^c wind

DAY VI.

The joy of God in His Creation (Gen. i. 24—31).

- 31 Let the Glory of YHVH be for ever;
 Let YHVH rejoice in His works:
- 32 Who (but) looketh on the earth, and it trembleth;
 He toucheth the mountains, and they smoke.
- 33 I would sing unto YHVH while I live;
 I would hymn unto my God while I have being.
- 34 May my musing to Him give pleasure.
 For myself, I will rejoice in YHVH.
- 35 Let sinners be ended^d from the earth,
 And the wicked exist no more.
 Bless YHVH, O my soul.

The final extinction of evil.

^d Ps. cii. 28

vv. 24—26. The manifold forms of life in the sea far exceed those of the dry land. In Rev. viii. 9 we find “*the creatures that are in the sea*” coupled with “*the ships.*”

v. 27—30. In these verses the generations of teeming life hang upon the breath of God. It should be noted that life, not death, is the last Word (*v.* 30). The lower forms of life are *withdrawn* that the higher forms may be *breathed forth*. Thus death itself becomes a door of hope. Note how the thought has grown from Pss. xc. 3 ff.; ciii. 14 ff.

v. 29. Compare Job xxxiv. 14 f. “*If He should set His heart upon Himself (alone), (then) would He gather to Himself His breath and His Spirit; (And) all flesh would expire together*” (Bernard’s translation).

vv. 31—35. The allusion here is not to the Seventh Day but to the Sixth. It was on the Sixth Day that “*God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good*” (Gen. i. 31).

v. 31. “*Let the Glory of YHVH be for ever.*” The whole purpose of the Six Days of Creation has been to prepare for the incoming of the Glory of God. Though “*all flesh be as grass*” yet “*the*

Glory of YHWH shall be revealed" (Is. xl. 6—8; cf. Ps. ciii. 14—17, note, p. 429). This Revelation of God's Glory will complete the Sixth Day's work, so that God may, once more, "*rejoice in His works.*"

The incoming of the Glory of God is, to us, the Incarnation which completes the work of the Sixth Day.

"Blessed art Thou, O Lord, for thy great and precious promise on this day touching the quickening seed, and for the fulfilling of the same (Eph. i. 10; S. John xix. 14) in the fulness of the times on this day." [Andrewes, *Preces Privatae* for the sixth day of the week.]

v. 35. "*Let sinners be ended.*" The Midrash explains this as meaning "*they shall be made perfect*"; and that "*Let the wicked be no more*" means "*that they shall be no more wicked.*" Jerome's comment is very similar: "Non dixit ut peccatores pereant, sed ipsum peccatum, ut non appareat. Peccato autem non apparante, utique jam non sunt peccatores, sed omnes justi invenientur. *Et iniqui ita non sint.* Ut non sint iniqui, sed justii."

No doubt our Psalmist, who has traced the good purpose of God in Creation, pictured to himself the final extinction of evil through the growing Light of God; even as it is said of the Dawn that it "seizes upon the skirts of the earth, so that the wicked are shaken out of her" (Job xxxviii. 13).

This is the Sabbath-rest to which the whole Creation moves.

PSALM CV.

In 1 Chr. xvi. 8—22 we have a duplicate text of the first fifteen verses of our present Psalm. The Psalm is there stated to have been delivered by David to the Sons of Asaph. Though it is quite impossible to regard the Psalm as a Davidic Psalm, yet the tradition that associates it with the Asaph guild is worthy of consideration. Certainly our Psalm has the characteristics of an "Asaph" Psalm in that it is a Psalm of *historical retrospect* (*Introd. to Asaph Pss.* Part II. p. vii). It is closely parallel with the Asaph Psalm lxxviii. which also treats in the same way of the Plagues of Egypt. It is also the only Psalm, apart from the "Asaph" Psalms, in which Joseph is mentioned (see note on vv. 17—22).

Thus we conclude that the tradition which led the Chronicle-writer (c. B.C. 300) to associate the Psalm with the Asaph guild and with a Dedication Festival has some foundation. (Compare *Introd. to Ps. xcvi.* p. 405.)

But Ps. cv. is closely related to the group in which it stands. As Ps. civ. deals with the growing Promise in God's works of Creation, so Ps. cv. deals with the same Promise as traced in the history of Israel's redemption. Ps. cv., as the first of the Hodu-Psalms, is also closely related to Pss. cvi., cvii., cxviii., cxxxvi.

The Plague-list of Ps. cv. has been fully explained in our Introduction to Ps. lxxviii. pp. 326—328. It should however be noted that, whereas the Asaph Psalm lxxviii. does not allude to those Plagues which are peculiar to the Priest-code, Ps. cv. certainly mentions one of those Plagues (v. 31 note). The reader will also observe that as in the Priest-code (Gen. i.) and in Ps. civ. Day III. is a double day, *i.e.* it has two 'Words' of Creation, so in Ps. cv. 30, 31, Day III. is a double day and has two plagues. Thus I conclude that Ps. cv. is later in date than Ps. lxxviii. Both these Psalms should be compared with the Psalm in Neh. ix.

PSALM CV.

Halleluyah.

- 1 "Thank ye YHVH, invoke His Name,
Make known among the Peoples His doings^a." ^a Is. xii. 4; cf.
Ps. ix. 11
- 2 Sing ye to Him, hymn ye to Him;
Meditate on all His marvellous works.
- 3 Glory ye in His holy Name;
Let the heart of them rejoice that seek YHVH.
- 4 Inquire after YHVH and His strength;
Seek ye His Face^b continuously. ^b Ps. xxvii. 8
- 5 Remember His marvellous works that He hath done;
His wonders^c, and the judgements of His mouth; ^c Ps. lxxviii.
43
- 6 O seed of Abraham, His Servant^d,
(Ye) sons of Jacob, His Chosen-ones. ^d Sept. *ser-*
vants
- 7 He is YHVH our God;
His judgements are in all the earth.
- 8 He hath remembered His Covenant for ever;
The Word^e which He enjoined unto a thousand generations^f; ^e *Promise*
^f Deut. vii. 9
- 9 (The Covenant) which He made with Abraham,
And the oath^g unto Isaac; ^g Gen. xxvi. 3;
Deut. vii. 8
- 10 And established it^h as a statute for Jacob,
And for Israel as an everlasting Covenant: ^h *i.e.* the oath
- 11 Saying, Unto thee will I give the Land of Canaan,
The lot of your inheritance:
- 12 When they were but "few in numberⁱ;" ⁱ Gen. xxxiv.
30
- 13 And they went about from nation to nation^k;
From (one) kingdom to another people. ^j Acts vii. 5;
Heb. xi. 9
^k cf. Acts vii.
2 ff.
- 14 He suffered no man to oppress them;
And reproved (even) kings for their sakes;
- 15 "Touch not Mine anointed-ones,
And do My prophets^l no harm." ^l Gen. xx. 7
(E)

v. 1. The whole of this verse is found again in Is. xii. 4 and, from the way in which it is there introduced, it might seem to have been a recognised liturgical formula of the Hodu Psalms. "And ye shall draw water out of the wells of salvation. And ye shall say in that day, *Thank ye YHVH, invoke His Name, Make known among the Peoples His doings.*" The context, in Isaiah, with its allusions to the Song of Moses (Ex. xv.), suggests such a season as that of the Passover (cf. Ps. xcvi. 1-3).

The "Hodu-Psalms" are so named from the opening word *Hodu*, "thank ye," just as the "*Hallelu-Yah*" Psalms are named after the Hebrew word *Hallelu*, "praise ye."

The second half of the verse occurs in a slightly different form in the Alphabetical Ps. ix. 11.

v. 4. "And His strength." The Sept., both here and in the parallel text in 1 Chr. xvi. 11, read

<p>Famine and slavery work out His will (cf. Acts vii. 9 ff.).</p>	<p>16 When he called for a famine^a upon the Land; He brake the whole staff^b of bread^b;</p>	<p>^a cf. Acts vii. 9 ff. ^b Ezek. iv. 16: v. 16: xiv. 13</p>
<p>Joseph the Sufferer</p>	<p>17 He had sent a man before them; Joseph was sold as a slave.</p> <p>18 His feet they afflicted with fetters; His very soul was in bonds^c;</p>	<p>^c entered into iron ^d v. 8</p>
<p>is raised up as a Saviour.</p>	<p>19 Until the time when His Word^d came, The oracle^e of YHVH tried him.</p> <p>20 The king sent^f and loosed him; The ruler of the Peoples let him go free.</p> <p>21 He made him lord of his household; And ruler of all his possessions,</p> <p>22 To bind his princes at will; And to teach his senators wisdom.</p>	<p>^e Pss. xii. 6: xviii. 30; Prov. xxx. 5 ^f Gen. xli. 14 (E)</p>
<p>As with Joseph so with Israel.</p>	<p>23 So Israel came into Egypt^g; And Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.</p>	<p>^g Exod. i. 1</p>
<p>God brings good out of evil (cf. Acts vii. 19).</p>	<p>24 And He made His People exceedingly fruitful^h; And made them strongerⁱ than their adversaries.</p> <p>25 He turned their heart to hate His People; And to deal subtilly^j with His servants.</p>	<p>^h Exod. i. 7 (P) ⁱ Exod. i. 9 (J) ^j cf. Exod. i. 10</p>
<p>Saviours out of Egypt (cf. Acts vii. 35—37).</p>	<p>26 He sent Moses His Servant; Aaron (too) whom He had chosen:</p>	

“*And be strong.*” There is, however, no reason to depart from the usual rendering, especially when we remember Exod. xv. 2 “YHVH is my strength and my song” (cf. Ps. cxviii. 14).

“*Continuously.*” The word *tamid* is constantly used to denote the continuity of the Service of God in the Temple. The Shewbread (Exod. xxv. 30), the lamps (Exod. xxvii. 20), the burnt-offerings (Exod. xxix. 42), the incense (Exod. xxx. 8) were all to be before God “*continuously.*” So also the Service of the Priests, Levites and Singers was to be a *Continuous* Service (1 Chr. xvi. 6, 11, 37, 40, &c.). Thus, under the Old Covenant, the privilege of prayer “without ceasing” (1 Th. v. 17) was set forth in visible types.

v. 6. The Chronicle text, for “*Abraham,*” reads “*Israel,*” a reading which is possibly correct, since the name *Abraham* may have originated from v. 42. The word “*seed*” is in apposition with “*His Servant,*” just as “*sons*” is in apposition with “*His Chosen-ones.*” The juxtaposition of “*Servant*” and “*Chosen-ones*” is suggestive of the Second Isaiah. Thus:—Is. xlii. 1 “Behold My *Servant,* whom I uphold; My *Chosen-one* (in whom) My soul delighteth”; Is. xlv. 4 “For Jacob My *Servant’s* sake, and Israel My *Chosen-one.*”

Is. lxxv. 9 “My *Chosen-ones* shall inherit it, and My *Servants* shall dwell there.” (Compare also vv. 15, 22.)

v. 12. “*When they were...*” The Midrash, Chald., and Syr. here read, “*When ye were...*” This also is the reading in the Chronicle-text and is probably correct.

“*Very few and sojourners.*” The nearest parallel is Deut. xxvi. 5, “And thou shalt answer and say before YHVH thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there with men very few, and he became there a great Nation.”

St Stephen (Acts vii. 5) and the Writer to the Hebrews (xi. 9) both dwell upon the discipline of the tent-life in the Land of the Promise.

v. 15. The Chronicle-text breaks off at the close of this verse, and continues with a good text of

He reversed the
Words of Creation
(cf. Ps. lxxviii 43 ff.).

DAY I.

First Word re-
versed. (Contrast Ps.
civ. 1, 2.)

DAY II.

Second Word re-
versed. (Contrast Ps.
civ. 3, 4.)

DAY III.

(a) Third Word re-
versed. (Contrast Ps.
civ. 5—13.)

DAY III.

(b) Fourth Word
reversed. (Contrast
Ps. civ. 14—18.)

DAY IV.

Fifth Word re-
versed. (Contrast Ps.
civ. 19—23.)

DAY V.

Sixth Word re-
versed. (Contrast Ps.
civ. 24—30.)

DAY VI.

Seventh Word re-
versed. (Contrast Ps.
civ. 31 ff.)

27 He^a shewed in them His signs ;
And wonders in the land of Ham.
28 He sent Darkness and it was dark ;
And they were not disobedient unto His words.

^a See *Sept.*

29 He turned their waters into Blood,
And slew their fish.

30 Their land swarmed with Frogs,
In the (very) chambers of their kings.

31 He spake, and there came the Swarm,
(Even) Lice^b through all their border.

^b or *gnats*

32 He gave them Hail instead of showers,
Flaming fire in their land ;

33 So it smote^c their vines and figtrees,
And brake the trees of their borders.

^c Exod. ix. 25
(J)

34 He spake, and there came the Locust,
And the grasshopper without number,

35 And ate every herb of their land,
And ate the fruit of their ground.

36 "And He smote all the Firstborn" in their land,
"Even the prime of all their strength^d."

^d Ps. lxxviii.
51

Ps. xcvi. 1—13^b and concludes with the first and the last two verses of Ps. cvi. We conclude that the Chronicle-writer had reasons for regarding these three Psalms as belonging to the same group.

v. 16. On this verse Jerome well says:—"Saepius evenit, ut quae putantur contraria esse, haec providentia Dei pro utilitate fieri."

vv. 17—22. This is the only passage in the Psalter in which Joseph is mentioned except in the Asaph Psalms (lxxvii. 15 : lxxviii. 67 : lxxx. 1 : lxxx. 5), and we must remember that according to 1 Chr. xvi. the present Psalm was an Asaph Psalm.

To a Psalmist who had witnessed the Captivity of the House of Joseph the story of the patriarch Joseph must have become full of meaning and of promise. To a much later age Joseph became the type of a Suffering Messiah, called by the Jews *Messiah ben Joseph*. (See Appendix A in my translation of the *Yalkut on Zechariah*.)

v. 19. "His Word," i.e. the Promise made of God unto the Patriarchs (Acts xxvi. 6) referred to in v. 8.

"The oracle of YHVH tried him." See notes on Pss. xii. 6 : xviii. 30, pp. 71, 87.

In Joseph's case the "oracle of YHVH" was the Promise to himself as he had apprehended it (Gen. xxxvii. 5—11 E). God's Word is sure, but our apprehension of that Word constitutes our trial.

v. 23. "So Israel came into Egypt." Egypt, as Babylon later, was a necessary stage in the history of revelation. Our Psalmist seems to suggest that the history of Joseph (vv. 17—22) repeated itself in the history of the People of Israel (vv. 23 ff.)

v. 26. To save "His servants" (v. 25), "His Chosen-ones" (v. 6), He sent "His Servant" "whom He had chosen."

- Thus He redeemed
His People. 37 And He brought them^a out with silver and gold ;
So there was no feeble-one throughout their tribes.
- 38 Egypt rejoiced at their departing,
For their fear was fallen upon them.
- He led them. 39 He spread out a cloud^b for a covering,
And a fire^b to give light in the night.
- He fed them. 40 They asked, and He brought^c quails,
And He filled^d them with the bread of heaven.
- He gave them
drink. 41 He opened the Rock and there welled out waters,
That ran through the deserts as a river.
- He more than justi-
fied His Promise and
His Oath (v. 8 f.). 42 For He remembered His holy Word,
Abraham also His servant.
- 43 So He brought out His People with gladness,
His Chosen-ones with ringing-joy.
- 44 And He gave them the lands of the Nations,
So that they took the labour of the Peoples in possession.
- 45 In order that they might keep His statutes
And observe His laws.

^a i.e. Israel^b cf. Ps. lxxviii. 14^c Ps. lxxviii. 29^d sated*Halleluyah.*

v. 27. "His signs." Lit. "the words of His signs." In the Priest-code (Gen. i.) there is no doubt but that the Writer had a special motive when, in his six "Days" of Creation, he introduced ten "Words," or fiat, of God. *Ten* is the sacred number of the Priest-code just as *six* (or *seven*) is the sacred number of JE. The heavenly bodies themselves are called "signs" (Gen. i. 14, cf. Jer. x. 2) and the Plagues of Egypt are not called *plagues* but *signs*. The whole point is that each of these so-called Plagues is a reversal of the corresponding *sign* of Creation: I therefore suggest that when our Psalmist, who was certainly familiar with the Priest-code, used the strange expression "the words of His signs" he was thinking of those "Words" of Creation which were, in punishment, reversed.

v. 28. Here, and in the Signs which follow, the "Words" of Creation (Gen. i.) are reversed. See Introduction to Ps. lxxviii. The reader must, however, bear in mind the fact that, though the first two "Days" of Creation have but one "Word" each, the third "Day" has two "Words" (viz. Gen. i. 9 and 11); thus the fourth, fifth and sixth "Days" correspond with the fifth, sixth and seventh "Words" respectively. It is true that in Gen. i. there are *ten* Words of Creation, since the sixth "Day" has four "Words" (Gen. i. 24, 26, 28, 29), but our Psalmist disregards the last three. His list is completed in the seventh plague, which, in the *Destruction of the Firstborn*, reverses the blessing of the sixth Day's work. Compare the "seven angels which had the seven trumpets" (Rev. viii. 7 ff.).

"And they were not disobedient." The P.B.V., misled by the Sept., reverses the meaning.

v. 31. "The Swarm." See on Ps. lxxviii. 45, p. 335.

"Lice." This Plague is one of those which are peculiar to the Priest-code [Exod. viii. 16 (12), 17 (13), 18 (14)]. This is interesting since the parallel Psalm (lxxviii.) does not make use of the Priest-code. The meaning of the word translated "lice" is uncertain. Possibly it may signify *gnats* or *sand-flies*.

v. 36. The verse seems to be quoted almost word for word from Ps. lxxviii. 51. It may be worth noting that if we had only the unpointed Hebrew text we might have translated, "And it (i.e. the Locust) smote (v. 33, and Exod. ix. 25) all the first-fruits in their land, Even the prime of all their substance" (Sept., ἀπαρχήν παντός κόπου ἀβρῶν). Since, however, the destruction of the Firstborn is found not only in P but in J there is no reason to doubt the traditional interpretation of the passage.

v. 32. The "Plague," or rather the Sign, of *Hail mingled with Fire* is peculiar to E (Exod. ix. 23, 24^a). In J (Exod. ix. 25^b and in Ps. lxxviii. 47), hail is mentioned but not the fire.

The comparative table of the Plague-lists given on p. 327 will explain the variations in the order and number of the "Plagues."

PSALM CVI.

The *Hodu*-Psalms combine the thought of *thanksgiving* with that of *confession* (*v.* 1 note). In the present Psalm the latter element prevails. An early example of this style of composition may be seen in the prophecy (*Ezek.* xx.) which Ezekiel delivered to the elders of Israel on the fast-day of the 9th of Ab (see marginal references).

Other examples of historical retrospect which should be closely compared with our Psalm are the Asaph Psalm lxxviii. and the Covenant-Psalm (*Neh.* ix.) which the Chronicle-writer assigns to the Levites for the renewal of the Covenant in the Seventh Month. We may also compare the *Confession* of Ezra before the Covenant of reformation (*Ezra* ix.).

The Chronicle-writer seems to connect the *Hodu* with the *Sons of Asaph* and with Dedication Services in the Seventh Month (see 1 Chr. xvi., for the time of David; 2 Chr. v. 3, 13: vii. 3, for the time of Solomon; *Ezra* iii. 11, for the time of Zerubbabel). From these passages we may at least infer the use of such Psalms in the age of the Chronicle-writer.

Our Psalm is undoubtedly later than Ps. lxxviii., being more influenced by the thoughts of the Priest-Code (*vv.* 11, 30 f.). It is however by no means certain that the Psalmist had before him the Hexateuch in its present form.

The object of the Psalm is to prove from history that the lovingkindness of God has always overmastered the ingratitude and sin of Israel. Thus the Psalm is one in thought with Pss. cv. and cvii.

PSALM CVI.

Halleluyah.

Sing the '*Hodu*'
to Him

Who is beyond all
praise (*Neh.* ix. 5).

1 "Thank ye YHVH, for He is good;
For His lovingkindness is for ever^a."
2 Who can tell^b the mighty acts of YHVH,
Or shew forth all His praise?
3 Happy are they that observe justice,
That do^c righteousness at all times.

^a 1 Chr. xvi.
34: Pss. cvii.
1: cxviii. 1:
cxxxvi. 1
^b Gen. xxi. 7

^c See Sept.

v. 1. "Thank ye." The Hebrew "*Hodu*" signifies both "thank" and "confess" (*Jer. confitemini*). The confession of sin is regarded as giving glory to God (*Josh.* vii. 19). In the present Psalm the Nation confesses its sinfulness (*vv.* 6 ff.), and thus justifies God's goodness even in punishment.

v. 2. "Who can tell...?" We should have assigned this verb to late Hebrew if it had not occurred in *Gen.* xxi. 7 (J) "Who could have told unto Abraham that Sarah should give children suck?" i.e. "Who could have ventured to tell anything so wonderful?"

For us a day of
Redemption is in
store.

As with our fathers
so with us (Neh. ix.
16 ff., 33):—
Though they forgot,

He forgave; and
redeemed them from
Egypt (Is. lxiii. 7—
14).

- 4 Remember me^a, O YHVH, in the acceptance of Thy People; ^a or us
Visit me with Thy salvation:
- 5 To enjoy the prosperity of Thy Chosen-ones,
To gladden with the gladness of Thy Nation^b, ^b Zeph. ii. 9
To give praise with Thine Inheritance.
- 6 We have sinned^c with our fathers, ^c 2 Chr. vi. 37
We have been perverse^c, we have done wickedly^c.
- 7 Our fathers in Egypt paid no heed^d to Thy wondrous works; ^d cf. Ex. v. 21
Nor did they remember Thine abundant lovingkindness; (J): vi. 9 (P)
But they rebelled against the Most High at the Red Sea.
- 8 Yet He saved them for His Name's sake,
To make His strength to be known.
- 9 He rebuked the Red Sea and it dried;
So He "brought them through the depths as through pasture-
land^e." ^e Is. lxiii. 13
- 10 And He saved them from the hand of the foe,
And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
- 11 So the waters covered^f their adversaries;
"There was not one of them left^g." ^f Exod. xiv. 28^a (P)
^g Exod. xiv. 28^b (J)
- 12 Then they put trust in His words;
They sang His praise.

v. 4. "Remember me." All the Greek Versions read "Remember us." In any case "me" does not denote the individual.

"...in the acceptance of Thy People." So we read of the "time (or day) of acceptance" (Is. xlix. 8: lviii. 5). Compare also Is. lx. 10 "In My wrath I smote thee, but in My acceptance have I had mercy upon thee."

v. 6. The use of the three verbs in 2 Chr. vi. 37 would seem to suggest a religious formula of confession. In coupling the sins of his own generation with the sins of the past the Psalmist looks forward also to a Redemption like that of the olden time which all the ingratitude of Israel could not hinder (see vv. 4, 47).

v. 7. The present text reads "But they rebelled against on the Sea at the Red Sea." This can scarcely be right. The Sept. read עָלָהּ, "as they went up," instead of עַל הַיָּם, "on the Sea." This is possible; but it is better (with Graetz, Baethgen &c.) to read הַיָּם הַגָּדוֹל "the Most High," as in Ps. lxxviii. 17, 56 "...they rebelled against God Most High," where the same verb is used.

This verb is, in the Psalter, almost confined to Ps. lxxviii. (vv. 8, 17, 40, 56) and to the present group, Pss. cv. 28: cvii. 7, 33, 43: cviii. 11, the only other passage in the Psalter being Ps. v. 10 (11).

The rebellion at the Red Sea is from J (Exod. xiv. 11—14). It is, however, possible that our Psalmist may also have been influenced by Is. lxiii. 10.

v. 9. Here, undoubtedly, the allusion is to Is. lxiii. 13 "That brought them through the depths as a horse through pasture-land." This same passage from the Second Isaiah has also influenced the thought of our Psalmist in v. 33.

v. 11. In this verse we have allusions to both members of Exod. xiv. 28 which critics assign to P and J. It might seem to follow that, if the critical analysis be correct, our Psalmist must have used the Hexateuch after the incorporation of P with JE. We must not, however, press this argument.

- Though they would not wait for God (cf. Ps. lxxviii. 17 ff.: Ezek. xx. 13),
yet He fed them.
- 13 Quickly they forgot His works;
They did not wait for His plan^a.
- 14 But "lusted exceedingly"^b in the wilderness,
And tempted God^c in the desert^d.
- 15 Then He gave them their request;
And sent leanness^e into their soul.
- They would obey man (Nu. xvi. JE),
so they paid the penalty of rebellion.
- 16 They envied Moses also in the camp,
And Aaron the sainted-one of YHVH.
- 17 The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan,
And covered the congregation of Abiram.
- 18 And a fire was kindled in their congregation;
A flame burned up the wicked.

^a Counsel^b Nu. xi. 4 (J)^c El^d Ps. lxxviii. 40^e Sept. "fatness"

v. 13. "Quickly they forgot." Lit. "They hastened they forgot." The Song of Moses (Exod. xv.) was but a brief-lived Hosannah.

"They did not wait for His plan." They did not await the development of His purpose of Redemption. The verb (נָחַת) here used is not the usual verb for *waiting with expectation* or for *waiting with hope*. The following passages in which it occurs will well repay study with their context;—Is. viii. 17 "But I will wait for YHVH...": Is. xxx. 18 "Therefore doth YHVH wait that He may be gracious...Happy are all they that wait for Him": Hab. ii. 3 "Though it tarry wait for it...": Is. lxiv. 4 (3) "...what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him" (cf. 1 Cor. ii. 9): Dan. xii. 8 "Happy is he that waiteth."

From these passages it will be seen how the Purpose of God in Redemption is, in every age, so vast as to prove a stumbling-block to all who refuse to wait.

v. 15. "And sent leanness." The expression "to send leanness" occurs in Is. x. 16.

Some have supposed that רָוַן "leanness" has been confused with לָוֶרָה (Nu. xi. 20) "loathsome," Sept. "cholera," Sym. "indigestion." Greediness for luxury punishes itself (cf. Eccles. xxxvii. 29—31 R.V.). For the relation between luxury and unbelief see 2 Pet. ii. 13f.: Jude 11, 12. But though the present reading gives a good and useful sense there is much to be said in favour of the Septuagint, "And send abundance (πληρομορφη)." There is no reason to give this word the bad sense of "satiety"; indeed, it occurs in the Sept. translation of the parallel passage (Ps. lxxviii. 25) which we have rendered, "Man ate the bread of the Mighty, And He sent them food to the full." In the present passage also the parallelism seems to require some such rendering, since the introduction of a punishment in the second member of the verse is abrupt.

I suggest that, for רָוַן "leanness," the Sept. read פֶּטֶר "fatness" (see Is. xxx. 23 Greek and Hebrew).

v. 16. It is interesting to observe that our Psalmist alludes to Dathan and Abiram, Nu. xvi. JE, but not to Korah whose story belongs to P. The two former rebelled against Moses, the latter against Aaron. The position of our Psalmist seems here to be midway between JE and P, since he evidently alludes to some rebellion against both Moses and Aaron, and, in v. 18, seems to allude to Korah.

v. 18. "their congregation." It is unfortunate that this word should, in the story of Korah, be sometimes translated "congregation" and sometimes "company" or "assembly" (Nu. xvi. 2, 5, 6, 11, 16 &c. E.V.). The word is purposely used by P to indicate that the "congregation" of Korah was in opposition to the "congregation" of YHVH. The word is not found in JE or D; thus it would seem that though our Psalmist does not mention Korah he intends, by the scornful term "their congregation," to allude to some such rebellion.

v. 20. This is one of the passages in which the Scribes from mistaken motives of reverence have changed the text, reading "their glory" for "His Glory." The latter reading is found in some MSS. of the Septuagint, in Theodoret, and is alluded to by St Paul in Rom. i. 23 [Baethgen]. We may illustrate from Jer. ii. 11, "Hath any nation changed its gods, though they be no-gods? but My People hath changed its Glory for that which is of no profit."

Though self-will led to self-degradation (Exod. xxxii. JE: cf. Rom. i. 22 f.),

yet He accepted the mediator (Moses) (Deut. ix. 25 ff.: cf. Ezek. xx. 14).

Though, at Kadesh, their repeated unbelief

compelled Him to punish (Deut. i. 34 f.),

yet scattering then was sowing.

Though they polluted themselves (cf. vv. 19 ff.),

yet, again, He found a mediator (Phinehas) (Nu. xxv. 13 P).

- 19 They made a Calf in Horeb^a,
And worshipped a graven image.
20 Thus they changed their^b glory
For the likeness of an ox that eateth grass.
21 They forgot God^c their Saviour,
Who had done great things in Egypt:
22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham,
Terrible things by the Red Sea.
23 So He thought^d to destroy them,
Were it not for Moses His chosen,
(Who) stood in the breach before Him
To turn away His wrath from destroying (them).

- 24 They despised^e also the pleasant Land,
They gave no credence to His Word;
25 And they "murmured in their tents^f,"
They "hearkened not to the voice of YHVH^g."
26 So He "lifted up His hand to them^h,"
To let them fall in the Wilderness;
27 And to let their seed fall among the nations;
"And to scatter them in the landsⁱ."

- 28 They joined themselves also unto Baal-Peor,
And ate the sacrifices of the dead.
29 And they stirred up indignation with their doings;
And the plague broke out among them.
30 Then Phinehas stood up and did judgment;
So the plague was stayed.
31 And that was counted unto him for righteousness,
Unto all generations for ever.

^a Ex. xxxiii. 6 (E); Deut. ix. 8

^b or "His glory"

^c *EI*

^d "said"

^e Nu. xiv. 31 (JE): cf. Ezek. xx. 16

^f Deut. i. 27

^g Nu. xiv. 22 (JE)

^h i.e. "He swore": Ezek. xx. 23

ⁱ Ezek. xx. 23

v. 27. "And to let their seed fall." The Psalmist uses the same verb that he had used in the preceding line since he feels that what God did to the generation in the Wilderness that also He has done to the generation in Babylon. The verb naturally signifies "to cause to fall," "to cast down," "to overthrow," but, when coupled with the thought of *seed*, it lends itself to another thought.

"And to scatter them." This verb also is used with a double sense, since it means "to scatter" or "to winnow." "He that scattereth Israel will gather him" (Jer. xxxi. 10).

Verses 26, 27 are closely parallel with Ezek. xx. 23.

v. 30. "Phinehas...did judgment." The rendering of the P.B.V. "and prayed" would have been right if the verb had been in the *Hithpacl*, but in the *Piel* it can only signify "to judge," "to intervene," hence (Sept.) "to make atonement." In Ecclus. xiv. 23 we read, "Phinehas the son of Eleazar is the third in glory.....And he made reconciliation for Israel."

The story of Phinehas (Nu. xxv.) belongs to P though both J and E know of the sin of Baal-Peor (Nu. xxv. 1-5).

- At Kadesh they grieved His Holy Spirit (Is. lxiii. 10) and forced Him unwillingly to punish (cf. *vv.* 24—27). Even in the Land itself (cf. Ezek. xx. 21)
- 32 They provoked Him also at the waters of Meribah, So that it went ill with Moses for their sakes.
- 33 For they were rebellious^a against His Spirit, And He pronounced^b (the vow) with His lips^c.
- 34 Neither destroyed they the peoples, As YHVH commanded them;
- 35 But were mingled^d among the nations, And learned their works;
- 36 And they served their idols; And they became to them for a snare^e;
- 37 And they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils^f.
- 38 And they shed innocent blood, The blood of their sons and daughters, Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; And the land was polluted with blood.
- 39 And they were defiled with their works, And went a whoring in their doings.
- 40 So the wrath of YHVH kindled against His People, And He abhorred His own Inheritance.
- 41 And He gave them up into the hand of the nations; So that they that hated them ruled over them.
- 42 And their enemies oppressed them, And they became subject under their hand.
- they again polluted themselves (cf. *vv.* 19 ff., 28 ff.: Ezek. xx. 30 f.)
- and suffered the consequences (cf. *vv.* 26, 33).
- ^a *vv.* 7, 43: Ps. lxxviii. 8, 17, 40, 56
- ^b Lev. v. 4
- ^c Ps. lxxxix. 34
- ^d Ezra ix. 2
- ^e Ex. xxxiii. 33: xxxiv. 12: Deut. vii. 16
- ^f Deut. xxxii. 17 only

v. 32. "They provoked." Lit. "caused wrath." This was at Kadesh. See Deut. i. 34 "And YHVH heard the voice of your words, and He was wroth, and sware, saying, Surely there shall not one of these men...see the good land.....Also YHVH was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither...." This is evidently the passage that the Psalmist has in his mind, and we have no right to force his words to fit the wholly different circumstances described in the Priest-code. Dr Driver (on Deut. i. 36f.) notes that "according to Deut. Moses was forbidden to enter Canaan in consequence of the people's disobedience at Kadesh in the second year of the Exodus; according to P (Nu. xx. 12: xxvii. 13 f.: Deut. xxxii. 50 f.) it was on account of his presumption at the same spot, but on a different occasion, 37 years afterwards."

I suggest that, according to D, the expression "YHVH was angry with me for your sakes" (cf. Deut. iv. 21) implied no actual sin on Moses' part, but rather that Moses, as the Mediator, had to bear the consequences of the People's sin. The later version by P is, of course, quite different.

"Meribah." See note on Ps. xcv. 8.

v. 33. "For they were rebellious." The verb always implies rebellion against God. See especially Pss. lxxviii. 8, 17, 40, 56: cv. 28: cvi. 7, 43: Neh. ix. 26.

Our Psalmist is evidently thinking of Is. lxiii. 10 "They were rebellious and vexed His holy Spirit: so He was turned for them into an enemy, and He Himself fought against them." See also note on *v.* 9.

"And He pronounced (the vow)...." This verb is generally translated "spoke unadvisedly" and is referred to Moses; but in the few passages where it occurs there is no evidence whatever for this sense

Yet, again and again, His compassion prevailed (cf. Neh. ix. 27; Ezek. xx. 22, 44).

43 Many times did He deliver them,
 But they^a rebelled in their counsel^b,
 And were brought low in their iniquity.

44 Yet He looked (kindly) on their affliction,
 When He heard their cry^c:

45 And He remembered for them His covenant,
 And relented according to His abundant lovingkindness;

46 And He granted them compassion
 From all those that carried them captive.

^a emphatic
^b self-will

^c wail

So let it be in our day (1 Chr. xvi. 35 f.).

47 "Save us, O YHVH our God;
 And gather us from among the Nations,
 To give thanks unto Thy Holy Name,
 To glory in Thy praise.

48 Blessed be YHVH, the God of Israel, for ever and ever:
 And all the People shall say, Amen."

Halleluyah.

of *rash-speaking*:—Thus, Lev. v. 4 "Or a soul when it shall swear, *pronouncing* with the lips, whether for good or bad, whatsoever it be that a man *shall pronounce* with an oath..." (Vulg. juramento et sermone firmaverit.)

Again Nu. xxx. 6 (7) "But if indeed she belonged to an husband when her vows were upon her or the *pronouncement* of her lips...": v. 8 (9) "...the vow which she vowed and the *pronouncement* of her lips." The Sifré here distinctly says that the word "means nothing else than an oath."

Compare also Prov. xii. 18. These are the only other Biblical passages in which the word occurs.

The passage in our Psalm is by the Sept. rendered *καὶ διέστειλεν* (Aq. *διέκρινεν*) *ἐν τοῖς χεῖλεσιν αὐτοῦ* (cf. Ps. lxvi. 13, Heb. and Sept.). Clearly the word implies a *vow* but we have no right to bring in the thought of *rashness*. Both Rashi and Aben Ezra refer the words to the oath. Some Rabbinic authorities suppose that the oath was taken by Moses and that this constituted his sin: but the whole context requires us to apply the word to God.

This is, I believe, the right interpretation. Kadesh was (according to Deut. i. 20 ff.) the turning-point of the wanderings; it witnessed the mission of the spies, the murmuring, and the Divine oath of rejection (Deut. i. 34 ff.; cf. Nu. xiv. 21—24 (JE): Ps. xc. 8—11). The sin of Israel then became a sin against the Holy Spirit. God could not then alter "*the edict of His lips*" (Ps. lxxxix. 34).

v. 44. It was often the inarticulate cry of affliction (Exod. iii. 7; Jud. ii. 18) not the cry of prayer that moved the compassion of God. (See also Ps. cvii.)

v. 47 f. On this passage see *Additional Note* at the end of this Psalm.

v. 48. "Amen." "R. Eliezer, in the name of R. Jose ben Zimra, said, *Amen* means an *oath*, *Amen* (means) a *Curse*, as it is written (Nu. v. 22) *And the woman shall say, Amen, Amen*" [Midrash Tehillim].

In the present instance the People are bidden to respond to the Covenant Psalm exactly as they respond to the Blessings and the Curses in Deut. xxvii.



In considering this last verse of the Chronicle-text it is evident, both from the parallel text and from the Sept., that the Masoretic pointing ("and all the people said...") is a mistake. The concluding *Halleluyah* was not read in the Sept. text of the Psalter which rightly ends with the word "Amen," but even if it belonged to the text it would not have been derived from ליהוה ללל of the Chronicle-writer.

The last verse of the Psalm is not, as the Commentators frequently assert, a Doxology, added at the close of the Fourth Book, but is an integral part of the Psalm in both texts.

"Amen" is an oath, or the seal of a Covenant; thus when the Levites recite the curses we read "*And all the People shall say, Amen*" (Deut. xxvii. 14—26). Also at the close of the Levitical Psalm (Neh. ix.), which is so closely parallel with Ps. cvi., we read, "*And to all this we make an Amen-covenant, and to the sealing (stand) our Princes, our Levites, our Priests.*" The Psalm in Neh. ix. is stated to have been sung by the Levites standing upon the "Stair of the Levites" on the 24th day of the Seventh Month. Evidently in the times of the Chronicle-writer Psalms of national confession were used in this way to ratify the Covenant (Deut. xxix., xxx). Such a practice will sufficiently account for the conclusion of Ps. cvi. This being so, the oft-repeated assertion that the Chronicle-writer quotes the Doxology of the Fourth Book and thereby testifies that the division of the Psalter into Five Books was known in his time, falls to the ground.

It is true that the words may be regarded as an Ascription exactly in the same way as the closing words of Pss. xli., lxxii. and lxxxix., but, in all these cases¹, I regard them as the People's "Amen" to a Covenant-Psalm. This point will become clear when, in our general Introduction, we consider the position held by these Psalms in the Triennial Cycle.

¹ In the Introduction to Ps. lxxii. (p. 299) I followed the usual opinion which ascribes vv. 18, 19 to an Editor who divided the Psalter into five Books. This I now see to be wrong.

PSALM CVII.

In this Hodu-Psalm the Redemption from Babylon is represented in four striking pictures which remind us of the tableaux vivants in the House of the Interpreter (*Pilgrim's Progress*) or in the Passion Play.

First (vv. 4—9) we see a *band of wanderers*, lost in a trackless desert, almost at the last gasp. Then their distress appeals to God (Gen. xxi. 17; Ex. iii. 7; Jud. ii. 18); He delivers them and guides them safely home.

Secondly (vv. 10—16) we see *prisoners in a dark dungeon*. The picture reminds us of Joseph; but these prisoners are rebels against God (v. 11 f.); so we think of the Children of Israel, the Suffering Nation, in the Prison-house of the Captivity. Again the suffering appeals to God (cf. Deut. xxxii. 36); He breaks the brazen gates (Is. xlv. 2) and sets His Captives free.

Thirdly (vv. 17—22) we have a picture of sufferers like Job, except that their sickness is the result of their own sin. Yet, even so, He, the Good Physician, "*sent forth His Word and healed them.*"

Fourthly (vv. 23—30) we see such a *Storm* as that in which Jonah was swallowed up. All human skill is unavailing! Then God lulls the Storm and brings the sailors safe to port. According to Jewish tradition vv. 23—28 have been displaced from their original position (see Delitzsch); and it must be confessed that the four pictures would be more effective, from an artistic point of view, if they were arranged in a different order, since the *fourth* is something of an anticlimax. Now it is an interesting fact, which, so far as I know, has not been observed, that in T. B. Berakoth 54^b, the four pictures are quoted in a different and more effective order: Thus, "R. Judah used to quote Rab as saying that there are four (classes) who are bound to give thanks, (1st) *those that go down to the sea*; (2nd) *those that walk in wildernesses*; (3rd) *whosoever has been sick and is healed*; (4th) *whosoever has been bound in prison and hath come forth.*"

The passage proceeds to prove these four propositions, in order, by quoting at length from our Psalm. If we might adopt the order thus suggested the four pictures of God's Lovingkindness would be arranged in an ascending scale. In the first two (*sailors saved from the storm*, vv. 23—31; *wanderers saved from the wilderness*, vv. 4—9) the opposing forces are physical and there is no mention of sin, whereas in the third (*weaklings or fools*, vv. 17—22) it is "*by reason of their iniquities*" that they suffer. The fourth picture (*prisoners in the dungeon*, vv. 10—16) is certainly the most hopeless of all; these *prisoners* are in *darkness*, *Shadow-of-Death*, *bound in misery and iron*, *afflicted by God with hopeless toil*, because they were rebels against His righteous laws! That dungeon seems to echo with the words, "Abandon hope all ye who enter here." Yet even from this Pit (Zech. ix. 11) God brought forth His prisoners, and the climax of deliverance is reached in v. 16, "*He hath broken the gates of brass, and hath hewn through the bars of iron.*"

The Psalm is full of allusions to the Second Isaiah, Job and Jonah.

PSALM CVII.

Let the redeemed
of the Lord sing the
Hodu.

1 "Thank ye YHVH, for He is good;
For His Lovingkindness is for ever."
2 So say "the redeemed of YHVH^a,"
Whom He hath redeemed from the power^b of affliction^b;
3 And hath gathered^c them from the lands,
From the east^c and from the west^c,
from the north^c and from the sea^d.

^a Is. lxii. 12 :
cf. xxxv. 9
^b or *the hand*
of the enemy
^c Is. xliii. 5 f. :
cf. Lk. xiii. 29
^d or *the south*

First Similitude.
Wanderers lost in
a wilderness.

4 They wandered in the Wilderness, in a desert way;
They found no city of habitation;
5 Hungry^e as well as thirsty,
Their soul fainted^f in them.
6 SO THEY CRIED TO YHVH IN THEIR AFFLICTION,
AND HE DELIVERED THEM OUT OF THEIR DEEP-DISTRESS^g.
7 For He led them by a right way;
That they might go to a city of habitation^h.
8 LET THEM THANKFULLY-CONFESSⁱ TO YHVH HIS LOVING-
KINDNESSⁱ,
AND HIS WONDERFUL WORKS FOR THE CHILDREN OF MEN!
9 For He hath satisfied^j the longing soul,
And the hungry^k soul He hath filled with good.

^e *vv.* 9, 36
^f *was over-*
whelmed:
Pss. lxxvii.
3 : cxliii. 4 :
Jonah ii. 7
^g Ps. xxv. 17
^h *vv.* 4, 36
ⁱ *v.* 1
^j Is. lviii. 11
^k *vv.* 5, 36

v. 2. "The redeemed of YHVH." Not for their merits but for His Name's sake (Ps. cvi. 8). This is a sure ground of hope for the future (Is. xxxv. 10 : xlv. 17).

"From the power of affliction." The Sept., E.V., and P.B.V. render "from the hand of the enemy" (cf. Ps. cvi. 10) which would be the natural rendering if the same word for *affliction* had not occurred in *vv.* 6, 13, 19, 28. The "return of the Captives" from Babylonia was far more than a deliverance "from the hand of the enemy"; it was a redemption from all adversity (cf. Gen. xlviii. 16).

The foundation passage for *redemption* is in the Song of Moses (Ex. xv. 13 (JE)). Jeremiah (xxx. 10 f.) foretells a larger redemption ("He that is winnowing Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd doth his flock. For YHVH ransoms Jacob, and redeems him from the power (that was) too strong for him"). In the Second Isaiah this *redemption* becomes the leading thought (Is. xliii. 1 : xlv. 22, 23 : xlviii. 20 : li. 10 : lii. 3, 9 : lxii. 12 : lxiii. 4, 9) and *Redeemer* becomes a Divine title (xli. 14 : xliii. 14 : xlv. 6, 24 : xlvii. 4 : xlviii. 17 : xlix. 7, 26 : liv. 5, 8 : lix. 20 : lx. 16 : lxiii. 16). The fact that the word for "*Redeemer*" signified also "*the next of kin*" must have modified the great expectation.

v. 3. "And hath gathered them." The prayer of Ps. cvi. 47 has been answered. This verb is used of *gathering sheep*, and thus of God, as the Good Shepherd, gathering together His scattered flock (Mic. ii. 12 : iv. 6 : Zeph. iii. 19 f. : Jer. xxiii. 3 : xxxi. 10 : Ezek. xxxiv. 13 : Is. xl. 11). Even in passages (Deut. xxx. 4 : Is. xi. 12 : lvi. 8 : Jer. xxix. 14 : xxxi. 8 : xxxii. 37 : Ezek. xi. 17 : xx. 34, 41 : xxxvi. 24 : xxxix. 27) where there is no direct allusion to the Shepherd-care of God we

Second Similitude.

Hopeless prisoners
in a dungeon (cf. Is.
xlii. 7, 22 : xlix. 9 :
lxi. 1 : Job xxxvi. 8—
15).

- 10 There are that sit in darkness and Shadow-of-Death^a,
That are bound in misery and iron ;
11 Because they rebelled^b against the words of God^c,
And despised the counsel of the Most High ;
12 So He humbled their heart with toil,
They stumbled, with none to help !
13 SO THEY CRIED TO YHVH IN THEIR AFFLICTION,
AND HE SAVED THEM OUT OF THEIR DEEP-DISTRESS.
14 He brought them out of "darkness and Shadow-of-Death^d,"
And burst^e their bonds^e in sunder.
15 LET THEM THANKFULLY-CONFESS TO YHVH HIS LOVING-
KINDNESS,
AND HIS WONDERFUL WORKS FOR THE CHILDREN OF MEN !
16 For "He hath broken the gates of brass,
And hewn through the bars of iron^f."

^a v. 14 : Pss.
xxiii. 4 : xlii.
19

^b Pss. lxxviii.
17 : cvi. 33

^c *Et*

^d v. 10

^e Jer. ii. 20 :
xxx. 8 : Nah.
i. 13

^f Is. xlv. 2

must bear in mind the significance of the verb. In the present Psalm we find again the Shepherd-care of God in v. 41 ; thus the pastoral symphony begins and ends on the same note.

The four quarters, *east, west, north* and *south* suggest the universality of Redemption, as also the four Pictures which follow.

v. 4. "*A desert way.*" Lit. "*a desert of a way.*" This word *desert* is used of the Wilderness of the wanderings in Deut. xxxii. 10 : Pss. lxviii. 7 (8) : lxxviii. 40 : cvi. 14 : cf. also Is. xliii. 19, 20 with *vv.* 33, 35 of our Psalm.

v. 6. "*So they cried...in their affliction.*" Except for the affliction they would not have cried (Gen. xxi. 17 : Ex. iii. 7 : Jud. ii. 18).

Thus, as Whittier says,

"On the ladder of God, which upward leads,
The steps of progress are human needs.
* * * * *
The heart must bleed before it feels,
The pool be troubled before it heals ;
Ever by losses the right must gain,
Every good have its birth of pain."

v. 9. The "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matt. v. 6) must be felt in pain before the soul be set free for the next upward step. See Dante's *Purgatorio*.

The thought of this verse is closely parallel with the Song of Hannah and with the Magnificat.

v. 14. So too the Second Isaiah speaks of the Return from Babylon as a coming forth from prison and from darkness, Is. xlii. 7 : xlix. 9. In both these passages it is the "*Servant of YHVH*" who is commissioned to bring "those that sit in darkness out of the prison house."

v. 16. The promise of God to Cyrus has been fulfilled in the fall of Babylon, "*I will go before thee...I will break the gates of brass, I will hew through the bars of iron*" (Is. xlv. 2).

In the *Golden Legend* of the Middle Ages these words were applied to Christ's victory over Hell. See Prothero, *Psalms in human life*, p. 112.

v. 17. "*Weaklings.*" The Hebrew text "*fools*" is somewhat doubtful.

The Sept. and Vulgate read "*He helped them from the way of their transgression because they were humbled on account of their iniquities.*" Thus, instead of the word אִילִים "*fools*," the Sept. must have read a verb with pronominal affix, probably עִזְרָם "*He helped them*" (cf. Ps. cxviii. (cxvii.) 13 Heb. and Greek). This reading is of no great value except that it throws doubt on the word "*fools*." It must be confessed that the word "*fools*" does not here give good sense. Modern scholars (Olshausen, Graetz, Wellhausen, Duhm) suggest a word which signifies "*sick men*," "*invalids*." If, however, we translate "*weaklings*" we shall express the meaning without necessarily changing the text.

Third Similitude.

Invalids (? lepers),
the martyrs of sin (cf.
Job xxxiii. 17 ff.).

- 17 Weaklings, by reason of their transgressive way,
And by reason of their iniquities, incur affliction^a.
18 Their soul abhorreth^b all manner of meat^b,
And they draw near to the gates of death.
19 SO THEY CRIED TO YHVH IN THEIR AFFLICTION,
AND HE SAVED THEM OUT OF THEIR DEEP-DISTRESS.
20 He sent forth His Word and healed them,
And delivered them from their destructions^c.
21 LET THEM THANKFULLY-CONFESS TO YHVH HIS LOVING-
KINDNESS,
AND HIS WONDERFUL WORKS FOR THE CHILDREN OF MEN !
22 Let them sacrifice the sacrifices^d of Thanksgiving^d,
And recount His doings with ringing-song.

^a *afflict themselves*
^b Job xxxiii. 20

^c *pitfalls:*
Lam. iv. 20

^d Ps. l. 23 note

Fourth Similitude.

Mariners helpless in
a storm (cf. Jonah i.,
ii.).

- 23 There are that go down to the sea in ships,
That do business in the great waters ;
24 These saw the doings of YHVH,
And His wonderful works in the Deep^e.
25 For He spake and He raised a tempestuous wind,
And it lifted up the waves thereof.
26 They mount to the heavens, they go down to the depths,
Their soul melteth with trouble.
27 They reel and stagger like a drunken man,
All their wisdom is swallowed up.
28 SO THEY CRIED TO YHVH IN THEIR AFFLICTION,
AND HE BROUGHT THEM OUT OF THEIR DEEP-DISTRESS.
29 He stayeth the tempest to a silence^f,
So the billows thereof were still.
30 Then they rejoiced because they were in calm^g,
And He guided them to the haven of their desire.
31 LET THEM THANKFULLY-CONFESS TO YHVH HIS LOVING-
KINDNESS,
AND HIS WONDERFUL WORKS FOR THE CHILDREN OF MEN !
32 Let them extol Him in the congregation of (the) people ;
And praise Him in the session of the Elders.

^e *Abyss:* Pss.
lxviii. 22 :
lxix. 2, 15 :
Jon. ii. 3

^f cf. Mk. iv.
39

^g Jon. i. 11, 12

v. 20. "He sent forth His Word and healed them." Even here the "Word" of God tends to become personal (cf. Ps. cv. 19). The best illustration is from *Wisd.* xvi. 7—12, where it is said, "For he that turned to it (i.e. the brazen serpent) was not saved because of that which was beheld, but because of Thee, the Saviour of all....For of a truth it was neither herb nor mollifying plaister that cured them, but thy Word, O Lord, which healeth all things." See the whole passage.

v. 22. So, in the parallel passage (Job xxxiii. 26) we read

"He prayeth unto God, and He accepteth him,
So that he seeth His Face with shouts-of-joy."

- 33 He turneth rivers into wilderness,
And watersprings into "thirsty-land^a." ^a Is. xxxv. 7
- 34 A fruitful land into a salt-waste^b,
For the wickedness of them that dwell therein. ^b Job xxxix. 6:
Jer. xvii. 6
- 35 He turneth "the wilderness into a pool^d" of water,
"And the dry land into springs of water^c." ^c Is. xli. 18
^d Is. xxxv. 7
- 36 And there He housed the hungry,
And they founded a city of habitation^e. ^e *vv.* 4, 7
- 37 They sowed fields, they planted vineyards,
That yielded fruits of increase.
- 38 And He blessed them that they multiplied exceedingly;
And suffered not their cattle to decrease.
- 39 When they decreased and were brought low,
Through oppression, evil, and sorrow—
- 40 Then "He poureth contempt upon princes^f," ^f Job xii. 21
"And maketh them wander in the trackless waste^g." ^g Job xii. 24
- 41 Yet He hath set the poor on high from affliction,
And hath made them families like a flock.
- 42 The upright shall see and rejoice;
And all iniquity shutteth its mouth.
- 43 Whoso is wise will observe these things,
That (men) may understand the Lovingkindness of YHVH.

It is worthy of note that, in this passage, the sick man is saved through a "Mediator" so that God says "I have found a ransom" (Job xxxiii. 24), while, in the Psalm, we read, "He sent His Word and healed them."

v. 24. "The Deep," or "Abyss" became a mystical name for Babylon as a "slough of despond" in which Israel had been swallowed up. Perhaps Zechariah (i. 8) was the first to use it in this sense.

The Second Isaiah pictures it as dried up, like another Red Sea, for the return of the Captivity:—"that saith to the Abyss, Be thou wasted, and thy streams will I dry up" (Is. xlv. 27).

So also in Ps. lxxviii. 22 "I will bring them back from the depths (Abyss) of the Sea." So also in the Prayer of Jonah (ii. 3 (4)) "For Thou hadst cast me into the Abyss, in the heart of the seas; the floods encompassed me, all Thy billows and Thy waves passed over me." So too the closely parallel passage Ps. lxxix. 2, 15 "I sink in the mire of the Abyss...." "Let not the Abyss devour me." (See context.)

I conclude that our Psalmist uses the word in the same mystical sense. Israel had been swallowed up; but the same God that raised the storm had now commanded the calm (*vv.* 29 f.).

v. 25. "tempestuous." The word carries our thoughts to the story of Jonah (see Jon. i. 4, 11, 12, 13). The Second Isaiah speaks of Israel as "tossed with tempest" (Is. liv. 11).

vv. 26 f. Baethgen and others quote Ovid, *Trist.* i. 2.

v. 40. We have here two quotations from Job xii. 21 ff. which is as follows:—"He poureth contempt upon princes....He increaseth the Nations and destroyeth them, He enlargeth the Nations and leadeth them (away). He taketh away the understanding of the chiefest of the people of the earth, And maketh them wander in the trackless waste; They grope in darkness, without light, And he maketh them to wander like a drunken man."

It is evident that our Psalmist, in quoting this passage, is thinking of the sudden downfall of Babylon. The P.B.V. has entirely missed the meaning.

PSALM CVIII.

This Psalm is composed of two parts, the *first* consisting of the last five verses of Ps. lvii., the *second* being taken from the last eight verses of Ps. lx. It will not therefore be necessary to repeat what has already been written upon these Psalms.

In order that the English reader may note the slight variants we have placed the readings of the earlier texts in square brackets.

Part I. (*vv.* 1—5), which is from the Easter Psalm, treats of a Divine Victory.

Part II. (*vv.* 6—13), which is from Ps. lx., is an appeal for a similar victory for man (*vv.* 6, 11—13) based upon old promises (*vv.* 7—10).

We cannot tell the exact circumstances which led a Psalmist to combine these portions of Psalms, but since the whole Psalm is appointed by our Church for Ascension Day the following note by Jerome may be suggestive, "Vide quid dicat: Quando exaltatus fuero in caelis, tunc omnia traham ad me. Pius quidem est iste sensus, sed ego aliud intelligo. Quando exaltatus fuero, quando crucifixus fuero, tunc omnes traham ad me. *Ut liberentur dilecti tui.* O mira intelligentia! propterea crucifigitur Dominus et exaltatur, ut liberentur dilecti ejus. *Ut liberentur*, inquit, *dilecti tui, exaltare super caelos Deus.* Factum est quod petivimus: ille exaltatus est, et nos liberati sumus." [*Anecdota Mared.* III. 2, p. 182.]

PSALM CVIII.

From Ps. lvii. 7—
11 (see p. 245).

- 1 My heart is fixed, O God, [my heart is fixed;]
I must sing, I must strike the chords!
- 2 Even^a my glory, awake lute and harp, ^a [*awake*]
I would waken the Dawn!
- 3 I will thank Thee, O YHVH^b, among the Peoples, ^b [*Adonai*]
(And) I will strike the chords to Thee among the Nations.
- 4 For great above^c Heaven is Thy Lovingkindness, ^c [*up to*]
And up to the skies is Thy Truth.
- 5 BE THOU EXALTED, O GOD, ABOVE THE HEAVENS,
(AND) THY GLORY ABOVE ALL THE EARTH!

From Ps. lx. 5—12
(see p. 255).

- 6 For the sake of Thy loved-ones being delivered
Oh save with Thy right-hand and answer us!
- 7 God hath promised, by His holiness,
I can exult, I can divide Shechem,
I shall mete out the valley of Succoth.
- 8 Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine;
While Ephraim is the strength of my head,
Judah my leader's-staff;
- 9 Moab is my wash-pot,
Over Edom I shall cast my shoe,
Over Philistia I shall triumph^d.
- 10 Who will bring me into the fenced^e city? ^d See note on
Ps. lx. 8
Who will guide me into Edom? • [*strong*]
- 11 Is it [Thou], O God, that hast cast us off,
And goest not forth, O God, with our hosts?
- 12 O give us help from the foe^f;
For vain is the help of man. ^f or *from*
affliction,
Sept.
- 13 Through God we shall do valiantly,
And He it is that must trample our enemies.

PSALM CIX.

It is difficult to believe that the patient Sufferer who complains of unrequited love in *vv.* 1—5, 21—31 could break off suddenly into the awful curses of *vv.* 6—20. The problem is exactly similar to that which we have already met in Psalm lv. There, as here, we find the same rapid transition from the *plural* to the *singular*; enemies being personified as a Man of Sin. There, as here, we find the meaning of the Psalm best brought out by the assumption of *Two Voices*, though not necessarily of two writers. Thus, in our present Psalm, if we read *vv.* 1—5, 21—31 as a continuous whole we have a beautiful Psalm which the Saviour himself might have made his own.

On the other hand *vv.* 6—20, which we have assigned to the *2nd Voice*, are full of curses, so terrible that we almost tremble to read them. How are we to account for this fountain sending forth from the same opening both sweet waters and bitter? It is something, at least, to recognise that the Enemy against whom these curses are directed is not an individual but a personification of the apostate party in Israel (*v.* 20 note) which, probably in the Greek period, had not only forsaken the Covenant but was bitterly hostile to those who kept it. In order to understand what the Psalmist intended by the Curse, we must remember that the Book of the Covenant was enforced by a Blessing and a Curse (Exod. xxiii. 20 ff.); so, also, was the Covenant in Deuteronomy, see Chap. xxviii., where the Curses are not unlike those of our Psalm; and the second Covenant in the Land of Moab (Deut. xxix., xxx.); so, also, was the Covenant in Leviticus, see Chap. xxvi.

These passages should be carefully compared with our Psalm, and, if they be studied critically it will be seen that, whereas in early times the Blessings were more developed than the Curses, in later times the Curses are more and more prominent. We learn from a very old Talmudic tradition (T. B. *Meg.* 31^b) that the Curses in Lev. xxvi. were to be read in the Temple at Pentecost, when the Decalogue (Ex. xx.) was read, and that the Curses in Deut. xxviii. were, in like manner, recited at Rosh Hashana, when the Decalogue (Deut. v.) was read (see Dr Büchler in *J. Q. R. Ap.* 1893). Evidently there existed from the earliest times a ritual in which the Blessings and Curses were regarded as the Seal of the Covenant (cf. Deut. xxvii.; Josh. viii. 32 ff.; also the double "*Amen*" and the "*Oath and the Curse*" Neh. viii. 6; x. 29 (30)).

Now since the Five Books of the Psalter are moulded after the pattern of the Five Books of the Pentateuch we should naturally expect that the Curses which play such an important part in the ratification of the Covenant would have their counterpart in the Psalms.

I conclude, therefore, that the imprecations of our Psalm do not spring from a spirit of personal revenge but from a vivid realization of the national consequences

which must follow upon the breach of a Covenant which is founded upon temporal rewards and punishments.

It is however quite another question whether we, who are under the Christian Covenant, should continue to use such words in the Services of our Church. St Paul's opinion may be gathered from Gal. iii. 10ff., "Those who are of works of law are under the Curse, for it is written (Deut. xxvii. 26), *Cursed is everyone who continueth not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them....* Christ redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, having become a Curse for us."

The Psalm should be studied in connexion with Pss. xxxv., lv., lviii. and lxix.

PSALM CIX.

1st Voice.

Israel meets with evil for good, hatred for love! (Cf. 1st Voice in Ps. lv., also Ps. xxxv. 11—16.)

1 O God of my Praise-song^a, be not silent:
 2 For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of fraud are
 opened upon me;
 They have spoken against me with lying tongue;
 3 And with words of hatred have they compassed me;
 And have fought against me without a cause.
 4 In return for my love they act as my adversaries^b;
 But as for me^c—prayer!
 5 For they have rewarded^d me evil in return for good,
 And hatred in return for love.

^a Ps. xxii. 3

^b cf. v. 6

^c v. 25: cf. Pss. xxxv. 13: lxix. 13, 29

^d Ps. xxxv. 12

v. 1. "O God of my Praise-song." In Ps. xxii. 3 God is said to be "throned on the Praise-songs of Israel" (compare also Deut. x. 21: Jer. xvii. 14). Can God then "be silent" to the voice of Israel's need?

"Be not silent" or "be not deaf." The only other passages in which these words are applied to God are as follows:

Ps. xxviii. 1: xxxv. 22: xxxix. 12 (13): l. 3 (but see note): lxxxiii. 1 (2). In every case they are an appeal to God to arise against the enemies of Israel. It will be noted that these Psalms all belong to one type.

"The mouth of the wicked" (Prov. x. 6, 11, 32: xi. 11: xv. 28: xix. 28).

"And the mouth of fraud." The word "fraud" means more than "deceit"; indeed it is translated "treachery" in 2 Kings ix. 23. It is often used in those Psalms which deal with apostates (see Pss. v. 6: x. 7: xxxv. 20: xxxvi. 3: xxxviii. 12: xliii. 1: l. 19: lii. 4: lv. 11, 23).

v. 7. "When he pleads." The *Niphal* of the verb *Shaphat* "to judge" generally signifies "to plead" (1 Sam. xii. 7: Is. xliii. 26: Ezek. xvii. 20: xx. 35, 36: Joel iii. 2 (iv. 2) &c.). This signification must be given in the present instance since the parallel member of the verse speaks of "his prayer."

v. 8. "Let another take his office." The Hebrew word here translated "office" signifies *that which is entrusted to anyone, or the oversight itself*, hence *office* (Num. iv. 16). Once it is translated "that which they have laid up" (Is. xv. 7). Some commentators would give it this meaning in the present passage. On the quotation in Acts i. 20, see note on Ps. lxix. 25.

2nd Voice.

The Curse. (Cf. *2nd Voice* in Ps. lv., also Ps. lxi. 22—28.)

- 6 Appoint a wicked-one over him ;
 And let an adversary^a stand at his right hand. ^a Satan
- 7 When he pleads let him come forth as wicked ;
 And let his prayer become sin.
- 8 Let his days be few ;
 Let another take his office^b. ^b Acts i. 20
- 9 Let his children become fatherless ;
 And his wife a widow.
- 10 Let his children be vagabonds, and beg ;
 And let them make search from their ruins^c. ^c Ps. ix. 6
- 11 Let the extortioner entrap his all ;
 And let strangers make spoil of his labour.
- 12 Let him not have one to forbear^d with him (in) kindness ; ^d Neh. ix. 30
 Nor to compassionate his fatherless children.
- 13 Let his posterity be cut off ;
 In the next generation let their name be blotted^e out. ^e Deut. xxix. 20
- 14 Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered by YHVH ;
 And let not the sin of his mother be blotted out :
- 15 Let them be continuously before YHVH,
 That He may cut off their memorial-name from the earth.
- 16 Because he did not remember to shew kindness,
 But persecuted the poor^f and needy-one, ^f Ps. lxi. 29
 And was for slaying the broken hearted.
- 17 He loved cursing, and it is come to him ;
 He had no pleasure in blessing, and it is put far from him.
- 18 He clothed him with cursing as with his garment,
 And it is come^g into his being like water, ^g Nu. v. 27
 And like oil into his bones.
- 19 May it be to him like the garment that covers him,
 And like the girdle that he is ever girt with.
- 20 Such (is) YHVH's award unto mine adversaries^h, ^h vv. 4, 6
 And those that mutter evil against my soul.

v. 10. "*vagabonds.*" Like Cain (Gen. iv. 12) ; cf. Ps. lix. 11, note.

"*ruins.*" Often used of cities or countries that have become *desolations*.

vv. 15, 16. Note the kindred words "*memorial*" "*memory.*" Because he did not "*remember*" to shew kindness therefore his own "*remembrance*" is cut off. Contrast Ps. cxii. 6.

"*The poor and needy.*" A recognised title for the remnant of Israel in the Psalter (Pss. xviii. 27 : xxxv. 10 : xxxvii. 14 : xl. 17 : lxix. 29 : lxx. 5 : lxxii. 2, 4, 12 &c.).

v. 20. "*Such...unto mine adversaries.*" The relapse here into the *plural* shews that the enemy is not an individual.

"*And those that mutter.*" The *part. Kal* of the verb *dabar*, "*to speak*" is, in the Psalter, always used in a bad sense with the single exception of Ps. xv. 2. The other passages are Pss. v. 6 (7) : xxviii. 3 : xxxi. 18 (19) : lviii. 3 (4) : lxiii. 11 (12) : ci. 7 : cix. 20.

1st Voice.

The afflicted Servant appeals to God.

21 But Thou, O YHVH, the Lord, deal with me for Thy Name's sake;

Because Thy Lovingkindness^a is good, deliver me.

^a Ps. lxi. 16

22 For the poor and needy-one^b am I,

^b v. 16

And my heart^b is wounded within me.

23 Like the lengthening shadow I am made to go;

I am shaken out like the locust.

24 My knees are weak through fasting;

And my flesh faileth of fatness.

25 And, as for me^c, I am become a reproach unto them:

^c v. 4

They see me, they shake their head^d.

^d Ps. xxii. 7:
Matt. xxvii.
39

26 Help me, O YHVH my God;

Save me according to Thy Lovingkindness:

27 And let them know that this is Thy hand;

That Thou, O YHVH, hast done it.

28 They^e may curse but Thou^e wilt bless:

^e Emphatic

They are risen and shall be shamed^f, while Thy servant^f shall rejoice.

^f Is. lvi. 5

29 Mine adversaries shall be clothed with disgrace;

And shall cover them with their shame as with a mantle.

Cf. Pss. lxi. 23 ff.,
and xxii. 23.

30 I shall thank YHVH exceedingly with my mouth;

And shall praise Him among the multitude:

31 Because He stands at the right hand of the needy-one,

To save (him) from the judges of his soul.

v. 21. This verse must not be read with v. 20, but with v. 5, *i.e.* "They have rewarded me evil for good...But Thou, O YHVH, ..." Cf. Ps. xxii. 19.

v. 23. "I am made to go." The *Niphal* of *halak*, "to go" only occurs here. The lengthening shadows of evening are driven on into the darkness which awaits them.

"I am shaken out." The word is used in a fine passage (Job xxxviii. 13) where the light is said to take hold on the four corners of the earth so that the wicked are shaken out of it. So drifting locusts are shaken out by the wind (Ex. x. 19) or by the sun (Nahum iii. 17).

v. 27. "And let them know that this is Thy hand."

"Quid est quod dicit, *Et sciant quia manus tua haec, et tu Domine fecisti eam?* Intelligant Judaei quoniam non ipsi praevaluerunt in me: sed mea et tua voluntas facta est ut patiar." (Jerome.)

v. 28. "They are risen." The reading of the Sept., "those that rise against me," is probably correct and involves only a very slight change between two similar letters in the Hebrew.

PSALM CX.¹

Our first object must be to ascertain, if we can, the meaning of this Psalm to the men to whom it was first spoken:—How it was to them a Divine Message. But, when we have done this, we must remember that no Word of God exhausts its meaning upon one age. We must therefore further enquire, What were the thoughts and traditions which have gathered round this Psalm in later times? We shall feel that the same Spirit which moved holy men to write has also, in every age, guided holy men to read, in that writing, that portion of an infinite truth which was intended for their age. In other words we shall recognize the fact that tradition must itself be reckoned as a factor in Inspiration.

First then we consider *the meaning of the Psalm and the date of its composition.*

The Title in itself proves nothing: since (a) no title forms part of the text, and (b) many Psalms are, by their titles, ascribed to David which could not possibly have been written by him.

Again, it is recognized by scholars that the Psalms as we have them now grew out of Three Collections, made at widely different times, the Third and last Collection (Pss. 90—150) being placed by Kautzsch even as late as B.C. 141.

Of course it may be argued that a late Collection of Hymns may contain some of great antiquity, but if this collection was made 800 years after David's death we must, at least, admit that the evidence of his authorship, which rests only upon the Title, is slight indeed.

Let us now turn to the Psalm itself and endeavour to determine, from internal evidence, the age to which it belongs.

The Structure of the Psalm.

We first observe that the Psalm falls into two natural parts, each commencing with a Divine Word or Oracle. This Divine Word comes forth from YHVH and refers to a Being who is called *Adoni*, "my lord" in Part I. and *Adonai* "the Lord" in Part II.²

In Part I. (*vv.* 1—3) the Divine Word is, "SIT THOU AT MY RIGHT HAND TILL I MAKE THY FOES A FOOTSTOOL FOR THY FEET"; *i.e.* *Adoni* is, by a Divine Oath, constituted a King. The Poet then (*vv.* 2, 3) sees, as it were in vision, the nature of that Kingship—and it is unlike any other.

(a) He rules (*v.* 2) not with the strength of earth but with the strength of God.

(b) His subjects (*v.* 3) are rather priests than soldiers. Like Arthur's Knights the holiness of their King has made them willing volunteers to share his battles.

¹ A portion of what follows appeared as an Article on Ps. cx. in the *J.T.S.* for April 1903.

² The difference between *Adoni* and *Adonai* depends only upon the vowel-points.

We feel at once that it is no common King that is here described, but that same Conqueror, with weapons not-carnal, who has already been pictured in Ps. xlv.

In Part II. (*vv.* 4—6) the Divine Word is,

*“Thou art a Priest for ever,
According to Melchizedek”;*

i.e. this same holy King is also to combine the office of Priest. Clearly he could not have been of the race of Aaron, for, if so, there would have been no need for him to have been constituted Priest by a Divine Oath. To make this still more clear we have the words, “*According to Melchizedek.*” So then this Priest-King, even as he differs from other Kings in the nature of his rule, differs also from other priests in the order of his priesthood.

Next (*vv.* 5, 6) the poet sees in vision the nature of that priesthood—*and, it too, is unlike any other.* For, as in Part I. the King had ruled as a Priest, so here we see (*vv.* 5, 6) a Priest conquering like a King.

We are now in a position to enquire, Was there any period in which the Messianic hope centred on a combination of the Kingship with the Priesthood? Certainly there was. Ezekiel had seen the fall of both Priesthood and Kingship, “Remove the mitre, take off the crown...until he come whose right it is” (Ezek. xxi. 26f.) Zechariah saw, in the coming Messiah, the union of the two. To him Zerubbabel represented the House of David, while Joshua, the High Priest, with equal dignity, represented the growing power of the Priesthood; but when he pictures the coming Messiah (*Tzemach*, “*the Branch*”) both Zerubbabel and Joshua are merely types, the Messiah has more than combined the offices and dignity of both.

This he sets forth in an acted parable (Zech. vi. 9 ff.).

“And the word of YHVH came unto me, saying, Take of them of the captivity, even of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah; and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, whither they are come from Babylon; yea, take (of them) silver and gold, and make a noble crown (lit. *crowns*) and set it (or *them*) upon the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and speak unto him, saying, Thus saith YHVH of Hosts, Behold, the man whose name is *Tzemach* (the *Branch* or *Outspring*) he shall spring up out of his place; and he shall build the Temple of YHVH; even he shall build the Temple of YHVH; and he shall bear the glory (*i.e.* as King), and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both” (*i.e.* the office of Messiah, both as priest and King, will be an office of Peace).

Now the name *Tzemach*, “*the Outspring*” is a most suggestive name for the Messiah implying, as it does, not merely the *dayspring* [ἀνατολή, Jer. xxiii. 5 : xxxiii. 15 (Theod. and Sym.): Zech. iii. 8 : vi. 12] but also the effect of the dayspring upon creation by causing an “*outspring*” from the ground [Is. lxi. 11]. The two thoughts are combined in Ps. lxxxv. 12 “Truth shall *spring* out of the earth; And Righteousness shall look down from heaven.”

Jeremiah, alluding to this Spring-tide of Righteousness says, “In those days and at that time I will *make to spring* to David an *outspring* of righteousness...this is the name whereby it shall be called, YHVH our Righteousness” (Jer. xxxiii. 15).

In another passage (xxiii. 5) he gives this same name to *Tzemach* himself. In Zechariah, as we have seen, "the man whose name is *Tzemach*" is the Messiah, who combines in his own person all the highest thoughts of Kingship and of Priesthood.

It is evident that *Tzemach* has derived his attributes from natural religion, from what we may call the yearly parable of the Spring-tide. In other words *Tzemach* is, in the sphere of Revelation, what *Tammuz* is in the nature-religion of Babylonia and Palestine. Now the favourite name of Tammuz was *Adoni* i.e. "my Lord" (Ezek. viii. 14, Heb. and Vulg.; cf. Jer. xxii. 18, "*Ah me Adôn*").

The fact that God's parable of Nature has been perverted into nature-worship is no argument against a right interpretation of that parable. I suggest therefore that a Psalmist who lived in the Persian period expressed under the name of *Adoni* that same Messianic hope which Zechariah had expressed under the kindred name of *Tzemach*. If the Psalm be read with this thought in mind some of the most difficult passages (e.g. vv. 3, 7) will gain a new light.

There is no period in the history of O.T. Revelation at which the Messianic hope approached so nearly to a Divine Theophany as in the Persian period.

If now we turn to Jewish tradition there is no question but that, in early times, Ps. cx. was interpreted of the Messiah, though, after the rise of Christianity, it was, by the Rabbinic writers, applied to Abraham.

The meaning of *Adoni* in the first verse has always been a difficulty. The Zohar (quoted by Neale) says, "*The higher degree (YHVH) spake unto the lower (Adoni), Sit thou on My right hand*" [quoted as *Zohar Gen. fol. 15 col. 139*] thus giving a semi-divine meaning to *Adoni*.

The Yalkut comments as follows:—

"In the time to come the Holy One, blessed be He, is going to make King Messiah sit at His right hand and Abraham at His left. And the face of Abraham grows pale and he says, My son's son sits at the right hand and I at the left! Then the Holy One, blessed be He, appeases him and says, Thy son's son is at My right hand and I am at thy right hand."

In the New Testament Christ appeals to this first verse with a view to shew that the dignity of the Messiah would be greater than that of David. This may be said to have been his chief object and, if our interpretation be correct, such a meaning was justified both by the intention of the Psalmist and by the voice of later tradition.

The question of authorship is of minor importance.

If the words of Christ (Mk. xii. 36: Matt. xxii. 44: Lk. xx. 42) have been correctly reported, he claimed David himself as the author of the Psalm. This is no doubt a difficulty. But it is by difficulties, honestly faced, that God leads men to new truth.

Most men now admit that there were things of which Christ was ignorant.

But some will say, Limitation of knowledge is one thing but mistake as to a matter of fact is quite another. If Christ could be mistaken in a matter of fact how can we look to Him as a sure Guide?

May not this difficulty be met by considering the nature of Inspiration? Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and the more holy they were the more completely they reflected and transmitted the message of God. If it were possible to have conceived of one who should have been absolutely "pure, undefiled, separate from sinners," the Divine message, through that man, would have been unique so far as it

concerned *life and conduct*: but there is no reason to suppose that it would have extended to facts of science or of history or of criticism.

In Heb. i. 1 f. the message of God through Christ is compared, and at the same time contrasted, with that through the prophets: *compared*, as though it were the same in kind; *contrasted*, as being different in degree.

This being so, the absolute and unique authority of Christ, as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, is in no way affected even if it should be proved that He was mistaken as to the authorship of a Psalm; but we positively assert that the inner meaning of the Psalm, as indicating the advent of a Priest-King of more than human power, was known and interpreted by Christ.

PSALM CX.

Part I. The Coming One is a King.

- The Divine Word. 1 Thus saith YHVH to "my lord"^a: ^a *Adoni*
 (Cf. Heb. x. 12.) SIT THOU AT MY RIGHT HAND
 TILL I MAKE THY FOES A FOOTSTOOL FOR THY FEET.
- The Psalmist meditates on its fulfilment. 2 The staff of thy strength shall YHVH from Zion send
 (Cf. vv. 5-7.) forth:
 Have thou dominion in the midst of thy foes.
- 3 Thy people offer themselves willingly^b in the day of thy^b cf. Jud. v. 2
 mustering host.
 On the mountains^c of holiness, from the womb of the dawn,^c or *In the beauty of*
 thou hast the dew of thy youth.

v. 1. "My lord." The Masoretic pointing which alone distinguishes between *Adoni* "my lord" and *Adonai* "the Lord" is, of course, late. There is every reason to suppose that the word here is identical with the word pointed *Adonai* in v. 5 (see note).

The question is Whom did the Psalmist mean by *Adoni*? We know that *Adôn* (whence *Adonis*) was another name of *Tammuz*, the personification of *Spring*. We also know that among the Biblical writers the *Spring*, especially under the name *Tzemach*, "the Outspring," was a title of the Messiah. I therefore suggest that, just as the author of Ps. xlv. was influenced by a Marduk myth, so the author of our Psalm was influenced by the story of *Adôn* in describing the coming Messiah, being thus guided to a name which might fill all the meanings between "my lord" and "The Lord." On *Adonai* as a Divine Name in the Psalms see note p. 233.

v. 2. "The staff of thy strength." The word used is not *hoter*, "a rod" or "shoot" as in Is. xi. 1, nor *shebet*, "a rod" or "sceptre" as in Ps. ii. 9: Is. xi. 4 &c., but *matteh* which is used indeed of Aaron's *rod* (better *staff*), and is frequently applied to the "staff of bread" (Ps. cv. 16: Ezek. iv. 16: v. 16: xiv. 13). It is possible that the choice of the word may have been influenced by the thought of "YHVH from Zion," as a heavenly Melchizedek, sustaining the Hero with bread and wine (Gen. xiv.).

"YHVH from Zion." "For His covert was (made) in Salem, And His lair in Zion" (Ps. lxxvi. 2, see notes p. 318 f.).

"Have thou dominion." The word is used in Gen. i. 28 of man's *dominion* over created things, and, in Ps. lxxii. 8, of the *dominion* of the Messiah from sea to sea.

v. 3. The two readings, "in the *beauties* of holiness" "in the *mountains* of holiness" have about

Part II. *The Coming One is a Priest.*

The Divine Word.
(Cf. Heb. vii. 17.)

4 YHVH hath sworn—and He does not repent—

THOU ART A PRIEST FOR EVER
ACCORDING TO MELCHIZEDEK.

The Psalmist meditates on its fulfilment.
(Cf. *vv.* 2, 3.)

5 "My lord^a," at Thy right-hand, hath smitten Kings in the ^a *Adonai* day of his wrath :

6 He judges among the heathen, it (*i.e.* the battle-field) is filled with dead :

He hath smitten the head^b, over a wide land.

7 He will drink of the brook^c in the way^c, therefore will he lift up his head.

^b Hab. iii. 13:
Ps. lxxviii. 22
^c Jer. xxxi. 9

equal weight. If we adopt the former we have an expression which nowhere else occurs, and which, judging from the analogy of 1 Chr. xvi. 20: Pss. xxix. 2: xcvi. 2, would rather denote *holy sanctuaries* than *holy garments*: whereas if (with Midrash Rabbah, Sym., Jer. &c.) we adopt the latter we have an expression which at least in the *singular* ("holy mountain") is very common, and which occurs in the *plural* in Ps. lxxxvii. 1. Zion is called God's *holy mountain* because it is an earthly counterpart of the *holy mountain* of Heaven (Ezek. xxviii. 14).

The mountains, also, are more naturally coupled with the thought of "dew" and of the "dawn": thus we read of "*the dawn spread upon the mountains*" (Joel ii. 2), "*the dew of Hermon*" (Ps. cxxxiii. 3; cf. 2 Sam. i. 21).

"*The dew of thy youth.*" Many modern commentators interpret "*thy youth*" as "*thy young men*" *i.e.* "*thy youthful soldiery.*" But the only other passages in which this word "*youth*" occurs are in Eccles. xi. 9, 10 where it is once translated "*youth*" and once (perhaps better) "*childhood.*" It is, then, evident that "*the dew of thy youth*" implies a birth that is ever fresh, a constant renewal of youth (cf. Is. xxvi. 19). Just as the Morning-star is called "*the son of the dawn*" (Is. xiv. 12) because it seems each morning to be born anew, so, too, of the Hero of our Psalm it is said, "*His going forth is prepared as the dawn*" (Hos. vi. 3); but though "*His goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting*" (Mic. v. 2) yet his youth is ever new.

This interpretation will also throw some light upon the last line of the Psalm which holds the same relation to Part II. that the present line does to Part I.

v. 4. "*According to Melchizedek.*" The rendering of the Sept., "*according to the order of Melchizedek,*" is rather a paraphrase than a translation.

The Hebrew *al dibrathi* (Aq. and Sym. *κατὰ λόγον*) signifies "*because of*" or "*according to*" (Eccles. iii. 18: vii. 14: viii. 2: Dan. iv. 17 (14)). If we regarded simply the usage of the language we should translate "*Because of Melchizedek,*" but the rendering of the Sept. is possible and represents a tradition adopted by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The name *Melchi-zedek*, "*My King is Zedek*" or "*My King is Righteousness,*" reminds us of the Messianic title "*YHVH Zidkenu,*" *i.e.* "*YHVH our Righteousness.*"

In the Babylonian religion *Zedek* is *Marduk* as the Planet *Jupiter*. The reader of Dante will remember that the 6th Heaven or Sphere of Jupiter is the abode of Righteousness or ideal Justice.

v. 5. "*My lord*" (*Adonai*), at Thy right-hand &c." *Adonai* is pointed here as if it were the name of God, and is usually translated "*The Lord.*" But it seems to me that the structure of the Psalm requires us to take it, as in *v.* 1, of the Messiah and this for the following reasons:

(a) In *vv.* 2, 3 the meditation is not upon the action of God but upon the action of Messiah: we should therefore naturally expect that in the corresponding verses of Part II. the action would also be that of the Messiah.

(b) In Part I. Messiah is seated at God's right-hand; it would therefore be strange, in Part II., to picture God at the right-hand of the Messiah.

(c) Lastly "*He will drink &c.*" (v. 7) must refer to Messiah; why then should not "*He judges &c.*," "*He hath smitten &c.*" also refer to Messiah?

v. 5. "*Hath smitten kings.*" It was "*as Abraham was returning from the slaughter of the kings*" that Melchizedek met him and blessed him (Gen. xiv. 17 f.: Heb. vii. 1).

"How beautiful is King Messiah, who will proceed from the house of Judah. He girds his loins and enters the field and sets the battle in array against his foes and kills kings" (Pseudo-Jonathan and Jerushalmi on Gen. xlix. 11; quoted by Schürer, Div. II. Vol. II. p. 167).

v. 7. "*He will drink of the brook in the way...*" This difficult line is supposed by many commentators to be a fragment; but, if we look at the structure of the Psalm, we see that it corresponds exactly with the last line of Part I. *There* Adoni, like a rising sun, on the "holy mountains," had a renewal of unending birth: *here*, like a setting sun, going down into the waters, he comes forth again with new vigour, rejoicing as a giant to run his course.

But the poet is still thinking of Gen. xiv. or of the legend upon which that Chapter was formed. Just as Abraham pursued the four kings, so in a straight course (cf. Jer. xxxi. 9), guided by God, Messiah pursues the powers of evil. The natural picture is that of a warrior stooping to drink and then continuing the pursuit. But the word "*drink*" suggests a deeper meaning;—to "*drink the waters of Sihor*" implies to be conformed to the customs of Egypt; to "*drink the waters of the River (i.e. Euphrates)*" is to adopt the manners of Babylon (Jer. ii. 18): therefore to *drink of the brook in the God-guided Way* suggests obedience to the God-guided life.

PSALMS CXI, CXII.

These Psalms, being alphabetical Psalms, have already appeared in Part I, see pp. 40—49.

PSALM CXIII.

This first song of the Hallel falls naturally into three parts of six lines each. The first part, cf. Mal. i. 11, anticipates the spread of God's Kingdom over the whole earth. The second, which contains two allusions to Is. lvii. 15 f., shews that the "High and Lofty One" can sink Himself to regard with favour (הרהר) with ב) this little earth and the life of man. The third part rejoices in a signal fulfilment of the prophecies of the Second Isaiah, in that God, thus stooping, has regarded the low estate of Zion, "the Barren-woman," and has made her a joyful mother of children. This third part should be compared with the Psalm which is commonly called "the Song of Hannah" (see Crit. Commentaries) and also with the Magnificat.

If for *Zion* we substitute *Humanity* we shall see the Christian meaning of our Psalm.

From internal evidence we conclude that the Psalm was written in the joyous days of the Return from Babylon (see note on v. 9).

Pss. cxiii., cxiv., which form the first portion of the Hallel, are similar in tone and are both appointed by our Church as special Psalms for Easter.

PSALM CXIII.

Halleluyah.

Praise Him through
all time and space!

1 Praise ye, O ye servants^a of YHVH,
Praise ye the Name of YHVH.

^a Pss. cxxxiv.
1: cxxxv. 1

2 May the Name of YHVH be blessed
From this time forth and for evermore.

3 "From the sun-rising to (the place of) his setting^b"
May the Name of YHVH be praised.

^b Mal. i. 11

He is as great in
the depth as in the
height!

4 High^c above all the Nations is YHVH,
Above the heavens is His Glory^d.

^c Is. lvii. 15

^d Ps. lvii. 5, 11

5 Who is then as YHVH our God,
That so exalteth Himself to be throned^e—

^e lit. "to sit"

6 That so humbleth Himself to look—
On the heavens—and on the earth?

v. 1. "O ye servants." A favourite title of Israel in the Second Isaiah. Sept. *παῖδες*, Vulg. "pueri." The *Servant* of the Old Testament becomes the *Son* in the New.

vv. 5, 6. He, who mounts so high as to be throned on the heavens, must sink to a corresponding depth of humility in order to look (with satisfaction) upon the earth! The thought is closely parallel with Is. lvii. 15, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that dwelleth in Eternity whose Name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit....." Cf. also Ps. xviii. 35 (36).

In both these passages it will be seen that the object of this Divine Humility was to raise humanity. Dante, *Paradiso*, vii. 103 ff., Cary's translation, has well expressed the need of a Divine Humility to raise fallen man:—

"But since the deed is ever prized the more,
The more the doer's good intent appears;
Goodness celestial, whose broad signature
Is on the universe, of all its ways
To raise ye up, was fain to leave out none.
Nor aught so vast or so magnificent,
Either for him who gave or who received,
Between the last night and the primal day,
Was or can be. For God more bounty show'd,
Giving himself to make man capable
Of his return to life, than had the terms
Been mere and unconditional release.
And for his justice, every method else
Were all too scant, had not the Son of God
Humbled himself to put on mortal flesh."

When we remember that this first Psalm of the Hallel was, very probably, sung by our Lord (Mk. xiv. 26) on the night of the Supper, these verses, which speak of a Divine Humility, gain a new interest. They are alluded to in the Gallican Mass, "ut celsa possideas tam dignabilis ut terrena non deseras" (Grünwald, *Ueber den Einfluss der Psalmen*, p. 113).

The Sept., ὁ ἐν ὑψηλοῖς.....τὰ ταπεινὰ ἐφορῶν, may have suggested St Paul's summary of true humility as *not minding high things but being carried away with (the beauty of) things that are lowly* (Rom. xii. 16, Greek).

His humiliation has
raised His People.

- 7 "He raiseth up the poor from the dust,
He lifteth the needy from the dunghill;
8 That He may set (him)^a with princes^b,"
Even with the princes of His people.
9 He maketh the Barren^c to keep house
As the children's joyous mother.

Halleluyah.

^a See Sept.
^b 1 Sam. ii. 8

^c Is. liv. 2:
Gal. iv. 27

vv. 7, 8^a. A verbal quotation from the 'Song of Hannah,' 1 Sam. ii. 8. But the Psalm-context suggests the deeper thought that the raising of the poor (*v.* 7) is through the Self-humiliation of God (*v.* 6). Compare note on *vv.* 5, 6.

v. 9. "*He maketh the Barren...*" As in the case of Sarai (Gen. xi. 30), Rebekah (Gen. xxv. 21), Rachel (Gen. xxix. 31), the wife of Manoah (Jud. xiii. 2 f.), and Hannah herself (1 Sam. i.). Such instances of Divine intervention on behalf of the barren had suggested to the Second Isaiah the thought of Zion as "*the Barren.*" Thus (Is. liv. 1 ff. "Sing, O Barren, thou that didst not bear...") Compare also Is. xlix. 18—21. Our Psalmist is thinking of these prophecies. It is natural to suppose that he wrote at a time when, to all appearance, they were being fulfilled. This would be in the early Persian period.

PSALM CXIV.

As the first Song of the Hallel comforts Israel with the assurance that "the Barren-woman" is to become the joyous Mother of many children, so this second Song develops a kindred thought, also from Deutero-Isaiah,—viz. that the first Redemption, from Egypt, is the pledge of a final and complete Redemption. This is pictured in four stanzas of four lines each. In the *first* stanza (*vv.* 1, 2) the Redemption from Egypt is regarded as the Birth of the Nation through a Divine indwelling. In the *second* (*vv.* 3, 4) the outward signs of this Divine Presence are graphically pictured. This is the middle of the Psalm, and from this point the tenses are no longer in the *past* but in the *present*.

In the *third* stanza (*vv.* 5, 6) the Psalmist sees, in the world-shaking of his own day, similar signs of that same Presence.

In the *fourth* (*vv.* 7, 8) he shews, by allusion to Deutero-Isaiah (xli. 18, xliii. 2), his full conviction that the New Creation is at hand.

Dante says of this Psalm, "If we view it in the letter, we see it describes the exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt in the time of Moses; if allegorically, we see signified our redemption by Jesus Christ; if we look at its moral sense, we perceive the conversion of the Soul from the plaint and misery of sin to the state of grace; if we regard it mystically, we behold the passage of the blessed Soul from present corruption into the liberty of Eternal Glory." (Quoted by Mrs Gurney, *Dante's Pilgrim's Progress*, p. 101.) See also note on *v.* 1.

The Psalm is appointed as a proper Psalm for Easter, but, as a Psalm of the Theophany, it would be even more suitable for the season of Epiphany for which, strangely, we have no proper Psalms.

Keble's translation of this Psalm is more than usually happy:—

“What time, in His great Name,
From Egypt, Israel came,
The house of Jacob from the throng
Of strange barbaric tongue;
In Judah lodg'd His light,
O'er Israel spread His might:—
The sea beheld, and trembling parts,
And Jordan backward starts.
The sea hath sprung aside,
And Jordan turn'd his tide;
Like rams the desert mountains leap,
The little hills, like sheep.
What ails thee, sea, to part,
Thee, Jordan, back to start?
Ye mountains, like the rams to leap,
Ye little hills, like sheep?
O earth, be mov'd before
The God Whom we adore,
Before the Lord Who deigns to dwell
In tents with Israel:
Who made the rock a pool
Of mantling waters cool,
The flint-stone in the burning mount
A bright and gushing fount.”

PSALM CXIV.

At the Birth of the
Nation,

1 When Israel came out of Egypt,
The House of Jacob from a barbarous^a people,
2 Judah became His Sanctuary,
Israel His dominion.

^a Sept., Je-
rome

all Nature was
moved.

3 The Sea saw and fled;
The Jordan was turned back.
4 The mountains skipped^b like rams,
The hills like the young of the flock.

^b cf. Ps. xxix.
6

v. 1. These were the words that Dante heard sung by the blessed spirits as the winged boat brought them safe to the shores of Purgatory:—

“*In Exitu Israel de Egypto*,
All with one voice together sang, and what
In the remainder of that hymn is writ.”

[*Purg.* II. 46 f., Cary's translation.]

v. 2. History is here idealised. Though Judah did not become “*His Sanctuary*” until the times of David, the Psalmist pictures that Divine Indwelling as a fact of the exodus.

v. 3. “*The Sea saw...*” See note on the closely parallel passage in Ps. lxxvii. 16 ff., p. 324 f.; and, for similar pictures of a Theophany, Pss. xviii. 7 ff.; lxviii. 7 f. (with Jud. v. 4; Hab. iii. 3–12); xcvi. 4 f. The idea of this Theophany is closely connected with the birth-pangs of a New Creation. See v. 7 note.

v. 4. If this verse is poetical must verse 3 be literal prose?

PSALM CXV.

The fact that the word *Halleluyah* does not occur at the close of Ps. cxiv. has led the Septuagint and other versions to regard Pss. cxiv., cxv. as one Psalm. There is no justification for this: indeed the Psalms differ greatly in tone.

There is much in Ps. cxv. to indicate a late date. The sarcastic verses (4—8) on idolatry could not have found a place in a popular Hymn for Public Worship until the thoughts of the Second Isaiah (xliv. 9—20) had been assimilated by the Nation.

Again, the threefold division of the Jewish Church into (a) *the House of Israel*, (b) *the House of Aaron*, (c) *the fearers of YHVH* (possibly *proselytes*) points to a still later date.

The Psalm was certainly written for the Temple Worship, and we shall best understand it by bearing in mind the fact that in the times of Sirach (l. 14—21) and of the Chronicle-writer (2 Chr. xxix. 27) the Psalms were sung *while the Sacrifice was being consumed upon the Altar*, and were accompanied by a threefold blast upon the trumpets, by the Priests, and by a threefold prostration on the part of the People (cf. Mishna, *Tamid*, vii. 3).

Thus we may analyse the Psalm as follows:—

vv. 1, 2. The pleading of the Sacrifice (cf. Num. x. 10).

vv. 3—8. The contrast between our God and gods of the heathen. With the underlying thought that, in each case, the worshipper becomes like to that which he worships (*v. 8* with *vv. 9 ff.*). Cf. Rom. i. 21 f.: Eph. iv. 18 f. with 2 Cor. iii. 18.

vv. 9—11. Israel's creed. Absolute trust. [The Sacrifice is accepted.]

vv. 12—15. Israel's blessing. As in the past so in the future.

vv. 16—18. Israel's life-work. To recount the Praises of God.

Several verses (4—8) of the Psalm have been repeated, with slight change in the "Great Hallel" (Ps. cxxxv. 15—18), while verses 3 and 9—15 have also their counterpart in Ps. cxxxv.

PSALM CXV.

Help us for Thine own honour!	1 Not for us, YHVH, not for us, But for Thy Name give glory; Because of Thy lovingkindness, because of Thy truth.
	2 "Wherefore should the heathen say, Where now is their God?"

▪ Ps. lxxix. 10

v. 1. "Not for us..." i.e. Not for our sake but for Thy Name's sake. Baethgen compares Ezek. xxvi. 22 "I do not do this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for Mine own Name's sake."

The words have been constantly used as a thanksgiving for victory won (e.g. at Bannockburn, Agincourt, &c., see Marson, *The Psalms at Work*) but originally they constituted a prayer before the battle. In *T. B. Pesahin* 117^a (quoted by Büchler, *Z. A. W.* 1900) there is a discussion as to the occasion on which the Hallel was composed: "R. Eliezer says, Moses and Israel spoke it when they stood by the Sea. They said, 'Not for us, YHVH, not for us,' and the Holy Spirit replied and said to them, 'For

Ours is the God of
Heaven and Earth
(cf. v. 15 f.).

Their gods are dead
(cf. Ps. cxxxv. 15—
18).

A threefold con-
fession of faith.

3 As for our God, in Heaven [and in earth]^a,
All that He pleased He hath done.

^a Sept., cf.
Acts xiv. 15

4 Their idols are silver and gold,
The work of men's hands.

5 A mouth is theirs, but they cannot speak;
Eyes they have, but they do not see;

6 Ears they have, and hear not;
Noses they have, but smell not;

7 Their hands (are there), but they handle not;
Their feet (are there), but they walk not;
Nor can they utter with their throat.

8 They that make them shall become as they;
Each one that puts his trust in them.

9 ISRAEL^b TRUSTS IN YHVH;
THEIR HELP AND SHIELD IS HE.

^b Ps. cxviii. 2

10 THE HOUSE OF AARON^c TRUST IN YHVH;
THEIR HELP AND SHIELD IS HE.

^c Ps. cxviii. 3

11 THE FEARERS^d OF YHVH TRUST IN YHVH;
THEIR HELP AND SHIELD IS HE.

^d Ps. cxviii. 4

Mine own sake, for Mine own sake will I do it' (Is. xlvi. 11)." According to another passage (*Pesahin* 118^a) this verse indicates one of the five things for which the Hallel gives thanks, viz. "the Sufferings of the Messiah, because it is written, 'Not for us, YHVH, not for us.'"

"Because of Thy lovingkindness, because of Thy truth." These words are simply an expansion of the preceding line. God's "Name" is expressed by "lovingkindness" and "truth" (Ps. lxxxv. 10 (11); lxxxvi. 15; lxxxix. 14 (15)). Thus there is no need, with Duham and Cheyne, to suppose that a line has dropped out and to interpret after Ps. cxxxviii. 2 f.

v. 2. A verbal quotation, except for the little word "now," from Ps. lxxix. 10. Probably the taunt "Where is their God?" was very common. See note on Ps. xlii. 3.

v. 3. "As for our God, in Heaven." The Sept. read "in heaven and in earth," thus bringing the passage in harmony with Ps. cxxxv. 6, "All that YHVH pleased He hath done, in heaven and in earth." This reading is probably correct. In the Yalkut the Hebrew text is quoted in this form.

In the parallel Psalm (cxxxv.) instances of this power of God are given in several verses. In our present Psalm the transition from the power of God to the nothingness of the idols is very abrupt.

v. 4. Instead of עֲצַבֵיהֶם "their idols," the parallel text reads עֲצַבֵי הַגּוֹיִם "the idols of the heathen." vv. 9^a, 10^a, 11^a. No change of the text, but only of the vowel points, is needed in order that the thrice-repeated verb should be rendered as a *present* tense (with Sept. Syr. Jer.) instead of an *imperative* (with E.V., R.V., P.B.V.) The connexion of thought requires a *present* tense. In v. 8 we saw that the fate of those that put their trust in idols was to become senseless as they: on the other hand (vv. 9 ff.) Israel, who trusts in the Living God (v. 3), will share His Life and His protection.

vv. 9^b, 10^b, 11^b. This refrain should be compared with Ps. xxxiii. 20, "Our soul waiteth for YHVH, Our Help and our Shield is He." Possibly both passages are founded on Deut. xxxiii. 29.

v. 11. "The fearers of YHVH." Rashi says, "These are the proselytes." We cannot, however, be sure of this. See s. v. *Proselyte*, in Hastings' *Dictionary*.

If the expression be used, as in Mal. iii. 16, of the faithful in Israel it is not easy to see why such should not have been included in "Israel" (v. 9).

A threefold assurance of blessing.

12 YHVH hath been mindful of us, He will bless—
 HE WILL BLESS THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL,
 HE WILL BLESS THE HOUSE OF AARON,
 13 HE WILL BLESS THE FEARERS OF YHVH,
 The small along with the great.
 14 YHVH will add unto you—
 Unto you and unto your children.
 15 Blessed^a are ye of YHVH,
 The Maker of Heaven and Earth^a.

^a cf. Gen. xiv.
 19

The Earth is lent us for praise.

16 The Heaven is YHVH'S Heaven;
 But the Earth He hath given to the Sons of Men.

We will use it for praise.

17 It is not the dead^b that can praise Yah;
 Nor all they that go down into Silence;
 18 But we—we shall bless Yah
 From henceforth and for ever.

^b cf. Pss. vi. 5:
 xxx. 9

Halleluyah.

v. 12. "YHVH hath been...." "He will...." Past mercy is a pledge for future help. This verse seems to mark the acceptance of the Sacrifice (Ewald).

v. 15. This verse suggests the Blessing of Melchizedek and should be compared with Ps. cxxxv. 21.

v. 16. "The Heaven is YHVH's Heaven: But the Earth...." Aben Ezra explains that man is, as it were, God's officer, and that God has committed all created things (cf. Ps. viii.) into his hands 'in order that he may recognise the work of God and praise Him as long as he lives.'

May we not say that the *Heaven* is God's, for blessing, while the *Earth* is man's, for labour? Compare the Parable of the Talents (Matt. xxv. 14—30).

There is a fine Sermon on this text, entitled "*The earth of the Redemption*," by Phillips Brooks, *Twenty Sermons*, p. 173 ff.

PSALM CXVI.

The Septuagint divides our Psalm, at *v.* 10, into two Psalms, not altogether without reason; for though the Psalm is one it is divided into two Parts at *v.* 10. These Parts closely correspond (see marginal notes). Part I begins, "*I love*," Part II, "*I believe*." In Part I the *love* of Israel is founded upon a resurrection from death at the Red Sea (*v.* 3, note) and upon the subsequent Revelation of God's Name (*v.* 5 note). In Part II the *faith* (*i.e.* *trust*) of Israel is founded upon the second resurrection from the death of the Captivity (*vv.* 10—12, notes) and upon the Revelation of God's compassion to the Suffering Servant (*vv.* 15, 16). The Refrain in Part I (*vv.* 2, 4) is repeated in Part II (*vv.* 13, 17 f.) with a significant addition.

PSALM CXVI.

Israel loves, because God first loved him.

This Divine Love was shewn at the Red Sea (cf. Ps. xviii.).

The Attributes (Exod. xxxiv. 6 f.) of Compassion were then experienced.

Therefore vows are due (cf. Ps. lvi. 13).

1 I love; for that YHVH hears
My voice, my supplications^a :
2 For that He inclined His ear to me ;
SO ON THE NAME OF YHVH I CALL.
3 "The toils of Death came round me^b " ;
The pangs^c of Sheol found me out.
I find (only) trouble and sorrow ;
4 SO ON THE NAME OF YHVH I CALL.
Oh now, YHVH, deliver my soul.
5 "Gracious" is YHVH, and Righteous ;
Yea, our God is "Compassionate."
6 One that preserveth the simple is YHVH !
I was brought low, and, for me, He was Saviour.
7 Return, O my soul, to thy rest,
For YHVH hath dealt bountifully with thee.
8 "For Thou didst deliver my soul from death^d,"
Mine eyes from tears, "my feet from falling."
9 I can walk before YHVH
In the land of the living^d."

^a Ps. xxviii. 6

^b Ps. xviii. 4

^c or *straits*,
Ps. cxviii. 5;
Lam. i. 3

^d Ps. lvi. 13

v. 1. "I love." The verb without an object is unusual but is exactly parallel with "I believe" (*v. 10*). The meaning is identical with Ps. xviii. 1 "Thee will I love," where, however, a different verb is used. "We love Him because He first loved us." God's antecedent love was shewn in the choice of Israel. To this love Israel responds by praise.

v. 2 b. The text reads, "So in my days I call." If we accept this we must explain "So, as long as I live I call (upon God)." But, as Hupfeld and others suggest, the Hebrew יָמַי, "in my days," might easily have arisen from יָמַי "on the Name of YHVH." In this case the Refrain (*vv. 4, 13, 17*) would occur twice in the first half and twice in the second half of the Psalm.

v. 3. "The toils." The word has the double meaning of "cords" or "pangs." "came round me," or "compassed me." See Ps. xl. 12 (13) note. The whole line is a quotation from Ps. xviii. 4 (5) where, as we have seen, it refers to Israel at the Red Sea, and hints at the story of Jonah.

vv. 5, 6. The Revelation of the so-called "thirteen Attributes" of God (Exod. xxxiv. 6 f.) was consequent upon the death and resurrection of Israel at the Red Sea. Our Psalmist (*v. 6*) sums up these Attributes in the beautiful Divine title "One that preserveth the simple" (Sept. τὰ ῥήματα).

The words *v'lee yehoshiq* mean much more than, "and He helped me" (E.V.; P.B.V.); they suggest a Divine strength made perfect in human weakness.

vv. 7-9. If the original passage in Ps. lvi. 13 be read with its context it will be seen that the thought is of the payment of vows due to God for deliverance. The second half of our Psalm deals wholly with these vows. See *vv. 14, 18*.

v. 10 f. We may paraphrase as follows: 'I said (*v. 1*) that my love to God was founded on the fact of His deliverance of me out of Death, so now (*v. 10*) I say of my faith. The Sea of trouble, out of which I have just come, does but shew the strength of my Deliverer.'

Though St Paul (2 Cor. iv. 13) quotes from the incorrect rendering of the Sept., it is evident, from the context, that the true meaning of the Psalm was in his mind:—"But having the same spirit of faith, according to that which is written, I believed, and therefore did I speak; we also believe, and therefore also we speak; knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up also with Jesus."

Israel trusts, because of that which God has already done (cf. *vv.* 1 ff.).

In the libation he acknowledges the Giver of Life (cf. *vv.* 3, 4).

The Attributes of Compassion have again been experienced (cf. *vv.* 5, 6).

Therefore vows are due (cf. *vv.* 7 ff.).

- 10 I believe; for that I can say—
I, that was so greatly afflicted!
11 I, that said in my haste,
All man's estate is a lie!—
12 "Wherewith can I requite YHVH
For all His bountiful dealings^a with me?"
13 I will take^b the Cup of Salvation;
SO ON THE NAME OF YHVH I CALL.
14 MY VOWS TO YHVH I PAY,
IN THE PRESENCE OF ALL HIS PEOPLE.
15 Precious in the sight of YHVH
Is the death of His saints.
16 Oh now, YHVH, for I am Thy Servant;
I am Thy Servant, the son of Thine handmaid;
Thou hast broken my bonds.
17 To Thee I sacrifice sacrifice of Thanksgiving^c;
SO ON THE NAME OF YHVH I CALL.
18 MY VOWS TO YHVH I PAY,
IN THE PRESENCE OF ALL HIS PEOPLE:
19 In the Courts of the House of YHVH,
In the midst of Jerusalem.

^a cf. *v.* 7

^b lift

^c Ps. l. 23,
note

Halleluyah.

v. 11^b. The words *kol ha-adam kozeb* do not mean "All men are liars" (E.V.; P.B.V.). We must interpret *kol ha-adam* as in Eccles. xii. 13 "This is *the whole of man*," and translate "The whole of man is a lie," *i.e.* "All man's estate is nothing but vanity." In the sorrows of the Captivity Israel had been tempted to feel that "*mere vanity and nothing more is all man's lot*" (Ps. xxxix. 5, 11).

v. 12. This must be read with *v.* 10^a. The sorrow (*v.* 10^b, 11), which comes between, is not without its purpose in producing the "I believe." "Ye now therefore have sorrow" (St John xvi. 22). See also notes on Ps. xxx.

v. 13. "I will take the Cup of Salvation." If we compare the corresponding verse (3) in the first half of the Psalm, we shall observe that the thought is fixed upon the deliverance at the Red Sea and the Song of Moses (Ex. xv.). In the deliverance from Babylon our Psalmist has seen a repetition of the miracle at the Sea. He is reminded of the Prophecy of Isaiah (xii. 1—3). "In that day thou shalt say, I thank Thee, YHVH, for that Thou wast angry with me;—Thine anger is turned back and Thou comfortedst me. Behold the God of my Salvation! I trust and am not afraid, for my strength and my song is Yah YHVH, and He is become my Salvation (cf. Ex. xv. 2). Therefore with joy shall ye draw water from the fountains of Salvation."

When we see the close connexion between this passage and our Psalm it is impossible to resist the conclusion that the "Cup of Salvation" and the "water from the fountains of Salvation" refer to one and the same thing.

Now it is well known that the custom of drawing water from the Pool of Siloam, and pouring it out, with the wine of the drink-offering, upon the Altar, during the Feast of Tabernacles, was based upon the words which we have just quoted from Isaiah (see Edersheim, *The Temple*, p. 241 f.). I therefore suggest that the words, "I will take (lit. I will lift or raise) the Cup of Salvation," refer to this libation which was poured out as a thank-offering to God for all those gifts of life of which water was the type. "As soon as the wine and water were being poured out, the Temple music began and Hallel was sung" (Edersheim, *The Temple*, p. 242).

PSALM CXVII.

In the introduction to Psalm xviii. (p. 84) we have traced a connexion with Deut. xxxii., and have also shewn that St Paul recognised this connexion when (Rom. xv. 9 ff.) he quoted the two together. Thus: "*And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written,*

*Therefore will I give praise unto Thee among the Gentiles,
And would sing unto Thy name* (Ps. xviii. 49).

And again he saith,

Rejoice ye Gentiles, with his people (Deut. xxxii. 43).

And again,

*Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles;
And let all the peoples praise Him*" (Ps. cxvii. 1).

This last quotation from our present Psalm suggests that it also should be compared with Ps. xviii. Another Psalm, which is still more closely parallel with our Psalm, is Ps. lxvi. (see p. 273 f.).

It is an interesting coincidence that, in the Triennial Cycle, Pss. xviii., lxvi., cxvii., would be read on the same Sabbath in the first, second, and third years respectively.

PSALM CXVII.

Let the Gentiles
praise God for His
Mercy to Israel (cf.
Ps. lxvi.).

1 Praise ye YHVH, all ye Nations;
Laud Him, all ye Peoples.
2 For His Lovingkindness has abounded upon us;
And the truth of YHVH is for ever.

Halleluyah.

v. 2. "*has abounded.*" The verb is used of the waters of the Deluge "*prevailing*" (Gen. vii. 18, 19, 20, 24), and in Ps. ciii. 11, of the Lovingkindness of God, which, like a Flood of Mercy, has "*prevailed*" over His People (see note, p. 429).

PSALM CXVIII.

The Psalm is manifestly antiphonal. Verses 1—4 may be regarded as a rubrical introduction, but they indicate a threefold arrangement (Israel, the House of Aaron, the Proselytes) which runs through the Psalm. This we have indicated in the margin by letters *a*, *b*, *c*, *a*₁, *b*₁, *c*₁, &c.

The Psalm practically begins with *v.* 5; if therefore the reader will study *a*₁ with *a*₂, *a*₃, *a*₄, *a*₅, and likewise *b*₁ with *b*₂, *b*₃, *b*₄, *b*₅, &c. he will see that the thoughts follow in this order: 1 *God is mine.* 2 *All the world was against me.* 3 *The danger ended in a new 'Song of Moses.'* 4 *Therefore I trust for the future* (cf. Ps. cxvi. 10 ff.). 5 *I thank Him for such an unlooked for deliverance.* The portions of the Psalm which do not fall under this threefold arrangement may be regarded as spoken by the Chorus.

Since the spiritual history of the Nation culminated in the experience of Christ, the Psalm is suitable for Easter Day, for which it is appointed in our Church.

PSALM CXVIII.

Rubrical introduction (cf. Jer. xxxiii. 10 f.).

(*a*) Israel,

(*b*) House of Aaron,

(*c*) Proselytes.

Confession of trust by

(*a*₁) Israel,

(*b*₁) House of Aaron,

(*c*₁) Proselytes.

1 "Thank ye YHVH for (He) is good;
For His Lovingkindness is for ever."

2 Let Israel now say:—
"For His Lovingkindness is for ever."

3 Let the House of Aaron now say:—
"For His Lovingkindness is for ever."

4 Let the fearers of YHVH now say:—
"For His Lovingkindness is for ever."

5 From the straits^a I called on Yah^b;
He answered me in spacious liberty.

6 YHVH is mine, "I will not fear;
What can man do unto me?"^c

7 YHVH is mine, my unique Helper!
So I^d shall see my desire on them that hate me.

^a Ps. cxvi. 3

^b Exod. xv. 2

^c Ps. lvi. 4, 11

^d Emphatic

v. 5. "From the straits." The only other passages in which the word occurs are Lam. i. 3, "All her persecutors overtook her between the straits," and Ps. cxvi. 3, where, as in the present Psalm, it refers to the distress of Israel at the Red Sea (Exod. xiv. 10). It was this "distress" that moved Israel to cry to God, but His answer went far beyond the prayer—"He answered me in spacious liberty."

Luther says of this Psalm that it had "helped him out of such straits as neither Emperor nor King, nor any man upon earth could have helped him out of."

"spacious liberty." The word, which occurs in Ps. xviii. 19 (20) of the deliverance at the Red Sea, is here intensified by the addition of the syllable *yah*. The Sept. renders *καὶ ἐπήκουσέ μου εἰς πλατυσμόν*. (Sym. *eis euryōplav*.)

v. 6. The words are almost identical with the Refrain of Ps. lvi. and are used by the writer to the Hebrews (xiii. 6) in exhorting his converts to freedom from covetous desires. Those who can say "The Lord is mine" can afford to sit loose to earthly possessions (Gen. xv. 1, xxviii. 15).

v. 7. *My unique Helper.* On the idiom see note on Ps. liv. 4.

"So I shall see my desire..." The emphatic pronoun disclaims the thought of personal vengeance and is inconsistent with the usual interpretation of the threefold Refrain in *vv.* 10—12: but see note on *v.* 10.

- Chorus. 8 It is better to trust in YHVH
Than to put confidence in man.
9 It is better to trust in YHVH
Than to put confidence in princes.
- (*a*₂) Israel (cf. *v.* 5). 10 All Nations compassed me round^a;
IN THE NAME OF YHVH (IT IS) THAT I SHALL DESTROY^b THEM. ^b doubtful word
- (*b*₂) House of Aaron (cf. *v.* 6). 11 They compassed me round and round;
IN THE NAME OF YHVH (IT IS) THAT I SHALL DESTROY^b THEM.
- (*c*₂) Proselytes (cf. *v.* 7). 12 They compassed me round like bees;
They flared out like a fire of thorns;
IN THE NAME OF YHVH (IT IS) THAT I SHALL DESTROY^b THEM.
- (*a*₃) Israel (cf. *vv.* 5, 10, 17). 13 Thou didst thrust sore at me that I might fall;
But YHVH hath helped me.
- (*b*₃) House of Aaron (cf. *vv.* 6, 11, 18). 14 Yah is my strength and my Song;
And he hath become my salvation^c.
- (*c*₃) Proselytes (cf. *vv.* 7, 12, 19). 15 The voice of joy and salvation is in the tents of the
righteous;
- Chorus. { The right hand^d of YHVH doeth valiantly. ^d Ex. xv. 6, 12
16 The right hand of YHVH is exalted;
The right hand of YHVH doeth valiantly.

v. 10. "I shall destroy them." If the present text be correct we should be obliged to render "I will cut them off," or even, "I will circumcise them." Against the text the following facts must be considered:—

First the Sept. (ἡμυνάμην αὐτοῦς. Vulg. *ultus sum in eos*) implies a different Hebrew text, probably נִסְּרָם or נִסְּרָם (see Josh. x. 13, Heb. and Greek).

But this text could easily have arisen from an earlier text נִסְּרָם thus repeating the Refrain of Ps. cxvi. (*vv.* 4, 13, 17), "So on the Name of YHVH (it is) that I call." I observe that Cheyne, following a different line of argument, arrives at a similar result. (Vol. II. p. 166.)

Secondly, our Psalm has much in common with Psalm cxvi. I therefore suggest that, originally, it had the same spiritually-minded Refrain (cf. note on *v.* 7). The present text may have arisen in the days of the Maccabees.

v. 14. "Yah is my strength...my salvation." Here we have a quotation from the Song of Moses, Exod. xv., which is in the Psalmist's mind throughout the Psalm (see *vv.* 5, 15, 28). Indeed throughout the Hallel the Deliverance at the Red Sea is a leading thought (see Ps. cxiv., cxvi. 3, 13) as it is in Ps. xviii.

But we have also an allusion to the song in Is. xii. 1—3. "In that day thou shalt say, I thank Thee, YHVH, for that Thou wert angry with me;—Thine anger is turned back and Thou comfortedst me. Behold the God of my Salvation! I trust and am not afraid, for my strength and my song is Yah YHVH, and He is become my Salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water from the fountains of Salvation." This passage is undoubtedly post-Exilic and we have already seen (p. 473) that it is alluded to in Ps. cxvi. 13.

- (a₁) Israel, 17 I shall not die but live,
And recount the works of Yah.
- (b₁) House of Aaron, 18 Yah chastened^a me sore: ^a cf. Is. xii. 1
But He did not give me over unto death.
- (c₁) Proselytes. 19 Open for me the gates of righteousness:
I will enter through them, I will thank Yah.
- Chorus. 20 This is the gate that is YHVH'S;
Righteous ones shall enter through it.
- (a₂) Israel, 21 I will thank Thee, because Thou hast answered^b me, ^b v. 5
And art become for me my salvation.
- (b₂) House of Aaron, 22 A stone that the builders despised
Hath become the chief of the corner.
- (c₂) Proselytes. 23 From YHVH hath this come to pass:
It is marvellous in our eyes.
- Chorus (cf. v. 20). 24 This is the day that YHVH hath made^c: ^c or wrought
We will be glad and rejoice therein.
- 25 Oh now, YHVH, save now^d! ^d "Hosanna"
(Mk xi. 9 f.).
Oh now, YHVH, prosper now!
- The threefold blessing (Nu. vi., cf. Ps. cxv. 12). 26 Blessed is he that cometh, in the Name of YHVH:
We bless you from the House of YHVH.
- 27 YHVH is the Strong-God^e, and hath shone out upon us: ^e El
Marshal the procession^f with the boughs up to the horns ^f Feast
of the altar.
- 28 Thou art my Strong-God^g and I will thank Thee; ^g El
My God^h and I will "exalt Theeⁱ." ^h Elohim
- 29 *Thank ye YHVH for (He) is good,* ⁱ Ex. xv. 2
For His Lovingkindness is for ever.

v. 19 f. "Open for me the gates..." The Psalmist probably had in his mind the following late passages from Isaiah:—

Is. xxvi. 2, "Open ye the gates, that a righteous nation, that keepeth the truth, may enter in."

Is. lx. 11, 21. "Therefore thy gates shall be open continually.... Thy people also shall be all righteous...."

The Church of the future is to be open to all. If our division of the Psalm be correct these words would be spoken by the Proselytes. There is no need whatever to interpret "the gates" as belonging to the Temple. The best comment is Rev. xxi. 24—27. Thus we must not assume, from this verse, that the Temple was necessarily standing when the Psalm was written.

v. 26. "Blessed is he that cometh." These words, in their original context, refer to pilgrims, one and all, who "enter in" at God's House (v. 19). Such are pronounced to be "blessed in the Name of YHVH" (Note the accents, and cf. Ps. cxxix. 8.) This greeting seems to have been in common use amongst the Jews at the Feasts. But, though this is the original meaning, there was undoubtedly a tendency to apply the term "he that cometh" to the Messiah or to the Kingdom of God (Mt. xxiii. 39; Mk. xi. 9, 10; Lk. vii. 19 f.; xiii. 35; John iii. 31; vi. 14; xi. 27; xii. 13; Heb. x. 37; Rev. i. 4, 8; iv. 8).

These two interpretations are not so distinct as might appear. The pilgrims who flock to the Feasts represent the Kingdoms of the World which already belong potentially to God. It should be noticed that the two interpretations are placed side by side in Mark xi. 9 f., "*Blessed is he that cometh, in the Name of the Lord, Blessed is the Kingdom that cometh (even the Kingdom) of our Father David.*" This greeting would doubtless have been used to welcome any group of pilgrims coming up to the Passover; its special fitness to Christ was probably known to few at the time.

v. 27. "YHVH is...and hath shone out upon us"—Lit. "...and hath caused (His Face) to shine on us," cf. Ps. lxxvi. 1 (2), where also there is an allusion to the threefold Priestly Blessing of Num. vi. 24 ff.

The Sept., *καὶ ἐπέφανε ἡμῖν*, carries our thoughts to that "Epiphany" in which the Priestly Blessing finds its fulfilment. (Cf. Lk. i. 79; Tit. ii. 11; iii. 4.) The gift of Light, in Nature, is the type and prophecy of the Light of the World.

"*Marshal the procession with the boughs up to the horns of the altar.*" The passage is very difficult. The E.V. and R.V. translate "*Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.*" Against this we urge:—

(a) that in the sixty other passages in which the word *ḥag* occurs it never signifies "a sacrifice" but always "a feast" or "sacred dance" (*ḥgg* "to dance" (1 Sam. xxx. 16)):

(b) that "*unto the horns &c.*" can, in the Hebrew, only signify "*up to (i.e. as far as) the horns...*" The sacrifices were never bound to the horns of the altar and to interpret "*bind the sacrifices (filling the whole space) up to the horns of the altar*" is very unnatural:

(c) and lastly that the translation, which gives no sense, is not supported by the Versions.

The Hebrew word translated "*cords*" also signifies the "*boughs*" of trees (Ezek. xix. 11; xxxi. 3; 10, 14; cf. Lev. xxiii. 40; Neh. viii. 15; Ezek. vi. 13; xx. 28).

The adjective from this root is specially used of the *thick* branches used at the Feast of Tabernacles. Thus:—Lev. xxiii. 40, "And ye shall take you on the first day the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and boughs of *thick* trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before YHVH your God seven days."

So also Neh. viii. 15, "...Go forth to the mount and fetch foliage of the olive, and foliage of the oil-tree, and foliage of the myrtle and foliage of palms, and foliage of *thick* trees..." These "*thick*" or leafy trees were the natural emblems of God's bounty, and, as such, played their part in all Nature-worship (Ezek. vi. 13; xx. 28).

As a matter of fact we know from 2 Macc. x. 7 that the Feast of Dedication (in the 10th month) was also celebrated in this way, "Wherefore bearing wands wreathed with leaves, and fair boughs, and palms also, they offered up hymns of thanksgiving to Him that had prosperously brought to pass the cleansing of His own place."

We also know from the Talmud that at the close of the Feast of Tabernacles the worshippers, carrying boughs, encompassed the altar seven times and beat their branches to pieces upon the altar itself (see Edersheim, *Temple*, p. 244, and cf. note on Ps. xxvi. 6). This custom is alluded to in the Jewish Prayer Book, in the "Order of the Hosannahs," "As thou didst save those who were the wine-press of Thy hewing (cf. Is. v. 2) who encompassed (the altar) with green-boughs, singing *Ani v'hu hoshiana* (Ps. cxviii. 25)" &c.

The Versions (Sept., Sym., Jer.) all favour the rendering "*boughs*," not "*cords*."

The chief difficulty lies in the first two words, "*Bind the Feast*," or, as we translate, "*Marshal the procession*." The usual meaning of the verb is "*to bind*," but it is twice used of "*setting (a battle) in array*." Thus:—1 Kings xx. 14, "Who shall *order* the battle?" and 2 Chr. xiii. 3, "And Abijah *set* the battle *in array*" (lit. *bound* or *tyed* the battle).

I therefore conclude that our translation, "*Marshal the procession (or Feast) with the boughs up to the horns of the altar*," is justified by the use of the Hebrew and by the practice at the Feasts of Tabernacles and of Dedication.

In the Psalmist's mind there must have been a close connexion of thought between v. 27^a and v. 27^b. The God who is the Giver of Light is to be worshipped with the festal boughs. We have seen that in the time of the Maccabees this practice prevailed at the Feast of *Dedication* which was also called the *Feast of Lights*, falling as it did at the winter Solstice, *i.e.* at the birthday of the Sun.

This passage should be closely compared with Ps. cxvi. 13: there we have the lifting of the cup, here the waving of the boughs. In both passages the context points to the Song of Moses (Exod. xv.).

PSALM CXIX.

This, being alphabetical, has, for purposes of comparison, been included in the group of Alphabetical Psalms. See pp. 50 ff.

PSALM CXX.

This is the first of the fifteen *Songs of the Steps*, commonly called the *Songs of Degrees* (see *Introduction*).

It opens with a thankful acknowledgment of redemption from captivity, and for this reason is appointed for Festival use in the Jewish Liturgy (T.B. *Taanith* 15^a, *Succa* 51^a, see Grünwald). But though Israel has been redeemed he is still surrounded by secret foes (*vv.* 2—4) and barbarous enemies (*vv.* 5—7).

If, following the suggestion of early Christian writers (see *Introduction*), we regard the fifteen step-songs as steps in the upward pilgrimage to God then the first step is seen to be *thanksgiving for answered prayer*,

"To YHVH, in my deep-distress, I cried—and He has heard me."

He who has done so much will not forsake me now.

PSALM CXX.

Israel has been re-
deemed,

1 To YHVH, in my deep-distress,
I cried—and He has heard me.

but dwells among
secret foes

2 O YHVH rescue my soul from lying lips—
From the deceitful tongue!
3 How shalt thou be paid—yea more than paid—
O deceitful tongue!
4 Sharp arrows of the tyrant^a
With fiery coals of broom-wood!

^a Ps. lii. 1 :
Jer. ix. 2

v. 1. "*To YHVH.*" In the Greek Church the Songs of Degrees are called the *Proskyrria* because of these opening words in the Septuagint (Neale).

"in my deep-distress." The word is emphatic. Like Jacob (Gen. xxxv. 3) the Psalmist sets up an altar to the God "*who answered him in the day of his distress.*" This is the leading thought in the Psalm. "*Tres res in uno versiculo velociter explicantur: angustia, preces, exauditió*" (Jerome, *Comment. in Psalmos*, ed. by Morin). The requests for further deliverance, *v.* 2 ff., are founded upon the fact of the great Redemption from Babylon.

v. 2 f. "*From the deceitful tongue,*" i.e. "*from men of a deceitful tongue.*" The Hebrew word here translated "*deceitful*" signifies, in its simplest form, "*to shoot*" (or "*cast arrows*"). As the arrow comes from an unseen foe so the word of slander strikes treacherously (Jer. ix. 3—8; Ps. xi. 2; lxiv. 4 (5)). It is ever the teaching of the Old Testament that sin is repaid in its own kind (cf. Ps. lxiv. 4 (5) with 7 (8)). So here the cruel tongue, which is a fire (Jas. iii. 6), is punished by

and open enemies.

5 Alas for me that I sojourn in Meshek,
That I dwell among Kedar's tents!
6 All too long^a my soul hath dwelt
With the hater of Peace.
7 I am Peace—but, if I (but) speak,
They are for war.

^a Ps. cxxiii. 4:
cxxix. 1

burning arrows, just as the ungrateful murmuring tongue was punished by burning serpents (Numb. xxi. 6). The connexion between the *tongue* and *fire* is obvious, since in every language a flame is a 'tongue' of fire. Dante, as usual, follows tradition in this matter. "Pit 8 presents the sole instance of a sin not directly against God avenged by burning. It is the furnace of Evil Counsellors, whose tongue, a little member set on fire of Hell while yet on earth, has covertly kindled a great matter, yea has set on fire the Course of Nature; and who here find how fearful a covering they have been weaving for themselves, even a tongue-shaped winding-sheet of fire unquenchable" [M. F. Rossetti, *Shadow of Dante*, p. 58].

The 12th of the "Psalms of Solomon" is founded on our Psalm (Baethgen).

v. 4. This verse may either be an answer to the question in v. 3 or it may be an expansion of v. 3^b. In favour of the latter view the word *gibbor*, "tyrant," should be compared with Ps. lii. 1 (see note p. 228).

"*With fiery coals of broom-wood.*" There is, in the *Midrash T'hillim*, a story of two men who lighted a fire of this wood in the wilderness and, chancing to come the same way twelve months later and to tread on the ashes, burnt their feet. So with the fire that is kindled by the tongue, the ashes smoulder but the hidden fire still burns.

v. 5. "*Meshek*," Gk. *Μοσχο*; possibly the "*saevi Moschi*" of the Caucasus (Gen. x. 2). In the age of Ezekiel this people was half mythical (cf. Ezek. xxxviii. xxxix. with xxxii. 26 f.). Our Psalmist uses the term, not in a geographical sense, but merely to denote fierce northern barbarians, as we might say "hyperboreans." So too with "*Kedar*," in the burning South (Cant. i. 5).

His lot is as wretched as if he were dwelling amid the savages of the frosty Caucasus or with the fierce Arabs in their sun-burnt tents.

It does not necessarily follow that the Psalm was written in captivity: the hostility of the surrounding nations (Neh. ii. 10, 19; iv. 1—7; vi. 1 ff.) would amply justify the words.

v. 7. "*I am Peace.*" The very name of "*Jerusalem*" (*Ero Shalom*) was interpreted as "*The City of Peace.*" Thus the Psalmist speaking in the name of the community can say, "*I am Peace.*" See also Pss. cxxii. 6, 7, 8; cxxv. 5; cxxviii. 6, from which it will appear that "*Peace*" is one of the leading thoughts in the present group of Psalms.

There is a striking contrast between the sigh for Peace, in this Psalm, and the joy over Peace attained, in the 14th Song of the Steps (Ps. cxxxiii.).

PSALM CXXI.

The keynote is "*the Guardian of Israel*" (*vv.* 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, compare Ps. xci.). As in Psalm cxx. we found an allusion to the God who had "*answered Jacob in the day of his distress*" (Gen. xxxv. 3), so, in the present Psalm, the Promise of the Divine Guardianship (Gen. xxviii. 15) to Jacob is regarded as the covenanted possession of Israel. The newly returned exiles greatly needed such a stay for their faith.

The first half of the Psalm (*vv.* 1—4) is a contest between the "two voices" of doubt and faith, reminding us of Hymn 530 (A. and M.). As in the Hymn the satisfying answer is found in "the Voice of Revelation," so in our Psalm it is found in God's covenanted relation with Israel (*v.* 4).

In the second half (*vv.* 5—8) the stilled soul sings itself to sleep, as it were, in God's arms. The very rhythm of the lines is a lullaby. Compare Ps. cxxxi.

PSALM CXXI.

Doubts.	1 I lift up mine eyes unto the hills! Oh whence will my help come?
Doubts answered from Creation.	2 My help—it comes from YHVH, The Maker of heaven and earth.
Doubts half revive.	3 May He never allow thy foot to stumble! May thy GUARDIAN never slumber!
Doubts set at rest from God's choice of Israel.	4 Lo! there never can slumber nor sleep The GUARDIAN* of Israel.

* Gen. xxviii.
15; Gal. vi.
16

v. 1. "*I lift up* (or "*Should I lift up?*") *mine eyes unto the hills.*" The "*hills*" or "*mountains*" are the natural image of strength, and would rather point to the refuge of earth than to the shelter of God (see Ps. xi. 1; cxxv. 2; Is. xxii. 5). The upward look "*unto the hills*" springs from a sense of weakness which has not yet become faith:

"The hills are tipped with sunshine, while I walk
In shadows dim and cold:
The hills are crowned with glory, and the glow
Flows widening down apace:
Unto the sunny hill tops I, set low,
Lift a tired face,—
How tired a face, how tired a brain, how tired
A heart I lift, who long
For something never felt but still desired;
Sunshine and song."

[C. ROSSETTI.]

The E.V. and P.B.V. imply that the help was to come from the mountains, and thus miss the whole meaning of the plaintive query. So also Dante, *Paradiso*, xxv. 37 f.

v. 2. The guardian-strength of the mountains is only one of God's parables of nature: my Guardian is the God who made them all (cf. Ps. cxxv. 2).

If Nature suggest doubts through man's littleness, Nature when read as God's book supplies the

Therefore "all things are yours"	5 YHVH is thy GUARDIAN ; YHVH thy shelter on thy right hand ;	
"the world"	6 The sun cannot smite thee ^a by day, Nor the moon by night.	^a cf. Is. xlix. 10: Rev. vii. 16
"life or death"	7 YHVH will GUARD thee from every ill;— Will GUARD thy soul.	
"things present or things to come"	8 YHVH will GUARD thy going out ^b and thy coming in ^b , From henceforth and for ever.	^b Deut. xxviii. 6

answer: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that *He is* strong in power; not one faileth. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgement is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard *that* the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, faileth not, neither is weary?" (Is. xl. 26 ff.).

If these words of Deutero-Isaiah were in the Psalmist's mind we can understand why he calls God here "*the maker of heaven and earth.*"

It is a favourite thought with Jeremiah that the stability of the "ordinances of the moon and of the stars &c.," or, as we should say, of the laws of nature, is a pledge of God's continued care for Israel (Jer. xxxi. 35—37).

"*The Maker of heaven and earth.*" We are apt to forget that there was a time when this title involved a new conception of the God of Israel (Jer. x. 12; li. 15). The actual title only occurs in Pss. cxv. 15; cxxi. 2; cxxiv. 8; cxxxiv. 3; cxlvi. 6, though the words "*possessor of heaven and earth*" (Gen. xiv. 22) are closely parallel.

The verse was used in the Jewish Kaddish Prayer and in the Roman Liturgy, *Adjutorium meum a Domino qui fecit coelum et terram*. Compare also Ps. cxxiv. 8.

v. 3. The words must be rendered as *optative*, consequently doubt is not yet at rest:

"The Voice of God's Protection told me
He loveth all He made;
I seem'd to feel His arms enfold me,
And yet was half afraid:
And I said—
Oh! that I knew where I might find Him!
His eye would guide me right:
He leaveth countless tracks behind Him,
Yet passeth out of sight."

v. 4. "*The Guardian (or Keeper) of Israel.*" It is probable that there is a reference here to the words of God to Jacob (Israel): "And lo! I am with thee and I will guard thee in everything wherein thou goest and will bring thee back to this land; for I will not forsake thee until I have truly done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Gen. xxviii. 15). That promise was fulfilled through many sorrows and in many unexpected ways (Gen. xlviii. 15, 16). But "*the Guardian of Israel*" refers also, and specially, to God's relation to the Nation as revealed in Scripture and interpreted in history. There were many dark days in which Israel was tempted to think that his Guardian had forsaken him; but the more-than-mother-care of God was ever justified in the end (see Is. xlix. 14 ff. and compare v. 4 and 8 of our Psalm).

The Christian has this same pledge "made more sure" by the prayer of Christ (St John xvii. 11, 15) and by two thousand years of Church history; so that he may say, "The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and guard (keep) you from evil" (2 Thess. iii. 3). The end of the promise is indicated in Rev. vii. 9—17.

v. 6. Cheyne (*Psalms*, Edit. of 1888) quotes Browning's *Saul*,—"Those sunbeams like swords."

PSALM CXXII.

The leading thought in this *third* Song of the Steps is *Peace*, understanding by that word the *Completion* of God's purpose (note on *v.* 6).

The Psalm consists of two closely related parts.

In the first part (*vv.* 2—5) Jerusalem, from its very name (*v.* 2), from its compact unity (*v.* 3), from the fact of its being the Centre of Israel's gatherings (*v.* 4), from its associations with the House of David (*v.* 5), is felt to be a type and promise of the ideal unity

In the second part (*vv.* 6—9) each of these thoughts is taken up in turn and becomes a benediction (see notes).

The commentators generally assume that this Psalm was written for the yearly Pilgrimages, but it is more natural to suppose that its original use was for the Dedication of the Walls of Jerusalem (Neh. xii.).

PSALM CXXII.

1 I am glad when they say unto me,
"Let us go to the House of YHVH."

The actual City suggests the ideal unity of Israel (cf. *vv.* 6—9).

2 Our feet are standing^a
Within thy gates, JERUSALEM;
3 Jerusalem, thou that art builded
As a City all-knit in a unity:
4 Whither the Tribes go^b up,
The Tribes of Yah,
A testimony to Israel,
To give thanks to the Name of YHVH.
5 For thrones of judgement are set there,
Thrones of the House of David.

^a *stationed*

^b *or went*

v. 1. "I am glad when they say unto me" or "I was glad when they said unto me." The words do not necessarily imply any one special occasion. This verse has no direct connexion with the rest of the Psalm. I would suggest that it has been added in order to adapt the Psalm for use at the pilgrimages to the Feasts.

v. 2. "Our feet are standing." Lit. "our feet are become standing" (i.e. *stationed*). A strange expression. "Standing" is the attitude of Ministry. Neh. vii. 3, "Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the heat of the day and until they (i.e. the porters and Levites) *are standing*." When then the Psalmist says "Our feet are standing" he does not merely imply that a band of pilgrims has reached the City but that the official guard was set, as recorded by Nehemiah (vii. 1—4).

vv. 2—5. Note the progress of the thought:—(a) the stationing of the watchmen at the gates of the City walls (*v.* 2), (b) the building of the City (*v.* 3; cf. Neh. vii. 1—4), (c) the yearly

Prayer for the realization of this unity (cf. *vv.* 1—5).

6 Pray^a for the PEACE of JERUSALEM:
 May they PROSPER that love thee!
 7 PEACE be within thy rampart!
 PROSPERITY within thy palaces!
 8 For the sake of my brothers and friends
 I would say, "PEACE be with thee."
 9 For the sake of the House of YHVH our God
 I would seek^b thy good^b.

^a Or, salute ye Jerusalem

^b See Neh. ii. 10

pilgrimages resumed (*v.* 4), (*d*) the dominion of David restored (*v.* 5). In the beginning the Prophet sees the end. There is a similar progress of thought in *vv.* 6—9.

v. 3. "...*thou that art builded.*" Lit. "*the builded-one.*" The Psalmist may very possibly allude to the fact that the City has been rebuilt, but his thought goes much deeper. The eye of faith shews him the "*City which hath the foundations*" (Heb. xi. 10).

"*As a City all-knit in a unity.*" The compact form of the actual City again suggests the corresponding reality in the spiritual world (cf. Rev. xxi. 16). The Targum renders, "*Jerusalem which is builded in the heavens is like a City all-knit in a unity upon earth.*"

St Paul may have had our Psalm in his mind when he wrote (Eph. iv. 16), "*All the Body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth.*"

Jerome comments thus:—"Cujus participatio ejus in idipsum. Haec est sanctae aedificatio civitatis, si sibi in omni parte sit particeps, et invicem pro se membra sollicita sint" (Morin, p. 87).

Kay notes that "*chubbar* is the word used in Exod. xxviii. 7; xxix. 4, of the 'coupling,' or knitting together, of the two shoulder-pieces of the ephod: each of which had attached to it an onyx-stone with the names of *six tribes* of Israel engraved upon it."

v. 4. "*Whither the Tribes go up.*"—The going up of Tribes was, in a twofold sense, "*a testimony to Israel*"; 1st, because it was *ordained by God* that they should so do (Exod. xxiii. 15—17; Deut. xvi. 16), 2ndly, because the very fact of their gathering together (*ἐπισυναγωγή*) was itself a *testimony* to God's ultimate purpose of unity. See Heb. xii. 22 ff., "*Ye are come.....to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, who are enrolled in heaven....*"

v. 5. "*Thrones of the House of David*"—cf. Jer. xxi. 12, "*O House of David, thus saith YHVH, Execute judgement in the morning....*" See also Zech. xii. 7, 10, and Cheyne's note on Is. vii. 13.

As in Wordsworth's poem "We are seven" the child's view is the true view, so with Israel; the "twelve Tribes" and the "House of David" might have long ceased for the historian but they were ever present to the eye of faith (Matt. xix. 28; Rev. xxi. 12—14).

v. 6. "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.*"

"*Jerusalem*" (Assyr. *Uru-salim*) probably signified by *derivation* (certainly by *association*) "*the City of Peace.*" Pinches (*O.T. in the Light of Historical Records*, p. 240) gives a Babylonian Hymn, "probably contemporaneous with Abraham," as follows:—

A resting-place there is,
 A plain there is—
 The gate of the palace is peace (*šalim*);
 Peace (*šulmu*) forms the bolt.
 The daughter has peace,
 The mountain-peak has peace,
 Mind and heart have peace—
 etc. etc. etc.

Pinches rightly says that the English word "*peace*" does not express the meaning of the original, which, he thinks, denotes rather "*safe and sound*," "*intact*." It seems to me that the Hebrew word *šalom* has in it the thought of "*wholeness*" and "*completion*." Certainly in the present Psalm (*vv.* 6—9) the prayer for *peace* is a prayer for *perfection through unity* (cf. John xvii. 23, "*that they may be*

perfected in One") which reminds us of the threefold Benediction in Num. vi. 24—27. This "Peace" comes through the Divine Name (Num. vi. 27). So in Heb. xiii. 20 f., "The God of Peace.....make you perfect...." So also Eph. ii. 14 ff., "He is our Peace who hath made both one... to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." And again, 1 Thess. v. 23, "The God of Peace himself sanctify you wholly, and may your whole being, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved...."

Verse 6 corresponds with v. 2. The watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem are bidden to pray for her peace (cf. Is. lxii. 6) or to greet her with the greeting of peace.

v. 7. This verse corresponds with v. 3. The City, whose outward form (v. 3) suggests unity, should have that unity within (v. 7). Again we seem to have an echo of Deutero-Isaiah (lx. 18).

v. 8. This verse corresponds with v. 4. In v. 4 the General Assembly of the Tribes is a testimony to the underlying thought of Israel's unity, so, in v. 8, the prayer goes up for this unity "for the sake of my brothers and friends."

v. 9. This verse corresponds with v. 5. In v. 5 the actual City is honoured as the seat of "the House of David," while in v. 9 it is seen to contain "the House of YHVH our God" (cf. Ezek. xlvi. 35).

In vv. 6—9 there is, in the original, a play upon the words *Jerusalem, peace, prosper, prosperity*, which is lost in translation.

PSALM CXXIII.

As the *fourth* Day of Creation corresponds with the *first*, so this *fourth* Song of the Steps corresponds with Ps. cxx. The sorrow that Israel had to bear from a mocking world (Ps. cxx.) is here laid before God (compare vv. 3, 4 with cxx. 2—6).

But the Psalm with which it has still closer connexion is the *eleventh* Song of the Steps (*i.e.* Ps. cxxx.). In Ps. cxxii. the expectant eye is waiting till the Master be gracious, while in Ps. cxxx. Israel is assured of this coming grace, and watches for it "as those who watch for the morning." For the reason of this connexion between the 4th and 11th Steps see *Introduction to the Songs of the Steps*.

The reader will notice the recurrence of the words "eyes" and "be gracious," from which the Psalm has been well named *Oculus sperans*. The "grace" that is looked for is nothing less than the Redemption of Israel (see Ps. cxxx.).

PSALM CXXIII.

1 Unto Thee have I lifted mine EYES,
O Thou that art throned in the heavens!

v. 1. In Ps. cxxi. 1 the language is somewhat similar but the thought is very different. The eye is now directed, not to the mountains but to God Himself.

"Ad te levavi oculos meos, qui habitas in caelo. Notandum quod per singulos psalmos quidam graduum sunt profectus. Qui in primo dixerat, 'Ad Dominum cum tribularer clamavi': et in secundo oculos ad montes se levasse narraverat: laetatus quoque fuerat, quia sibi ingressus in domum Dei fuerat repromissus: nunc ad majus proficit, ut ad ipsum Deum oculos levet, qui habitat in caelo." [Jer. *Comment. in Psalmos*, ed. Morin, p. 87.]

Waiting (cf. Pss. cxxx., cxxxi.)

2 Behold, as the EYES of servants
To the hand of their master,
As the EYES of a maid
To the hand of her mistress,
So (are) our EYES to YHVH, our God,
Until He be GRACIOUS towards us.

for the Redemption of Israel.

3 Be GRACIOUS YHVH, be GRACIOUS to us ;
For we are all-too^a sated with contempt^b.
4 All-too^a sated is our soul
With scoffing (from) them that are at ease,
With contempt from the proud^c.

^a Pss. cxx. 6,
7 : cxxix. 1
^b Neh. iv. 4

^c Ps. cxl. 5

v. 2. We must not picture the servant looking to the open hand that gives, or even to the pointing hand that directs, but rather to the uplifted hand that chastises. This is evident from the words, "*Until He be gracious toward us,*" i.e. "*until He shew us mercy.*"

Thus the Psalm is closely parallel with the 11th Song of the Steps (Ps. cxxx.).

"to YHVH, our God." We should rather have expected *Adonai* here, since the thought of God as *Lord* or *Master* is uppermost. The companion Psalm (cxxx.) is an *Adonai* Psalm.

"Until He be gracious." Cf. Is. xxx. 18, "*And therefore will YHVH wait that He may be gracious unto you.....happy are all they that wait for Him.*" See also Ps. cxxx. 6 f.

v. 3. The expression "*all-too*" (i.e. "*too much*" or "*too long*") carries us back to Ps. cxx. 6, where we have translated it by "*all too long.*" See also Ps. cxxix. 1.

v. 4. "*them that are at ease.*" The word is used twice in the good sense, "*quiet*" (Is. xxxii. 18; xxxiii. 20); but more frequently in the bad sense of *careless pleasure* (Job xii. 5; Is. xxxii. 9, 11; Amos vi. 1). Thus Zech. (i. 15) speaks of "*the heathen that are at ease.*"

"from the proud." This strange word is, according to the Masora, to be read as two, thus making it "*from the pride of oppressors,*" or, by a change of vowel-points, "*from the pride of the Greeks.*" This, however, is mere fancy. The Jews are fond of reading a new sense into an old word. Another play upon the word makes it allude to the Roman *legions*!

We must not therefore assume that the Psalm is Maccabaeian because an expression in it is capable of being made to refer to the Greeks.

PSALM CXXIV.

As the *fifth* Day of Creation completes the work of the *second* so this *fifth* Song of the Steps completes the thought of the *second* Song (*i.e.* of Ps. cxxi.). Thus, in Ps. cxxi. 2 we read, "*My help—it comes from YHVH, The Maker of heaven and earth,*" while our present Psalm ends with the words, "*Our help is in the Name of YHVH, The Maker of heaven and earth.*" In the former we note the struggle for faith, in the latter we see faith assured through the recognition of God in history.

But though the *fifth* Song corresponds with the second it has still closer connexion with the *tenth*, *i.e.* with Ps. cxxix. (see notes). The reason for this correspondence is explained in our *Introduction to the Songs of the Steps*.

Our Psalm (omitting *v.* 7) is appointed to be used at Sea, "After Victory or Deliverance from an Enemy." It is still more suitable for the victories of peace.

PSALM CXXIV.

God only! (in the past).

- 1 Had it not been YHVH that was for us^a!
 Let Israel now say^b:—
 2 Had it not been YHVH that was for us
 When man rose up against us;
 3 Then had they swallowed us up alive,
 In the heat of their anger against us:
 4 Then had the waters overwhelmed us,
 The flood had passed over our soul:
 5 Then had passed over our soul
 The proudly-swelling waters.

^a cf. Josh. v.
 13
^b Pss. cxviii.
 2: cxxix. 1

v. 1. "*YHVH...for us.*" So Joshua says, "Art thou *for us* or for our adversaries?" (Josh. v. 13.) The Sept. translates, "*in us*" (Vulg. *in nobis*). This obscures the thought of the Hebrew, which is better represented by the P.B.V. paraphrase, "*on our side.*"

"*Let Israel now say*": In the Hallel (Ps. cxviii. 1—4) the three classes, *Israel, House of Aaron, Proselytes*, are all thus appealed to. There, as here, the thought is the same, viz. testimony to the unchanging lovingkindness of God as witnessed in the history of Israel. The student should carefully compare Ps. cxxix. 1 f. where the same words occur in the same connexion. There is, as Graetz has noted, a very close resemblance between Pss. cxxiv. and cxxix.

v. 2. "*When man...*" *Adam*, "*man*," means here more than "*men*": it denotes the World in opposition to God (Pss. lvi. 11; cxviii. 6, 8; Is. xxxi. 3; Jer. xvii. 5; xxxii. 20) and hints at its utter futility.

v. 4. "*The flood.*" The Hebrew student should note that this word, with different accentuation, is capable of three meanings. (See Aben Ezra's note.) He should also observe certain irregularities in grammar in this and in the following verse, which may have led the Sept. and Vulg. to invert the whole sentence ("Torrentem pertransivit anima nostra: forsitan pertransisset anima nostra aquam intolerabilem").

- God be thanked (for the present). 6 Blessed be YHVH who did not give us up
As a prey to their teeth.
7 Our soul hath escaped, like a bird from the snare of the
fowler;
The snare was broken, and we—we escaped!
- God only! (in the future). 8 Our help* is in the Name of YHVH*,
The Maker of heaven and earth*.

* cf. Ps. cxxi.:

v. 7. The transition from hopeless captivity to joyous liberty is here set forth in one line. "Vasari rapporte que Léonard de Vinci, quand il passait par le marché, achetait souvent de petits oiseaux, pour avoir le plaisir de les tirer lui-même de leur cage et d'ouvrir la main pour leur donner la volée. On éprouve en lisant ces mots une sensation de ce genre" (Bovet, *Les Psaumes des Maaloth*, p. 81).

v. 8. Compare Ps. cxxi. 2 and the use of both in the Confirmation Service.

PSALM CXXV.

As the *sixth* Day completes the *third*, by the creation of man, so this *sixth* Song of the Steps answers to and completes the *third* Song (Ps. cxxii.). Thus in Ps. cxxii. we have a Vision of Peace for Jerusalem, the City of God, while in Ps. cxxv. the mountain-girt Jerusalem (v. 2) becomes still more clearly the emblem of *Israel* the God-protected. "*Peace upon Israel*" is the leading thought of the whole Psalm (v. 5, note.)

But though our Psalm is allied to Ps. cxxii. it is, perhaps, still more closely allied to Ps. cxxviii., which ends with the same words (see *Introduction to the Songs of the Steps*). These three Psalms are the only ones which mention *Jerusalem* by name in the Songs of the Steps. They are essentially Songs of the City of God.

PSALM CXXV.

- The mountain-girt City suggests the ideal safety of God-protected Israel (cf. Ps. cxxii. 1-5).
- 1 They that trust in YHVH (are) as Mount Zion,
That is changeless, enthroned for ever!
2 Jerusalem—mountains are round about her,
And YHVH is round about His People
From henceforth and for ever*.

* Pss. cxxi. 8:
cxxx. 3

v. 2. The Psalmist seems to be thinking of the words of Zechariah (B.C. 520), "*I will be unto her a wall of fire round about*" (Zech. ii. 5).

"*From henceforth and for ever*"—Three times these words are found in the Songs of the Steps, twice of the unending care of God (cxxi. 8; cxxv. 2) and once of the unending expectation of Israel (cxxx. 3).

in spite of a passing shadow.

3 For the sceptre of wickedness cannot rest
on the lot of the righteous;
Lest the righteous put forth their hand
unto wickedness^a.

Prayer for the realization of God's thought for Israel (cf. Ps. cxxii. 6—9).

4 Do good^b, O YHVH, to the good,
Even to them that are upright in heart^c.
5 But those who pervert their crooked-ways^d—
May YHVH lead them (away) with the workers of iniquity.
PEACE UPON ISRAEL^e.

^a cf. Ps. lxxxv. 8 note

^b Pss. cxxii. 9: cxxviii. 5

^c Ps. lxxiii. 1: cf. John i. 48

^d Jud. v. 6

^e Ps. cxxviii. 6: Gal. vi. 16

v. 3. "cannot rest." The Sept. reads a different *voice* of the same verb,—"*He (God) will not allow it to rest.*" In either case the thought is the same, God is faithful and will not suffer His People to be tried beyond measure (cf. 1 Cor. x. 13).

v. 4. The "upright in heart" are the faithful Israelites (Pss. vii. 10; xi. 2; xxxii. 11; xxxvi. 10; lxiv. 10; xciv. 15; xcvi. 11) as opposed to apostates or waverers. Our Psalmist may have had Ps. lxxiii. 1 in his mind, where, however, a different word is used,

*"Surely God is goodness (itself) unto Israel,
Even unto the pure of heart."*

v. 5. "But those who pervert..." The word is used of "perverting (judgment)" Deut. xxvii. 19, and of "turning aside (the stranger)" Mal. iii. 5. We therefore regard the verb as *transitive* and understand either that they "pervert their crooked-ways" or that they "pervert (others in) their crooked ways." In either case those designated are not heathen but wavering or apostate Israelites. "Crooked ways" suggests Mr By-ends of the *Pilgrim's Progress*.

"May YHVH lead them (away)." The unity (*Peace*) of Israel requires the exclusion of evil (cf. Pss. ci. 8; civ. 35; Rev. xxii. 15).

"With the workers of iniquity." There are times when Mr Facing-both-ways is a greater danger to the community than the open sinner.

"Peace upon Israel." It is often assumed that these words (which occur again at the close of Ps. cxxviii.) are merely a liturgical addition. This is quite wrong. The words give the key-note to the whole Psalm. In Ps. cxxii. the "*Peace (i.e. unity) of Jerusalem*" is the leading thought, whereas in the present Psalm Jerusalem (*v. 2*) becomes a type of "*the Israel of God.*" This "Israel" is God-defended (*v. 2*). And if, for a while, it is suffering from oppression yet the very Being of God is pledged that such oppression cannot continue (*v. 3*). Nay, God must do good to His own Israel (*v. 4*). He must purge away the dross (*v. 5 a, b*) and complete His own thought for Israel (*v. 5 c*).

The name *Israel* signifies "*God perseveres*" (Hastings' *Dict.*). The history of Israel (cf. the life of Jacob) is, from end to end, the record of *God's perseverance* in His purpose of Creation to give to man the blessing of Peace.

PSALM CXXVI.

We have now reached the *seventh* Song, which is the turning-point of the Songs of the Steps, ending as it does the first group (see *Introduction*). The key-note of the Psalm is "*turning the fortune of Zion*" (*vv.* 1, 4 note). In this respect there is much to remind us of the Korah Psalm lxxxv. 1, 4 (see p. 358 f.).

The second half (*vv.* 4—6) of our Psalm, which corresponds closely with the first half, gives us two picture-parables from the winter season, 1st, the dry channels flooded with water (*v.* 4), 2nd, the sower's seeming-thankless toil (*vv.* 5 f.). If the Psalm were written for the winter solstice (Hanucca), which is the turning-point of the year, the rainy season, the time of sowing, the points which we have indicated would gain fresh interest. That this was so we attempt to shew in our *Introduction to the Songs of the Steps*.

PSALM CXXVI.

The Return began 1 When YHVH TURNED^a THE ILL-FORTUNE of Zion
in sorrow. We became^b as dreamers.

^a Ps. lxxxv. 1

^b *v.* 3

v. 1. "*turned the ill-fortune.*" The word rendered "*ill-fortune*," lit. "*turning*," is written in a more correct form in the parallel verse 4 *a*. The expression is of frequent occurrence and is generally translated "*to turn the captivity.*" See Amos ix. 14; Hos. vi. 11; Jer. xxix. 14; xxx. 3, 18; xxxi. 33; xxxii. 44; xxxiii. 7, 11, 25; Ezek. xxxix. 25; Joel iii. 1 (iv. 1); Zeph. ii. 7; iii. 20; Deut. xxx. 3; Job xlii. 10; Pss. xiv. 7; lxxxv. 1 (2). In several of these passages it is impossible that there should be any reference to "*captivity.*" See Driver on Deut. xxx. 3 and Cheyne on Ps. xiv. 7 (edit. of 1888). We must therefore give the phrase a wider sense, such as "*turn the fortune.*" Perhaps even in Ps. lxxxv. 1, where we have rendered "*Thou hast turned again the captivity of Jacob*," it would have been better to have given this wider sense.

"*We became as dreamers.*" (Jer. "*facti sumus quasi somniantes.*") The words are generally interpreted to mean "Our joy was so great that it seemed too good to be true." But a *dream*, in Scripture, is often a terror, often an unreality, but never a joy. We must also note the contrast between "*We became as dreamers*" and "*We became joyous*" (*v.* 3 Hebrew, Jer. "*facti sumus laetantes*"). This contrast is still more clear in the second half of the Psalm. Moreover, if we consult the history of the Return from Babylon, the early days were by no means days of joy and zeal. The Edict of Cyrus (c. 537 B.C.) found but few who cared to avail themselves of its permission to return, and those who did return had little zeal (Hag. i. 2, &c.). If however our Psalmist wrote some 92 years later, in the days of Nehemiah, he might well regard those earlier days as days of stupor, when the great work which gladdened his own day had not been realized. When God delivered Peter from the prison (Acts xii. 9—11) he was at first as one that dreamed. The joy came afterwards when the truth was realized.

May we not say that all God's great deliverances begin thus? "*Ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice.*"

PSALM CXXVII.

With this *eighth* Song of the Steps we begin a new series of eight songs which have a close relation, not only to one another, but to the seven Songs of the first series. The present Psalm is identical in structure with Ps. cxxvi. It also contains allusions to the same prophecies (Amos ix. 11—15; Jer. xxxi., see notes). The two leading thoughts of our Psalm, *Nisi Dominus*, are (a) *God only as the Builder*, (β) *God only as the Guardian*; of these the first (a) answers to Ps. cxxiv., *Nisi quia Dominus*. While the second (β) takes up the thought of Ps. cxxi. in which “*guard*,” “*guardian*,” occur six times.

But though no words can express more clearly the vanity of any help that does not come from God, yet our Psalmist, following the second Isaiah, sees that God acts through means; His *building* will be with *sons* (v. 1^{ab} with v. 3. Compare the kindred words *banah*, “*to build*,” *banim*, “*Sons*,” and see Ps. cxiii. 9, note). So also God’s *guarding* will be through the *Sons* which He will restore to His People (v. 1^{cd} with vv. 4, 5, see notes). There is, through the Psalm, a Sabbath tone which suggests miracles of unasked mercy.

“May thy Kingdom’s peace
Come unto us; for we, unless it come,
With all our striving, thither tend in vain.”

Purg., x. 7 ff., Cary’s translation.

PSALM CXXVII.

God must <i>build</i> .	1 If YHVH BUILD not the house, Its BUILDERS will have toiled in vain:
God must <i>guard</i> .	If YHVH GUARD not the city, Vainly its GUARD may watch.
	2 Vain your early rising, sitting late, eating the bread of toils!
	Truly* He gives to His beloved sleeping-wise!

* Targ.
Rightly.

v. 1. The thought is national. God is the *Builder* of Zion (Pss. li. 18; lxix. 35; cii. 16). The Psalmist must have been familiar with the prophecies of Jeremiah to this effect, e.g. Jer. xxiv. 6, “*I will build them and not pull them down...*”; xxxiii. 7, “*And I will bring back the captivity (? the ill-fortune) of Judah.....and I will build them as at the first*” (cf. xxxi. 4; xlii. 10; xlv. 4; Ezek. xxxvi. 36).

The same thought also occurs in that prophecy of Amos (ix. 11—15) [to which we have already found an allusion in the preceding Psalm (cxxvi. 4—6)] “*In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen.....and I will build it as in the days of old.*” See the whole prophecy and compare it with Jer. xxxi. and with the Songs of the Steps.

“*If YHVH guard not...*” The same word is used in Jer. xxxi. 10, “*He that scattereth Israel will gather him and will guard him as a shepherd doth his flock.*” It also occurs six times, of the *guardian* care of God, in Ps. cxxi. (vv. 3, 4, 5, 7 bis, 8). Thus we have another point of contact between the Songs of the Steps and Jer. xxxi.

v. 2. “*Truly.*” The word *ken*, which is generally translated “*so*,” or “*thus*,” is rendered

- How God *builds*. 3 Lo! YHVH's heritage is SONS;
The fruit of the womb is (His) reward^a.
- How God *guards*. 4 As arrows in a hero's hand,
So are SONS (born) in life's prime.
5 Happy the man who has stored his quiver with them!
Such shall not be ashamed when they speak with their foes
at the gate.

^a *hire* Jer.
xxxi. 16

"well" (*i.e. truly*) in Ex. x. 29 E.V. and "straightway" in 1 Sam. ix. 13, and "howbeit" in 2 Ch. xxxii. 31. Probably it is kindred with the *adj. kenim*, "true (men)," Gen. xlii. 11, 19, 31, 33, 34.

"His beloved" (*yedido*). It should be noticed that Nathan (whose name signifies "He gave") named Solomon *Yedidya* ("the beloved of Yah"), see 2 Sam. xii. 25. If with this we couple the story of Solomon's *dream* (1 Kings iii. 5-15) and the gift *given to Solomon in sleep* we shall understand why this Psalm is in its Title attributed to Solomon. Not, of course, that Solomon wrote it! but because Solomon represents the ideal of a golden age, the ideal of that greater David who should build up the Kingdom of God, not by weapons of man's warfare, but by wisdom and by peace.

This verse suggested Mrs Browning's well-known lines:

"Of all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward into souls afar,
Along the Psalmist's music deep,
Now tell me, if that any is
For gift or grace surpassing this,
He giveth His beloved sleep?"

[Quoted by Marson, *The Psalms at Work*.]

A less familiar illustration is Dante, *Purg.*, ix. 52-63, suggested by Cheyne (*Psalms*, edit. 1888). The meaning of this passage is thus given by Mrs Gurney, *Dante's Pilgrim's Progress*, p. 141, "Even while, in Dream-vision, Dante felt the scorching fires, he was being carried tenderly upwards over the last difficult steps to the entrance of the rugged Way. So it is at times when we least expect it; rough places are made plain and crooked paths straight, and Love has wafted us through dreaded places without effort of our own."

v. 3. "Lo! YHVH's heritage is sons." The P.B.V., E.V., and R.V. invert the sense. The order of the Hebrew is preserved by Jerome, "*ecce hereditas domini filii*." God's "heritage" is Israel (Is. xix. 25; Jer. ii. 7; xii. 7-9 &c.). Our Psalmist has already (v. 1) spoken of God as the "builder" of Israel, he now goes on to shew that this *building* must be with "living stones" *i.e.* with "sons." "YHVH's heritage consists of sons," or, possibly, "the heritage that YHVH gives (Prov. xix. 14) to Israel is sons." In either case the thought of the Psalmist is national, going far beyond the truism of the English translations. The scanty population of Jerusalem was a grave source of danger in the age of the Return. God will remedy this (Is. xlix. 17-21, a lovely picture: liv. 1; lxvi. 8; and esp. Jer. xxxi. 15-17).

"The fruit of the womb is (His) reward." The word *sakar*, "reward," "hire," "wages," is used (Gen. xxx. 18 E) by Leah at the birth of a child, "God hath given me my *hire* (reward).....and she called his name *Issachar*." But the passage which our Psalmist had in his mind was, once more, Jer. xxxi. 15-17, where Zion, personified as Rachel weeping for her children, is thus comforted by God, "Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, for there is a *reward* (*sakar*) for thy work, saith YHVH, for they shall return from the land of the enemy."

This prophecy our Psalmist has seen fulfilled, therefore he says, "The fruit of the womb is (His) reward." This is true nationally, but scarcely individually (Ps. xvii. 14 f.; Job xxi. 8-11).

v. 5. Neale quotes a good illustration from Sophocles, *Antig.* 641 ff.

PSALM CXXVIII.

A superficial view sees here only an idyll of happy home-life. No doubt the Psalm takes its colour from Deuteronomy, but even in Deuteronomy the promises of prosperity, long life, and many children, were not given to the individual but to the Israel of God (cf. Ps. xvii. 15, note). Our Psalm is, I believe, addressed to proselytes, inviting them, in the spirit of the second Isaiah, to become sharers with Israel in the blessings of the Covenant.

The Psalm is clearly divided into two equal parts, and so arranged that *vv.* 1, 2, 3 answer respectively to *vv.* 4, 5, 6. In *vv.* 1 and 4 we have the third person, while in *vv.* 2, 3, 5, 6 we have the second.

The use of the Psalm in the Marriage Service may be justified as an application.

PSALM CXXVIII.

The proselyte will share the prosperity promised to Israel (Deut. xxviii.),

1 HAPPY^a is every FEARER OF YHVH,

That walks in His ways.

2 The labour of thy hands, when thou shalt enjoy^b,

HAPPY THOU! and weal^c be thine!

3 Thy wife—like a fruitful vine^d—in the sanctum of thy home:

Thy sons—like olive^e plants—round about thy table.

^a Ps. cxxvii. 5

^b eat

^c v. 5

^d Ezek. xix. 10

^e Rom. xi. 17 ff.

v. 1. "*fearer of YHVH.*" In the Hallel we saw that "*the fearers of YHVH*" (Pss. cxv. 11, 13; cxviii. 4) formed a distinct class and were probably proselytes.

I suggest that the expression has the same meaning here and that it is to be interpreted from Is. lvi. 2 ff., "Happy is the man that doeth this.....And let not the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself unto YHVH, speak saying, YHVH hath utterly separated me from His People..... For the sons of the stranger that join themselves unto YHVH to minister unto Him, and to love the Name of YHVH, to be His servants, even every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and that holdeth fast to My Covenant; Even them will I bring to My holy Mountain, and will gladden them in My House of Prayer.....for My House shall be called a House of Prayer for all the Peoples, saith the Lord YHVH that gathereth the outcasts of Israel, Yet will I gather others (*i.e.* Gentiles) unto him, in addition to those (*i.e.* Israelites) that are gathered."

In the Persian age the Jewish Church was largely augmented from the Gentile world (Ps. xlvii. 8 f. note): probably more so than later Judaism would care to own.

In the previous Psalm we saw that the true *building* of Jerusalem must be with *sons*, and that this would be, as the second Isaiah had foretold, essentially God's work: so now, in the present Psalm, we see how, in allusion to another prophecy of the second Isaiah, God has other *sons* whom also He must bring for the completion of Israel (*v.* 6; cf. John x. 16).

"*That walks in His ways.*" A Deuteronomic phrase. See *Oxford Hexateuch*, vol. I. p. 207.

It should be noted that *v.* 4 answers to *v.* 1.

v. 2. "*The labour of thy hands.*" The exact expression is found in Gen. xxxi. 42; Hag. i. 11; Job x. 3. The words are often taken to supplement the quietism of the preceding Psalm by insisting on the duty of labour. But this, though true, is not the Psalmist's thought. Rather should we explain from Is. lxxv. 22 f., "they shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and

and the blessing of
Israel's God.

4 Lo, thus truly^a shall be BLESSED
The man that is a FEARER OF YHVH:
5 "May YHVH BLESS^b THEE from Zion^b:
Look thou on the weal^c of Jerusalem
All the days of thy life.
6 And look thou on the sons of thy sons."
PEACE UPON ISRAEL^d.

^a Ps. cxxvii. 2
note

^b Pss. cxxxiv.
3; cxxxv. 21
^c v. 2

^d Ps. cxxv. 5

another eat; for as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people, and the work of their hands mine elect shall use to the full. They shall not labour for vanity, nor bring forth for sudden trouble, for they are a seed of the blessed of Jehovah, and their offspring (shall remain) with them." (Cheyne's transl.)

"and weal be thine," lit. "and good to thee." The expression is given in the list of words and phrases characteristic of the Deuteronomic School in Carpenter's *Hexateuch*. See Deut. v. 33; vi. 24; x. 13; xix. 13. Prosperity as the reward for "walking in God's ways" is the constant theme of Deuteronomy, but here the promise (Deut. xxviii.) is extended to proselytes.

This verse corresponds with v. 5, where the same expression is used respecting the "weal" of Jerusalem.

v. 3. Young, vigorous trees grow up all round out of the gnarled roots of the old olives, as I saw for the first time in the beautiful olive woods of Bordighera.

May it be that our Psalmist is still thinking of that prophecy (Is. lxxv. 21 f.) which we have already quoted on v. 2, viz. "As the days of a tree shall be the days of Thy People"? No tree could better picture immortality than the self-renewing olive. This verse corresponds with v. 6.

v. 4. Of the two Hebrew words to denote *blessing*, one is used twice in vv. 1, 2, while the other, and stronger word, is used twice in vv. 4, 5.

v. 5. "May YHVH bless thee from Zion." The prayer that *help* (Pss. xiv. 7; xx. 2) or *strength* (Ps. cx. 2) or *blessing* (Pss. cxxxiv. 3; cxxxv. 21) should come forth *from Zion* may possibly be associated with the old prophecy (Mic. iv. 1 f.; Is. ii. 2-4) which foretells that Zion shall be the centre of light and blessing for the whole earth.

v. 6. "sons of thy sons," cf. v. 3.

Rosenmüller quotes (incorrectly) Virg. *Aen.* III. 98:

"Et nati natorum, et qui nascentur ab illis."

"Peace upon Israel." See Ps. cxxv. 5 note. As, in that Psalm, *Peace upon Israel* was obtained by the exclusion of unworthy Israelites, so, in the present Psalm, it is attained by the admission of worthy Gentiles.

PSALM CXXIX.

All the Commentators remark on the points of similarity between this Psalm and Ps. cxxiv. The two Psalms are alike in structure; they both draw, from Israel's deliverances in the past, the lesson of all Church history, that the gates of hell cannot prevail against the Church of God; they both have the same Refrain, "*Let Israel now say.*" These and other points of similarity are accounted for in our *Introduction to the Songs of the Steps.*

PSALM CXXIX.

Israel must suffer to be plowed as a field

- 1 All too long^a have they oppressed me from my youth,
Let Israel now say:
2 All too long have they oppressed me from my youth^b;
Still they have not prevailed against me.
3 The plowers^c plowed upon my back;
They made long their furrows^d—
4 YHVH is Righteous^e;
He sundered the cord of the wicked.

^a Pss. cxx. 6:
cxxiii. 4

^b Hos. ii. 15:
xi. 1

^c Sept. differs

^d 1 Sam. xiv.
14

^e Ezra ix. 15

but those who plow will reap only shame (contrast Ps. cxxvi. 6).

- 5 All the haters of Zion
Shall^f be shamed and turned backward.
6 They shall^f be as the grass on the housetops,
Which withers before it be grown:
7 Whereof the mower filleth not his hand,
Nor he that bindeth up the sheaves his bosom.
8 Neither say they who go by,
"The blessing of YHVH be with you":
"We bless you in YHVH'S Name."

^f or, *Let them be*

v. 3. "*The plowers plowed.*" Micah (iii. 12; cf. Jer. xxvi. 18) had foretold that "*Zion should be plowed as a field.*" If we think of Zion, "*the plowing upon the back*" represents cruel affliction; but if we think of the *plowers*, then we remember that "*they that plow iniquity and sow wickedness reap the same*" (Job iv. 8; cf. Hos. x. 13). This thought which is latent in v. 3 becomes the leading thought in vv. 6—8.

v. 4. The abrupt transition forcibly suggests the parallel passage in Ps. cxxiv. 7, "*The snare was broken, and we—we escaped.*" In both Psalms the deliverance is not to be limited to one special occasion; rather it describes the experience of Israel "from his youth," from Egypt to Babylon. The Midrash quotes Lev. xxvi. 13.

v. 6. "*grass on the housetops.*" We need not confine the word to "*grass*" alone. The flat mud housetops were sometimes used for storing corn (Josh. ii. 6); some of this might grow, but, not having depth of earth, it would bring no fruit to perfection.

"*before it be grown.*" Lit. "*before it unsheath.*" The verb is used twenty times of *drawing* a sword, twice (Ru. iv. 7 f.) of *drawing off* a shoe. Probably it was used as a technical term for that process of *unsheathing* whereby the growing grass, or corn, breaks forth into the ear. The P.B.V. "*plucked up*" is certainly wrong. The picture is not unlike that of the *gardens of Adonis* in Is. xvii. 10 f. The nearest parallel is 2 Kings xix. 26, "*as grass of the housetops, blasted before it become standing-corn*" (cf. Pss. xxxvii. 2; xc. 5).

v. 8. The kindly greeting (see Ruth ii. 4) was part of the "joy of harvest." This joy is not to be. Contrast the picture, doubtless by the same poet, in Ps. cxxvi. 7.

PSALM CXXX.

The *De Profundis* is essentially an *Adonai* Psalm, like Ps. lxxxvi. with which it has much in common (see marg. references). Both, indeed, are based upon the revelation of the Divine attributes of unsparing compassion and justice as revealed to Moses (Exod. xxxiv. 6 ff.). Without asserting that our Psalm was written for the Day of Atonement we must admit that it contains all the thoughts which gave rise to that observance.

The Psalm falls naturally into four stanzas of two verses each.

In Stanza I. the cry is from the depths of sin-consciousness.

Stanza II. states the two-fold need of man:—his need of forgiveness lest he should despair, but also of such a forgiveness as may manifest God's hatred of evil (Exod. xxxiv. 7, Hebrew). This unforgiving forgiveness is (*v.* 4 note), as in Exod. xxxiv., regarded as a Divine Attribute, or as existing in the Godhead.

Stanza III. pictures to us the earnest expectation of the creature waiting for this Divine paradox to be revealed.

Stanza IV. assures Israel that this expectation will not be disappointed, but that the coming Redemption will more than satisfy the widest hopes. Among the "Songs of the Steps" the *De Profundis* is nearly allied to Ps. cxxiii. It should also be compared with Ps. cxxxi., which is virtually a pendant, and which has the same Refrain, "*O Israel, look-with-expectation unto YHVH.*"

PSALM CXXX.

A Jonah-cry from the depths of sin-consciousness.

1 From out of the depths I call (unto) Thee, YHVH.

2 O Lord^a hearken to my voice;

Let Thine ears be attentive^b

To the voice of my plaint^c.

^a *Adonai.*
^b 2 Chr. vi. 40
^c Ps. lxxxvi. 6

The forgiveness is an Attribute of the Godhead,

3 If Thou, Yah, shouldst retain iniquities^d,

O Lord^e, who could stand?

4 But there is, with Thee, the Forgiveness^f,

That Thou mayest be feared.

^d *v.* 8
^e *Adonai*
^f Cf. Ps. lxxxvi. 5

v. 1. "*the depths.*" In the other passages in which this word occurs (Is. li. 10; Ezek. xxvii. 34; Ps. lxix. 2 (3), 14 (15)) it is coupled with "*waters*" or "*sea*," and in Ps. lxix. is used of the "*deep waters*" (of affliction) with obvious reference to Jonah. In the present instance, though the *depths of affliction* are not excluded, the whole context points to the wider meaning of *sin-consciousness* (cf. *v.* 8 note).

v. 2. "*Let Thine ears be attentive.*" The phrase is characteristic of Nehemiah (i. 6, 11) and of the Chronicle-writer (2 Ch. vi. 40; vii. 15) who puts it on the lips of Solomon in his Dedication Prayer. This is of special interest because the whole passage (2 Chr. vi. 41 f.) occurs almost word for word in Ps. cxxxii. 8—10 (see notes).

v. 3. "*If Thou...shouldst retain iniquities.*" When used of *sin* the verb does not signify *to mark* or *observe* it, but to *keep* it or *retain* it unatoned (Amos i. 11; Job xiv. 16).

The object of the Day of Atonement, year by year, was to assure Israel against this load of accumulated guilt.

v. 4. "*the Forgiveness.*" The *substantive* occurs only here in the *singular*, and twice in the *plural*,

K. III.

- and will be revealed
in God's Day.
- 5 I wait^a for YHVH—my soul waits ;
And I look-with-expectation for His word^b.
- 6 My soul is—to the Lord^c,
More than watchmen for the morning—
Watchmen for the morning.
- Israel may count
on this.
- 7 O ISRAEL, LOOK-WITH-EXPECTATION UNTO YHVH^d
For with YHVH is Lovingkindness^e,
And with Him is plenteous Redemption,
8 And He^f (Himself) will redeem Israel
From all his iniquities^g.
- ^a Ps. xl. 1 note
^b *promise*
^c *Adonai*
^d Ps. cxxxvi. 3
^e Ps. lxxxvi. 5, 15
^f *Emphatic*
^g *v. 3*

viz. Neh. ix. 17, "To Adonai our God belong mercies and *forgivenesses*..." and Neh. ix. 17, "But Thou art a God of *forgivenesses*, Gracious and Merciful, slow to anger, &c."

But, in a slightly different form, the substantive is found in the closely parallel Psalm lxxxvi. 5 "For Thou, Lord (Adonai), art good and *forgiving*." The student will note that, in all these passages, there is an allusion, expressed or understood, to the Revelation of the Divine Attributes to Moses (Exod. xxxiv. 6 ff.). The *verb*, however, is of frequent occurrence and is used of the forgiveness which follows Atonement (Lev. iv. 20, 26, 31, 35; v. 10, 13, 16, 18 &c. &c.) or of that forgiveness which springs from God's "Nature and property" (Exod. xxxiv. 9, see context; Nu. xiv. 19, 20; Is. lv. 7; Jer. xxxi. 34; also ten times in Solomon's Dedication Prayer (1 Kings viii. 30—50; 2 Ch. vi. 21—39)).

The Sept. renders δ *ἱλασμός* i.e. "*the Propitiation*" (cf. 2 Macc. iii. 33, "But as the high priest was making the Propitiation").

In the New Test. this word *ἱλασμός* is used twice, viz., 1 John ii. 2, "and He is *the Propitiation* for our sins": and 1 John iv. 10, "...He loved us, and sent His Son (to be) *the Propitiation* for our sins."

St John's reference to our Psalm on the one hand and to the Day of Atonement on the other is obvious.

"*That Thou mayest be feared.*" The Midrash comments as follows:—"R. Abba said, The Forgiveness is laid in store beside Thee from New Year's Day; and why so? '*that Thou mayest be feared,*' i.e. in order that Thy fear may be upon Thy Creatures on the Day of Atonement." The nine days between New Year's Day and the Day of Atonement were regarded by the Jews as a special opportunity for repentance. In point of fact New Year's Day itself was regarded by Ezekiel as the Season of Atonement (Ps. lxxv. 3 note). If this be borne in mind we shall find new meaning in the expectation (v. 6) for God's "Day" to break (cf. Zech. iii. 9^b).

v. 6. "*My soul is—to the Lord,*" i.e. "is directed to Him." Compare the parallel Psalm cxliii. 1, 2. Prothero (*Psalms in Human Life* p. 175) quotes the lines of Phineas Fletcher:—

"As a watchman waits for day,
And looks for light and looks again,
When the night grows old and grey,
To be relieved he calls amain;
So look, so wait, so long my eyes
To see my Lord, my Sun arise."

Our Psalmist is waiting for the Redemption of Israel pictured here as the breaking of God's Day.

v. 7. The Refrain in this verse, being identical with that in the following Psalm, might almost justify us in regarding the two Psalms as one.

v. 8. "*And He.*" The emphatic pronoun implies that God, and God only, can and will do this. Verse 8 answers exactly to v. 4. The thought is similar in Ps. lxxv. 3:—

"*Manifold iniquities are, for us, too strong:
Our transgressions Thou Thyself wilt atone.*"

See note p. 270.

PSALM CXXXI.

In Rev. viii. 1 we read that, "when he had opened the seventh seal (which corresponds with the seventh month) there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour." St John is, I think, alluding to the Jewish belief that, from the opening of the Seventh Month (New Year's Day), there is, with God, a period of *Silence* or *Suspense* till the tenth day, i.e. the Day of Atonement. During this period of *Silence* the sins of men were said to be in the balance. To these days of opportunity the Jews applied the text, "Call ye upon Him while He is near" (Is. lv. 6).

In the previous Psalm we traced an allusion to the Day of Atonement. To that Psalm the present Psalm is a pendant, having the same Refrain (v. 3). As a motto for the Psalm we might take Hab. ii. 20, "YHVH is in His holy Temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him."

The reader will, however, notice that the *Silence* of our Psalm is not simply the silence of *humility* but the silence of *expectation*. Thus, among the Songs of the Steps, our Psalm has points of contact, not merely with Ps. cxxx., but with Ps. cxliii.

PSALM CXXXI.

Silence of heart.

1 O YHVH, my heart is not haughty,
Nor mine eyes lofty;
I do not exercise myself in great matters^a,
Nor in things too wonderful^b for me.

^a Jer. xlv. 5^b Job xlii. 3

Silence of soul.

2 Of a truth I have stilled and hushed my soul,
As a weaned child with its mother;
My soul is with me as the weaned child.

v. 1. Israel, in these words, is not claiming for himself the grace of *lowliness*, but emphasising the fact of his *low estate* (cf. Luke i. 48).

"haughty," lit. "lifted up" (see Ezek. xxviii. 2, 5, 17; Prov. xviii. 12; 2 Chr. xxvi. 16; xxxii. 25).

"eyes lofty." Cf. Prov. xxx. 13 "There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes!" such a spirit is hateful to God (Prov. vi. 17; Ps. xviii. 27 (28); Is. ii. 12—14). In such a spirit Israel, as such, has no part. The ideal Israel is meek and lowly of heart.

"great matters," lit. "great things." Baruch when complaining of the sorrows of his times is thus admonished by Jeremiah, "Why seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not" (Jer. xlv. 5). There come times in the lives of men and nations when they must content themselves with mere existence. The Psalmist makes Israel here declare that by reason of his absolute confidence in his Guardian he is thus content. Such contentment must however be full of expectation (see v. 3).

"too wonderful." The exact expression occurs in Deut. xxx. 11, "It is not too wonderful (i.e. difficult) for thee"; and in Job xlii. 3, where Job confesses that he had been meddling with matters beyond him. To obey is never beyond us, but it is often beyond us to understand the reason.

v. 2. "weaned." The word (*gamál*) does not imply a sucking-child (*gal*) but one already weaned (Is. xxviii. 9). There must be pain in the process of weaning, but when the lesson is learnt a higher

Silent expectation. 3 O ISRAEL, LOOK-WITH-EXPECTATION UNTO YHVH^c
From henceforth and for ever.

^c Ps. cxxx. 7

stage of life is reached. The mother was once to the child the mere gratification of an appetite, but, by a seeming denial, the weaned child enters into the love of the mother. So with Israel. There had been a time when God, as *El Shaddai*, was but the Giver of temporal blessings (Ex. vi. 3): but by the sufferings of the Captivity and the withdrawn consolations he came to know something of the Mother-heart of God (Is. xlix. 15), thus "learning obedience through the things that he suffered" (Heb. v. 8).

Every soul must, for itself, go through this same experience and become "like this little child" (Mt. xviii. 4) in humility before it can become great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For humility is

"that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too;
The submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's all-complete,
As by each new obeisance in spirit [we] climb to His feet."

"with its mother," "with me." The E.V. and P.B.V. miss this connexion, which implies self-conquest.

v. 3^a. The Refrain not only links this Psalm with the preceding but also shews that, in both, the speaker is not a private individual but the ideal Israel.

v. 3^b. This expression, which is not common, occurs in Pss. cxxi. 8; cxxv. 2, in both passages of the unceasing *guardian-care* of God. This is not altogether accidental, for Pss. cxxi. and cxxxi. have other points in common.

PSALM CXXXII.

This Psalm differs, in metre, in parallelism, and in length, from the other Songs of the Steps; so much so that some Commentators have supposed it to have been misplaced. We shall, however, see that it is not unsuited to the position it holds in the group.

It consists of two Parts (*vv.* 1—9 and 10—16) which, if they did not so closely correspond the one to the other, might be regarded as complete in themselves (see marginal comments). The correspondence between the two parts of the Psalm may be indicated as follows:—

PART I.

David's care for God's House.

- v. 1. Remember to David's credit all his affliction.
- vv.* 2—5. David's oath and care for building God's House (Temple).
- v. 6 f. (See notes.) The prophecy of Micah respecting Zion is being fulfilled.
- v. 8. We take up the old Dedication Hymn and say
"Arise, YHVH, into Thy Resting-place."
- v. 9. "Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness;
And Thy saints ring-with-joy."

PART II.

God's care for David's House.

- v. 10. For David's sake reject us not.
- vv.* 11, 12. God's oath and care for building David's House (children).
- v. 13. Yes, God has chosen Zion as His own Dwelling.
- v. 14. God replies
"This is My Resting-place for evermore."
- v. 16. "I will clothe her priests with Salvation;
And her saints shall-ring-with joy."

We might say that Part I. refers to *man's prayer* and Part II. to *God's answer*. The references to 'David' should be compared with those in Ps. lxxxix.

The literal meaning of the Psalm is that the Covenant with David implies the Covenant with Zion and therefore the fulfilment of the Zion-promise (Mic. iv. 1 ff.), Zion becoming the World-temple through travail which ends in the birth of a greater David (Mic. v. 1 ff.).

The Psalm is fitly appointed, in our Church, for use on Christmas Day.

PSALM CXXXII.

Part I.

David Covenant.

1 O YHVH, remember for David
All his affliction^a:
2 Who sware unto YHVH,
Who vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob;
3 "I will not enter the shelter^b of my home,
I will not go up to the repose^c of my bed;
4 I will not give sleep to mine eyes,
Nor slumber to mine eyelids;
5 Until I find a place^d for YHVH,
An Habitation for the Mighty One of Jacob."

^a or *humility*

David's oath

^b *tent of my house*, cf. 2 Sam. vii. 2

^c *couch*

^d Is. xviii. 7 ; 1 Chr. xv. 3

Zion Covenant.

We desire the promised glory of Zion.

6 Lo, we heard her^e in Ephratah^f
We found her^e in the field^g of the forest^h.
7 We would enter into His Habitation,
We would worship at His Footstoolⁱ.
8 "Arise, YHVH, into Thy Resting-place^j,
Thou and the Ark of Thy strength:
9 Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness;
And Thy saints ring-with-joy."

^e or *it*

^f Mic. v. 2

^g Mic. iv. 10

^h Mic. vii. 14

ⁱ Ps. xcix. 5

^j 1 Ch. xxviii. 2

This is still our prayer.

v. 1. "remember for David," i.e. "Remember to David's credit" (cf. Neh. vi. 19).

"All his affliction," lit. "all his being afflicted." The right reading was probably "his affliction" or "his humility" (Sept.). The Chronicle-writer was perhaps alluding to our Psalm when he made David say, "Now, behold, in my affliction I have prepared for the House of YHVH" (1 Ch. xxii. 14). But I think that the Psalmist's meaning was somewhat wider:—Writing at a time when "David," i.e. the "House of David," had fallen into obscurity, he asks God to remember the founder of that House who had shewn such zeal for the House of God (cf. vv. 10—12).

David's zeal in this respect would be a suitable reminder in the age of Nehemiah.

v. 6. "we heard her (or it)." Not the Ark. The pronominal affix is *fem.* whereas "the Ark" is, properly, *masc.* Add to this the Ark has not yet been mentioned. We must therefore seek some other interpretation. Now, according to the structure of the Psalm (see Introduction p. 500) v. 6 (of Part I.) answers to v. 13 (of Part II.). But v. 13 refers to *Zion*; we therefore infer that v. 6 also refers to

Zion. But *v.* 6 also answers to *v.* 1 which speaks of the *affliction* of the House of David. What is needed therefore is some allusion which shall couple the affliction of *Zion* with *Ephratah* and the *field of the forest*. This we have in the prophecy of *Zion* as the *Travailing Woman* in Mic. iv.—*v.* 3.

We need not consider any critical questions as to the unity of these chapters of Micah. We shall assume that the prophecy was known to our Psalmist in its present form.

This prophecy may be analysed as follows:—*Zion* is to become the Temple of the world (Mic. iv. 1—5). At present she is, indeed, like *Rachel*, in great sorrow, but as with *Rachel* in travail at the Tower of the Flock (Gen. xxxv. 21), so with *Zion*, the *Travailing Woman* (Mic. iv. 8 ff.), the pangs are necessary to the birth, she must “go forth from the City” (perhaps “from being a City”) and must “dwell in the field,” but this very affliction shall be her deliverance (*v.* 10). Thus (*Bethlehem Ephratah* (the place of *Rachel*’s sorrow, Gen. xxxv. 16—19) has, for *Zion*, a symbolism of great hope, she is there to give birth to that Son in whom the promise (Mic. iv. 1—5) is to be fulfilled (Mic. v. 2—7) and in whom *Zion* is become the dedicated Temple of humanity. I would therefore paraphrase our Psalmist’s thought as follows:—“Yes, the affliction of *Zion* has been foretold, she must become like *Rachel* (the *Travailing Woman*) before she give birth to the Second *David*:—She must be abased before she be lifted up out of the Earth to become the Temple of the World.”

Some difficulties respecting *Ephratah* are discussed in an *Additional Note* at the end of this Psalm.

“in the field of the forest.” The parallelism throughout the Psalm is not the parallelism of contrast; we must therefore exclude all interpretations which involve a contrast between 6^a and 6^b, such as “We heard of it in *Bethlehem*, we found it in *Kirjath Jearim*.”

Again, “*Kirjath Jearim*” signifies the “*City of the forest*,” whereas our Psalmist uses the word “*field*,” in contrast to *City*, and further qualifies it by “*forest*” or “*steppe*,” thus denoting the “*wild field*.” No commentator could have suggested *Kirjath Jearim* unless he had been misled by a supposed allusion to the Ark (1 Sam. vii. 1 f.; 2 Sam. vi. 2—4). There is however no such allusion. On the contrary, the allusion is to the forsaken “*Daughter of Zion*” “*cast out in the open field*” (Ezek. xvi. 5; cf. xxix. 5; xxxii. 4) in her captive state, which as Micah (iv. 10) had foretold was to be to her the precursor of her greatest glory;—

“...*thou shalt go forth out of the City and shalt dwell in the field...there shalt thou be delivered.*” It will perhaps be said that though this gives us a suitable meaning for “*the field*” it leaves “*the forest*” unexplained. I answer that this may also be explained from Micah (vii. 14);—

“...*the flock of Thine heritage that dwells solitarily in the forest.*” Indeed throughout the “*Rachel*” prophecy there is an undercurrent of reference to God’s *flock* or *sheep* (Mic. iv. 6 f. “*her that halteth*”; iv. 8 “*the tower of the flock*”) which may be half unconsciously due to the meaning of the name *Rachel*.

If this be so, the words of the Psalmist might be paraphrased as follows:—

“We heard the daughter of *Zion*, the *Rachel* of the future, in her *Ephratah* of sorrow, and we found her, as Micah had foretold, gone forth from the city and dwelling in the wild fields—we therefore look to the end of that same prophecy and to the Birth, of which those sorrows were to be the precursors.”

If our Psalm were written, as we believe, for a *Zion* dedication Service, it would be natural that Mic. iv., *v.* should have influenced the Psalmist’s thought, since this prophecy, more clearly perhaps than any other, shews how *Zion* is to be lifted up out of sorrow to become the Temple of the World.

v. 7. “*We would enter*”...“*We would worship.*” The *optatives* must not be translated as mere *futures*. They express the desire whereby *Israel* responds to the Divine Indwelling in *Zion*.

vv. 8—10. The Chronicle-writer has turned these verses into prose and has put them in the lips of *Solomon* in his Prayer of Dedication. Thus:—2 Ch. vi. 41 f. “[And now] Arise YHVH [Elohim] to Thy rest, Thou and the Ark of Thy strength. Let Thy priests [YHVH Elohim] be clothed with *salvation* (cf. Psalm *v.* 16) and Thy saints *rejoice in prosperity*. [O YHVH Elohim] turn not away the face of Thine Anointed; Remember (cf. Psalm *v.* 1) the mercies of (cf. Is. lv. 3) *David Thy Servant.*”

This passage does not occur in the earlier text of *Solomon*’s Prayer (1 Kings viii.), and it is evident that the Chronicle-writer adapted a Dedication Psalm which he quoted from memory.

It is strange that any critic should suppose our Psalm-text to have been derived from the prose of *Chronicles*. It is, however, very probable that the Psalmist himself used an old liturgical formula based upon Nu. x. 35. See on Psalm lxxviii p. 279 f. The journeys of the Ark represented stages of preparation for the final Indwelling in *Zion*. What the *Zion* Covenant was for the Old Testament the Incarnation is for the New.

v. 8. "*the Ark.*" This is the only passage in the Psalter in which the Ark is mentioned. We do not know when the Ark ceased to exist, but it is scarcely conceivable that it should have been in existence when our Psalm was written. The thought that had been embodied in the Ark remained for the Psalmist as it does for us at the present day.

Part II.

David Covenant.

God's oath to David
(cf. 2 Sam. vii.: Ps.
lxxxix.).

- 10 For the sake of David, Thy Servant,
Turn not away the face of Thine Anointed.
11 YHVH sware unto David in truth;
From this He will not turn,
"Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne;
12 If thy children keep my Covenant,
And these My statutes that I teach them,
Then their children for evermore
Shall sit upon thy throne."

Zion Covenant.

God still intends
Zion's glory.

This is His Pro-
mise.

- 13 For YHVH hath chosen Zion,
Hath longed^a for her as a Dwelling of His own: ^a v. 14
14 "This is My Resting-place for evermore;
Here will I dwell for I have longed for her.
15 I will abundantly bless her provision;
And will satisfy her poor with bread.
16 Her priests I will clothe with salvation;
And her saints shall ring-with-joy^b. ^b v. 9

Conclusion (cf. vv.
1, 6, 10, 13).

- 17 There will I make to shoot forth^c a horn^c for David,
I have prepared a lamp for Mine Anointed. ^c Ezek. xxix.
21: Lk. i. 69
18 His enemies I will clothe with shame,
But upon himself his^d crown shall shine." ^d Sept. and
Jer. My

v. 13. God's "*choice*" of Zion was a favourite thought of the Return. See Zech. i. 17; ii. 12 (16); iii. 2. Historically the choice of Zion might seem to date from Deuteronomy and the Reforms of Josiah (B.C. 622), but the prophetic mind, looking deeper, sees that the "*choice of David*" involved the "*choice of Zion*" (1 Kings viii. 16). Thus v. 13 answers to v. 10 in *Part II.* and also to vv. 1, 6 in *Part I.*

"*Hath longed for her.*" The word is a very strong one and is nowhere else used of God. It suggests a Divine *στροφή*. We are reminded of the Second Isaiah's prophecies of the *Barren Woman* once *forsaken* but now again *beloved* and *chosen* (Is. liv.; lx. 15 ff.; lxii. 4). These thoughts are of special interest when we remember that, according to the structure of the Psalm, v. 13 corresponds with v. 6.

v. 17. "*I will make to shoot forth.*" Sept. ἐξανατελεῶ. The Hebrew verb lends itself to the two meanings of the *shooting forth* of light (cf. *Dayspring*, Lk. i. 78) and the *shooting forth* of vegetation (cf. the prophecies of the *Branch*, lit. the *Shoot*).

"*a horn.*" Here again we have two meanings. A *horn* may be simply an emblem of *power*,

or it may denote a *ray* of light. Our Psalmist seems, from the context, to have the latter meaning in his mind.

v. 18. "*his crown.*" The reading of the Sept. ("*My consecration*") is perhaps to be preferred. The word *nāzer*, "*crown,*" "*consecration,*" is that from which "*Nazarite*" is derived.

"*shall shine.*" Once more we have two meanings:—(a) "*shall shine*" or "*sparkle,*" (b) "*shall blossom,*" Sept. ἐξασθήσει [cf. Sept. on Exod. xxviii. 29 (33); xxxvi. 32 (xxxix. 24)]. These two meanings exactly correspond with the two meanings in v. 17. Those who have traced the prophecies of the *Branch* will reject neither of these meanings. Keble's metrical version is based upon the second:—

"the crown I bring
Shall o'er him bloom as fresh and bright
As starting flowers in spring."

The golden *plate* worn on the forehead of the High Priest (Ex. xxviii. 36; xxxix. 30) was called the *Tzets*, i.e. "*the flower.*" On it was inscribed "*Consecration to YHWH*" Ex. xxviii. 36. This *plate* or *flower* was actually called the "*crown of consecration*" (Ex. xxix. 6 Heb. and Greek). When then the Sept. render ἐπὶ δὲ ἀβρὼν ἐξασθήσει τὸ ἀγλασμά μου they clearly wish to suggest the diadem of a High Priest. So too Jerome, "*Super ipsum autem floriet sanctificatio mea. Pro sanctificatione NAZER in hebraeo habet, quod Aquila 'consecratum' interpretatur; et significat laminam ex auro, quae in fronte pontificis ligabatur, sculptum habens nomen Domini*" [*Comment. in Psalmos*, p. 90, ed. Morin]. It may be worth noting that the consecration of the High Priest consisted of *clothing him with certain vestments*, the *Tzets* being put on last (Ex. xxix. 6). Thus our Psalmist may have intended the *clothing with shame* (v. 18^a) to contrast with the *clothing of consecration* (v. 18^b).

The *clothing* of the High Priest was immediately followed by the *anointing* (Ex. xxix. 7). On this *anointing* see next Psalm.

Additional Note on Ephratah.

The names "*Ephratah,*" "*Ephraim*" are from the same root and signify "*fruitfulness.*" Hence, as we might naturally expect an *Ephrathite*=an *Ephraimite* (1 Sam. i. 1 Heb. text). Thus we have a *connexion between Ephratah and Ephraim on the North.*

But *Bethlehem*, "*house of bread,*" also signifies *fruitfulness*, i.e. it is almost identical in meaning with *Ephratah*. We should therefore naturally expect a *connexion between Ephratah and Bethlehem on the South.*

Thus we find an *Ephrathite*=a *Bethlehemite* (1 Sam. xvii. 12; Ru. i. 2).

Again, Rachel's tomb is, in 1 Sam. x. 2, distinctly stated to have been *North* of Jerusalem, and this is also implied by Jer. xxxi. 15; xl. 1, where *Ramah*, about 5 miles North of Jerusalem, is the traditional site of the tomb. But on the other hand if we accept the text of Gen. xxxv. 19 Rachel's tomb will have been *south* of Jerusalem, for we read, "*And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath [the same is Bethlehem].*" The words in brackets are, however, probably a later gloss. The well-known passage in Micah (v. 2) also identifies *Ephratah* with *Bethlehem* and with the grave of Rachel.

But this is not all. A tradition preserved by the Chronicle-writers connects *Ephratah* with the Caleb tribe, south of Jerusalem (1 Ch. ii. 19, 50; iv. 4), and links with this tradition the name of Hur. Josephus makes this Hur the husband of Miriam (*Ant.* iii. 4; vi. 1). Jerome seems to have known this strange tradition and even identifies Miriam with Ephratah the "*wife*" of Hur, and this too on the authority of a passage in Chronicles of which we can find no trace. Thus:—

"Dicat aliquis de Ephrata: hic Bethleem dixit. Legimus enim in Genesi: 'Venit in Bethleem, haec est Ephrata.' Hoc dicitur de Iacob, quando uxor eius Rachel mortua est, hoc est in Ephrata. Sed videamus Ephrata quare nomen accepit. Scriptum est in Paralipomenon, quoniam Maria, soror Moysi et Aaron, habuerit maritum Or: non Ur, sed Or. Et postea ordo describitur, et dicitur: 'Maria, soror Moysi et Aaron, haec est Ephrata.' Hoc in Paralipomenon libris scribitur: quaerite et inuenietis. Denique et haec Ephrata ab illa Ephrata nomen accepit" [*Tract. de Psal.* Ed. Morin, p. 244].

It is not improbable that two traditions may have existed regarding the site of Rachel's tomb, one belonging to the Northern Kingdom, the other to Judah. The point of real importance is, not the geographical position, but the mystical meaning, whereby the sorrows of the Mother (the ideal Rachel, the Travailing Woman) become the salvation of Zion and of the whole world.

PSALMS CXXXIII., CXXXIV.

Psalm cxxxiii. is, virtually, the last of the Songs of the Steps, Ps. cxxxiv. being little more than its pendant. The two together picture for us that ideal unity of Israel in God (*Shalom, Peace*) which is to be a Consecration from the highest (cxxxiii. 2), while it embraces all that is lovely in the Gentile world (cxxxiii. 3). This Blessing of Peace becomes an acted parable in Ps. cxxxiv., where the two bands, representing, as we may suppose, Zion and the outer world, meet with that mutual blessing, which is at the same time a confession of a universal priesthood of worship (*vv.* 1, 2) and a reminder of the one Divinely appointed Centre from which alone the brotherhood of Man can come (*v.* 3, cf. cxxxiii. 3). It is interesting to compare the first Song of the Steps (Ps. cxx.), which longs for unity and peace, with these two last Songs in which we find that Peace attained in God.

PSALM CXXXIII.

The meeting of the two bands.

Chorus.

A unity that is
"goodly" and "love-
ly."

1 Lo, how goodly
And how lovely
Is the dwelling of brothers all at-one^a!

^a Acts ii. 1

First band.

"Goodly."

2 'Tis like the goodly oil^b upon the head,
DOWN-FLOWING to the beard—an Aaron's beard—
DOWN-FLOWING to the border^c of his robes.

^b Ex. xxx.
22 ff.

^c Collar

Second band.

"Lovely."

3 'Tis like a Hermon dew,
DOWN-FLOWING on Zion's Mount;
For that YHVH hath there laid the blessing,
Life for evermore.

v. 1. "*the dwelling of brothers all at-one.*" The words suggest not merely *harmony*, or *fraternity*, but rather that unity in God of which the "general assembly" of Israel was a type (cf. Heb. xii. 23). This unity, under its other name of *peace*, is, as we have seen, a leading thought in the Songs of the Steps. It finds its highest expression in the High-priestly prayer of Christ (John xvii. 23).

The two images under which this unity (*φιλadelphia*) is pictured must be kept distinct. (*a*) It is "goodly," as the "goodly oil." (*b*) It is *lovely*, as the *lifegiving dew*. Both of these, however, are "*downflowing.*"

v. 2. "*the goodly oil.*" The same word "goodly," as in *v.* 1. The "goodly oil" is the "*holy anointing oil*" (Ex. xxx. 22 ff.) used for the Consecration of the High Priest, and, *afterwards*, for the consecration of his sons. (See crit. comment. on Ex. xxx. 30; xl. 15; Lev. vii. 36; Nu. iii. 3.)

"*Down-flowing to the border of his robes.*" The anointing of the High Priest immediately followed his investiture (Ex. xxix. 7, cf. note on Ps. cxxxii. 18). The sacred oil was poured upon his head and applied to his forehead in the form of a cross (see Edersheim, *Temple* p. 71). It would run down the beard to the collar of the "breastplate," which bore the names of the twelve Tribes of Israel. Thus, from the Consecration of the One, there is implied the Consecration of all in One (cf. John xvii. 19, 23).

v. 3. "*a Hermon dew.*" Travellers speak of the dew on Hermon as almost phenomenal. Dew, in

Scripture, is the very emblem of life and beauty. When the Psalmist speaks of a *Hermon dew, down-flowing on Zion's Mount*, he suggests to us that abundant outpouring of life and beauty from the Gentile world which should flow down upon the Church of God (Hag. ii. 6 f.). The influx of the World-nations was the vivifying power in the Jewish Church (Mic. v. 3), just as, conversely, "the remnant of Jacob (was) in the midst of many peoples as a dew from YHVH" (Mic. v. 7).

This Hermon dew comes upon Zion, not by nature, but, because "*YHVH hath there laid the blessing*," as was explained, by His choice of Zion, in the preceding Psalm. See especially Mic. iv. 1 f. Mount Zion is exalted above the mountains only because of this choice. Thus the word "*down-flowing*" gives the Key-note to the whole Psalm.

Perhaps it is not altogether fanciful to distinguish between "*the blessing*" (v. 3^c) and "*Life*" (v. 3^d), making the former refer to the priestly consecration (v. 2) and the latter to the *life-giving dew of refreshing* from the Gentile world (v. 3^{ab}), Zion being the Mother City (see Ps. lxxxvii. 5). For the thought of the Gentiles joining in the brotherhood of Israel we may compare Ps. cxvii. which is last but one in the Hallel, even as the present Psalm is last but one in the Songs of the Steps.

PSALM CXXXIV.

The meeting of the two bands.

First band, representing pilgrims to Zion.

1 LO, BLESS YE YHVH, all ye servants of YHVH,
Ye that stand in the House of YHVH, night by night,
2 Lift up your hands* in holiness
And BLESS YE YHVH.

* 1 Tim. ii. 8

v. 1. "Lo." This word links our Psalm with the preceding (cxxxiii. 1).

"*Ye that stand*," i.e. stand to minister (cf. Ps. cxxii. 2). The lay-representatives of Israel were called the "*station-men*," lit. "*men of the standing*."

"*night by night*," lit. "*by nights*." Delitzsch reminds us that, in the Second Temple, the Levite Singers had "*a duty of ministry day and night*" (1 Ch. ix. 33), and that the Targum refers this verse of our Psalm to the Temple-watch. It is true that the Temple-watch made their nightly rounds of the Temple Courts in *two bands moving in opposite directions* (Edersheim, *Temple* p. 121). No doubt this Psalm would be a very suitable greeting when the two bands met. The Talmud distinctly tells us that it was so used at the Water-drawing Festival (Feast of Tabernacles). Thus:—"What used they (i.e. the Levites) to say? '*Lo, bless ye &c.*' Some of them said, '*Lift up your hands in holiness.*' And when they were separating one from the other what did they say, the one to the other? '*YHVH bless thee...*'" (Tos. Sukka iv. 7 quoted by Graetz). Thus we are justified in regarding the Psalm as antiphonal. But we must not assume that, because it was used at the Water-drawing Festival, it was necessarily written for that Festival. Indeed the whole ritual of the night processions was as old as Natural religion, and was suggested by the movement of the Stars [see *Introduction to the Songs of the Steps*]. In later Hebrew poetry the Temple-watch is, not unfrequently, compared to the night-watching stars in the sky. Thus there is a Hebrew poem by R. Judah Ha-Levi which we may translate as follows:—

"The Stars of morning hymn their hymns to Thee,
For 'tis from Thee, their Fount of light, they shine:
The 'Sons of God,' all standing on their watch,
Both night and day extol Thy glorious Name.
From them the saints on earth take up the theme,
And, every morn, Thy Temple-watch maintain."

If then the Songs of the Steps were written, as we maintain (see *Introduction*), for a Dedication procession it would be only natural that they would lend themselves to similar Services at later times, such as the

Second band, representing dwellers in Zion.

3 YHVH BLESS THEE FROM ZION^a—
THE MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH^b.

^a Ps. cxxviii. 5

^b Pss. cxxi. 2;
cxxiv. 8

night-processions at Tabernacles (Graetz), or the processions of the Temple-watch (Edersheim), or the night-gatherings of the Station-men (Kohler).

v. 2. “*Lift up your hands.*” The phrase might indicate *prayer*, as in Ps. xxviii. 2, “*As I lift up my hands to the Shrine of Thy Sanctuary.*” But it also denotes *blessing*, as Lev. ix. 22, “*and Aaron lifted up his hands to the people and blessed them*”; also Ps. lxxiii. 4 (5), of man blessing God (where, however, the word for *hands* is different). In the present instance the context requires the latter thought.

“*in holiness,*” or, “*in the Sanctuary*”; Jer. *ad sanctum*:—*i.e.* God’s Ministers and Station-men, who represent His People, are, in His earthly Temple, what the Stars are in His heavenly Temple; the office of both is to bless the Creator.

St Paul (1 Tim. ii. 8) quotes this verse, with a side reference to Mal. i. 11, in order to define the characteristic work of *men* (as opposed to *women*). That work is to be a Eucharistic work. “I desire then that the *men* offer prayers, in every place (cf. Mal. i. 11), lifting up holy hands...” That the *prayer* which St Paul intended was *Eucharistic prayer* is evident from *v. 1*.

In late Hebrew the verb which signifies “*to lift up*” also signifies “*to wash*”: hence this verse was used as the Benediction at the Washing of the hands, which was an act of ritual preparatory to the public Service of God.

v. 3. “*YHVH bless thee.*” We cannot mistake here the opening words of the High Priestly blessing Nu. vi. 24. This blessing is, “*in the latter days,*” to go forth from Zion. See note on Ps. cxxviii. 5 where the same words seem to be addressed to proselytes.

“*The Maker of heaven and earth.*” The juxtaposition of this title with the blessing from Zion reminds us of the blessing of Melchizedek, from Salem (Gen. xiv. 18 f.). See also notes on Pss. cxv. 15; cxxi. 2.

The closing Blessing of the Songs of the Steps should be compared with the closing Blessing of the Hallel (Ps. cxviii. 26).

PSALMS CXXXV., CXXXVI.

The Songs of the Steps are finished; but these two Psalms, which have sometimes been called *the Great Hallel*, are closely connected both with the *Hallel* (Pss. cxiii.—cxviii.) and with the *Step-songs* (Pss. cxx.—cxxxiv.). They belong to the type of Psalm given by the Chronicle-writer in Neh. ix., sung by the Levites on the “*stairs (steps) of the Levites*” (Neh. ix. 4).

We have endeavoured to indicate the composite character of these Psalms by printing the more obvious quotations in italics. There is little originality, but the thoughts are grouped with care (see marginal notes), and the quotations, if studied with their contexts, are most suggestive.

PSALM CXXXV.

Halleluyah.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Israelites (cf. <i>v.</i>
19^a).
Priests (cf. <i>v.</i> 19^b).
Levites (cf. <i>v.</i> 20^a).
Proselytes (cf. <i>v.</i>
20^b).</p> <p>God's <i>Name</i> im-
plies Israel's call (cf.
<i>vv.</i> 13, 14).</p> <p>The power of God
in Creation (contrast
<i>vv.</i> 15—18).</p> | <p>1 <i>Praise ye the Name of YHVH</i>;
<i>Praise ye, O ye servants of YHVH</i>^a;</p> <p>2 <i>That stand in the House of YHVH</i>^b,
<i>In the Courts of the House of</i>^c our God.</p> <p>3 <i>Praise ye Yah</i>, for YHVH is good^d;
Hymn ye to His Name, for it is lovely^d.</p> <p>4 For Yah hath chosen Jacob for Himself^e,
Israel for His peculiar-treasure^f.</p> <p>5 <i>For I</i>^g <i>know that YHVH is great</i>^h,
And that our Lord is above all gods.</p> <p>6 <i>All that YHVH pleased He hath done</i>,
<i>In Heaven and in Earth</i>ⁱ,
In the seas and in all deeps.</p> <p>7 <i>He bringeth up the mists from the ends of the earth</i>^k;
<i>He made the lightnings for the rain</i>;
<i>He bringeth forth the wind from His treasures.</i></p> | <p>^a Ps. cxiii. 1</p> <p>^b cf. Ps.
cxxxiv. 1</p> <p>^c Ps. cxvi. 19</p> <p>^d Ps. cxxxiii. 1</p> <p>^e Deut. vii. 6</p> <p>^f Ex. xix. 5</p> <p>^g Emphatic</p> <p>^h Ex. xviii. 11</p> <p>ⁱ Ps. cxv. 3</p> <p>^k <i>v.</i> 7 is almost
word for
word from
Jer. x. 13</p> |
|---|--|--|

vv. 1, 2. This ritual Introduction is not to be regarded as a separate Psalm (as by Duhm and Cheyne). It corresponds, line by line, with the ritual Conclusion (*vv.* 19, 20) in which the whole People, Israelites, Priests, Levites, Proselytes, call upon one another to bless the Lord.

The *order* in which the various classes of the People are addressed may be due to the fact that the "*stairs of the Levites*" led up to the *Court of Israel* (see *Introduction to the Songs of the Steps*), so that the singers, standing on those steps, would have the *Court of Israel* and the *Court of the Priests* to the West while the outer Courts would lie to the East.

v. 3. "*for it...*" "*it*" may refer either to the "*Name*" or to the *act of praising*. The parallelism is in favour of the former, but the context of the Psalm rather favours the latter (cf. Ps. cxv. 16—18). The same expression occurs in Ps. cxlvii. 1.

v. 5. This verse at first sight is strangely abrupt until we recognise it as a quotation from the words of Jethro, Ex. xviii. 9—12 (J), "And Jethro rejoiced over all the goodness which YHVH had shewn to Israel, in that He had delivered them from the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed be YHVH, who hath delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians.....*Now know I that YHVH is greater than all gods*; for in that wherein they dealt proudly (He was) above them."

These words of Jethro strike the note of the Egyptian "*Hallel*" and suggest that contrast between YHVH and the "*gods of the heathen*" which is developed later in the Psalm (*vv.* 15—18).

v. 7. This verse, which is taken from Jer. x. 13, seems, like *v.* 5, to have no direct bearing on the subject of the Psalm. But if we study the whole passage in Jeremiah we shall see that the context, *vv.* 1—16, is, like our Psalm, a contrast between the idols of the heathen and the God of Israel Who created the heavens and the earth. Thus, once more, we are led to see a certain unity of thought in the Psalm.

God's Power in Redemption, i.e. in History.

8 That smote the firstborn of Egypt,
Both of man and beast.
9 He sent signs and wonders in thy midst, O Egypt;
Upon Pharaoh and upon all his servants.

See next Psalm *vv.* 17—22.

10 That smote great nations.
And slew mighty kings;
11 Such as Sihon king of the Amorites,
And Og the king of Bashan,
And all the kingdoms of Canaan:
12 And gave their land for an heritage,
An heritage for Israel His People.

God's *Name* implies Israel's call (cf. *vv.* 3, 4).

13 O YHVH, Thy *Name is for ever*^a;
O YHVH, Thy *Memorial-Name is for all generations*^a.
14 *For YHVH will right His People,*
And will repent Himself concerning His servants^b.

^a Ex. iii 15

The powerlessness of the heathen gods (contrast *vv.* 5 ff.).

15 *The idols of the heathen are silver and gold*^c,
The work of men's hands.
16 *A mouth is theirs, but they cannot speak;*
Eyes they have, but they do not see;
17 *Noses they have, but smell not;*
Yea there is no breath in their mouths.
18 *They that make them shall become as they;*
Each one that puts trust in them.

^b Deut. xxxii 36; cf. Ps. xc. 13

^c *vv.* 15—18 are from Ps. cxv. 4—8

Israelites (cf. *v.* 1^a).
Priests (cf. *v.* 1^b).
Levites (cf. *v.* 2^a).
Proselytes (cf. *v.* 2^b).

19 O HOUSE OF ISRAEL, BLESS YE YHVH^d;
O HOUSE OF AARON, BLESS YE YHVH;
20 O HOUSE OF LEVI, BLESS YE YHVH;
O YE FEARERS OF YHVH, BLESS YE YHVH.
21 Blessed be YHVH from Zion^e,
Who dwelleth in Jerusalem.

^d cf. Ps. cxv. 9 ff.

^e cf. Ps. cxxxiv. 3

Halleluyah.

vv. 13, 14. The two quotations are suggestive of Hallel thoughts. The first, Exod. iii. 15, reminds us of the eternal Promise of God's call from Egypt; the second, Deut. xxxii. 36, is from that second "*Song of Moses*" which was a witness (Deut. xxxi. 21) to Israel that though suffering must follow sin yet the eternal purpose of God's call remained sure.

PSALM CXXXVI.

- 1 *Thank ye YHVH, for He is good^a;*
For His Lovingkindness is for ever.
- 2 *Thank ye the God^b of gods^b;*
For His Lovingkindness is for ever.
- 3 *Thank ye the Lord of lords^b;*
For His Lovingkindness is for ever.
- The Goodness of God in Creation (cf. Ps. cxxxv. 5 ff.).
- 4 Him that alone doeth great wonders^c:
For &c.
- 5 Him that maketh the heavens by His wisdom^d:
For &c.
- 6 Him that spreadeth the earth on the waters:
For &c.
- Cf. Gen. i. 14—16.
- 7 *That maketh (the) great lights:*
For &c.
- 8 *The sun for the rule of the day:*
For &c.
- 9 *The moon and stars for the rule of the night:*
For &c.

^a Pss. cvi. 1;
cvii. 1;
cxviii. 1
^b Deut. x. 17

^c Pss. lxxxvi.
10; cxi. 4

^d N.B. Jer. x.
12

v. 4. "*great wonders.*" God's *wonders* often refer to His works in Redemption (Ps. lxxxvi. 10, note p. 363), but here, I think, they refer to His work of Creation. Compare Ps. cxi. 4 f. (p. 42) when God's "*Memorial-Name for His wonders*" is associated with the thought of His liberality as "*giving provision to them that fear Him.*" See also note on *v.* 25.

vv. 5—9. The *present participles*, "*maketh*," "*spreadeth*," are not to be disregarded, or translated, as in E.V. and R.V. as *past tenses*. They suggest the work of Creation as a continuous act. This is recognised in the Jewish Prayer Book (Sabbath Morning Service) which speaks of God as, "*He who in His goodness renews, every day continuously, the work of Creation.*"

v. 5. Note the reference to Jer. x. 12, the same passage which suggested *v.* 7 of the previous Psalm.

vv. 10—22. Here again the *present participles*, "*smiteth*," "*cutteth*," "*leadeth*," &c. are not quite the same as the *past tenses* in the parallel verses of Ps. cxxxv. As the work of Creation is continuous so also the work of Redemption is continuous. While the Psalmist is speaking of the redemption from Egypt he is thinking of the redemption from Babylon.

v. 13. "*sections.*" The word is only found in one other passage (Gen. xv. 17), of the divided "*pieces*" of Abraham's sacrifice. The poet seems to regard the Red Sea as a monster cut into pieces. Possibly he was influenced by the story of Marduk and Tiamat.

v. 16. "*that leadeth.*" The *pres. part.* is used here as in Deut. viii. 15 to denote the continuous care of God as He led and fed His People in the Wilderness.

v. 25. "*Him that giveth food to all flesh.*" Cheyne (ed. of 1904) says, "In truth, no more feeble close of a psalm of thanksgiving could be imagined." But we have constantly seen that the closing words of a Psalm sum up the thoughts of the opening verses. Our present Psalm began with a confession of God's goodness in *Creation* (*vv.* 4—9) similar in tone to Ps. civ., in which the leading thought is the *provision that God makes for all His creatures* (see Ps. civ. 11—15, 21, 27 f.).

His Goodness in
Redemption (*vv.* 10
—22. Cf. Ps. cxxxv.
8 ff.).

10 *Him that smiteth Egypt with their firstborn:*

For &c.

11 And hath brought out Israel from their midst:

For &c.

12 With a strong hand and a stretched out arm:

For &c.

13 Him that cutteth the Red Sea into sections:

For &c.

14 And hath made Israel pass through its midst:

For &c.

15 And overthrew^a Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea:

^a Ex. xiv. 27

For &c.

16 Him that leadeth^b His People in the Wilderness:

^b Deut. viii. 15

For &c.

17 That smiteth great kings:

For &c.

18 And hath slain famous kings:

For &c.

19 *Such as Sihon king of the Amorites:*

For &c.

20 *And Og the king of Bashan:*

For &c.

21 *And gave their land for an heritage:*

For &c.

22 *An heritage for Israel His Servant^c:*

^c cf. Deut.
xxxii. 36

For &c.

Redemption from
Babylon.

23 Him that remembered us in our low estate:

For &c.

24 And hath violently-freed us from our oppressors:

For &c.

Creation (cf. *vv.* 4
—9).

25 Him that giveth food to all flesh^d:

^d cf. Ps. civ.

For &c.

26 *Thank ye the God^e of Heaven^e:*

^e Neh. i. 4

For &c.

Additional Note on Psalm CXXXVI.

In the Hebrew text of the *Wisdom of Ben Sira* (edited by Schechter and Taylor) there is an interesting imitation of this Psalm, which we may translate as follows:

51. 12. (1) *Thank ye YHVH, for He is good ;
For His Lovingkindness is for ever.*
- (2) *Thank ye the God of Praises ;
For &c.*
- (3) *Thank ye the Guardian of Israel ;
For &c.*
- (4) *Thank ye the Former of all things ;
For &c.*
- (5) *Thank ye the Redeemer of Israel ;
For &c.*
- (6) *Thank ye Him that gathereth the outcasts of Israel ;
For &c.*
- (7) *Thank ye Him that buildeth His City and His Sanctuary ;
For &c.*
- (8) *Thank ye Him that maketh-to-spring the horn of the House of David ;
For &c.*
- (9) *Thank ye Him that chooseth the sons of Zadok to be priests ;
For &c.*
- (10) *Thank ye the Shield of Abraham ;
For &c.*
- (11) *Thank ye the Rock of Isaac ;
For &c.*
- (12) *Thank ye the Mighty One of Jacob ;
For &c.*
- (13) *Thank ye Him that chooseth Zion ;
For &c.*
- (14) *Thank ye the King of kings of kings ;
For &c.*

PSALM CXXXVII.

The first six verses of this Psalm are complete in themselves, forming a lovely Psalm in two parts.

In Part I. (*vv.* 1—4) the newly returned captives recall the passionate devotion they had felt for Zion when they dwelt beside the sad waters of Babylon.

In Part II. (*vv.* 5, 6) they resolve that practical effect shall be given to that devotion, and that Jerusalem shall come before their chiefest personal interest and joy.

Here the Psalm closes. But unfortunately a fragment (*vv.* 7—9) has been added from some other source which has no connexion with our Psalm (see notes) and entirely destroys its beauty. It would be a great relief to many Christians if, in the public use of the Psalm in church, these vindictive verses might be omitted. Their true place is rather in the Book of Lamentations.

PSALM CXXXVII.

In the Captivity we
remembered the City
of God.

1 By the rivers of Babylon,
There^a we sat, yea wept,
As we called to mind^b Zion.
2 By the willows therein
We had hanged our harps.
3 For there^c our captors
Asked of us songs!
Our mockers^d (asked for) joy^e!
"Sing us one of Zion's songs."
4 How should we sing the Song of YHVH
Upon an alien land?

^a v. 3

^b v. 6

^c Emphatic,
cf. v. 1

^d doubtful
word

^e v. 6^d

v. 1. "*Babylon*" denotes not the city only but the country. To the exiles Babylonia appeared essentially as a land of rivers (Is. xlv. 27); indeed it is not infrequently pictured as a water-monster that has swallowed up Israel (Jonah ii.; Jer. li. 34, 44; Pss. xl. 2, note; xlii. 7; lxix. 2, 15, note).

"*There we sat.*" "*There,*" in that dreary land of waters! Note also the force of "*there*" in v. 3.

"*we sat.*" The context suggests the attitude of sorrow, *sitting upon the ground in silence* (Neh. i. 4; Is. xlvii. 1; Jer. xv. 17; Lam. i. 1; ii. 10; iii. 28; Ezek. iii. 15; xxvi. 16).

v. 2. "*By the willows.*" The name of the tree is significant. The *willows* were used with the palm branches at the joyous Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. xxiii. 40); indeed the closing day of that Feast was, in later times, called the "*Day of Willows*" (see Edersheim, *Temple*, p. 244).

Our Psalmist implies that as, in olden days of home, the "*waters*" and the "*willows*" had been to Israel the very types and emblems of joy, so now the "*waters*" and "*willows*" of Babylon are to him a "sorrow's crown of sorrow."

"*therein.*" This refers to the land of Babylon (v. 1^a).

v. 4. "*How should we sing the Song of YHVH...?*" We cannot suppose that the Service of Psalms ceased in the Captivity. Our Psalmist uses the word "*Song*" (*shir*) in the more restricted sense of the *triumph-song*, such as that of Moses (Ex. xv. 1), or, especially, the Song of Passover or of Tabernacles (Is. xxx. 29). Such a song was essentially "*the Song of YHVH*" (2 Chr. xxix. 27).

We may illustrate the thought of the Psalmist from the words of Horatius Bonar:

"My God, it is not fretfulness
That makes me say "How long?"
It is not heaviness of heart
That hinders me in song;
'Tis not despair of truth and right,
Nor coward dread of wrong.
But how can I with such a hope
Of glory and of home;
With such a joy before my eyes
Not wish the time to come,—
Of years the jubilee, of days
The Sabbath and the sum?"

Shall we forget her
now?

5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
May my right-hand forget!
6 May my tongue cleave to my palate^a,
If I do not call thee to mind^b;
If I do not set Jerusalem
Above my chiefest joy^c.

^a or gums

^b cf. v. 1

^c v. 3^b

A fragment against Edom, in the style of Lam. iv. 21 f.

7 O YHVH remember to the sons of Edom the day of
Jerusalem,
How they said, "Lay bare, lay bare, to the foundations
with her!"
8 O daughter of [Edom] that art devoted to spoil!
Happy he that payeth thee thy requital, as thou hast
requited us:
9 Happy he that graspeth and dasheth thy babes against
the rock^a.

^a selq

vv. 5, 6. In the Captivity they had spoken of *Zion* (*vv.* 1^c, 3^d), but now, in the Return, they call the city by the still dearer name *Jerusalem* (*vv.* 5^a, 6^c).

In the early days of the Return there was, on the part of many, a selfish feeling of neglect for the rebuilding of the city (Hag. i. 2 f.). At such a time these verses while they expressed the feeling of the prophets would be a useful reminder to those who were lacking in zeal. It is easier to remember "*Jerusalem*" in days of affliction than in days of success.

Verse 6 corresponds with *v.* 3 and closes the Psalm.

vv. 7—9. These verses have no connexion whatever with what has gone before. They differ in style, being heavy and prosaic, while their savage vindictiveness is directed not against Babylon but against the brother-tribe of Edom.

v. 7. "*the day of Jerusalem*,"—There seems to be a reference to Obadiah's prophecy against Edom *vv.* 10—14. "For the violence toward thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest as opponent; in the day that strangers took captive his forces, and foreigners entered his gates, and cast lots over Jerusalem; thou also wast as one of them. Ah, but do not exult over the day of thy brother, the day of his barbarous treatment; rejoice not over the sons of Judah in the day of their destruction; enlarge not thy mouth in the day of distress. Enter not into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; do not thou too gloat over evil in the day of his calamity, nor lay hands on his army [*or* substance] in the day of his calamity; and stand not thou at the cross-road to cut off his fugitives; and deliver not up his remnant in the day of distress."

This prophecy of Obadiah refers to the hostility of the Edomites at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (B.C. 586); compare also the parallel prophecies in Jer. xlix. 7—22; Ezek. xxxv. The Edomites, profiting by the Captivity, took possession of the greater part of Judah (Ezek. xxxv. 10, 12, 15). This may explain though it cannot justify the words of our Psalm.

In the Second Isaiah we have a terrible Apocalypse against Edom, in which however God and not man is the Avenger (Is. xxxiv. with lxiii. 1—6). The Christian interpretation of this latter passage is most suggestive (Rev. xix. 13, &c.).

v. 8. "*O daughter of [Edom]*." The text reads "*O daughter of Babylon*," but the allusions

are all directly to prophecies against *Edom* (see notes) and the unity of the context forbids us here to introduce the thought of Babylon.

I suggest that "*Edom*" stood in the original text, and that at a later time, when Babylon was regarded as the typical enemy of Israel, the word "*Babylon*" was substituted. This change may have been made at the time when vv. 7—9 were added to a Psalm which relates the sorrows of the captives in Babylon.

"*that art devoted to spoil.*" I have tried to reproduce the ambiguity of the original. The Hebrew word, with different pointing, may have either an *active* or a *passive* sense (Sym. ἡ ληστρῆς, Sept. ἡ τολαίπρωπος, Jer. "*vastata*"). Thus it may signify either that the city is *devoted to spoil* in the sense that it is *about to be laid waste*, or, that it is *devoted to spoil* as the *robber-city*. This latter sense is probably right. The rock-city (*Sela*, later *Petra*) of Edom was one of the strongest cities of the world. It is of this that Jeremiah (xlix. 16) says, "Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock (*Sela*), that holdest the height of the hill...."

"*that payeth thee thy requital.*" So Obadiah says of Edom (v. 15), "As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy requital shall return upon thine own head."

The taunt-song in Lam. iv. 21 f. which seems to belong to the days of Zedekiah, is closely parallel with our text. Thus:

"Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwelleth in the land of Uz;
To thee, too, the cup shall pass, thou shalt be drunken and make thyself naked
... ..
He will visit thine iniquity, O daughter of Edom; he will discover thy sins."

The enmity against Edom was of long duration (Mal. i. 2—4; 1 Esd. iv. 45, 50; Sira, l. 25 f.).

Undoubtedly the Edomites did all in their power to complete the destruction of Jerusalem (see note on v. 7). Thus Ezekiel (xxxv. 15) says of them, "As thou didst rejoice over the inheritance of the House of Israel on account of its being desolate, so will I do to thee: thou shalt become desolate, O mount Seir, and Edom, all of it."

The imagery of the prophecies against Edom was influenced by the fact that *Edom* signifies "*red*" and is kindred with *dam*, "*blood*"; while *Bosrah* (Is. xxxiv. 6; lxiii. 1; Jer. xlix. 13) is derived from a root which also signifies to "*gather grapes*" (Jer. xlix. 9; Obad. 5), thus lending itself to the "*vintage of the wrath of God.*"

PSALM CXXXVIII.

We now have a group of eight Psalms (cxxxviii.—cxlv. inclusive) which bear the title "*for David*," the closing Psalm of the group being an Alphabetical Psalm. All internal evidence is against the Davidic authorship; the reason for the title must therefore be sought either in the subject-matter of the individual Psalms or in the season of the Jewish Year in which this group of Psalms was used in the Temple Services (see *Introduction, Influence of Triennial Cycle on the Psalter*).

The present Psalm is all based upon God's *Promise* to the lowly-one (see marginal notes).

In the later prophetic times David was pictured as the ideal lowly-one, and God's *Promise* to David had become the hope of the nation, all the more because with the death of Zedekiah the House of David had seemed to come to an end.

Thus our Psalm (see note on v. 2) and 2 Sam. vii. (a late passage) belong to the same development of Messianic thought and may be used to illustrate each other. Compare also Ps. lxxxix. 19—end.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

The lowly - one thanks God for His Promise (cf. *Magnificat*).

- 1 I thank Thee with my whole heart [O YHVH]^a:
 In the presence^b of the powers^c I hymn to Thee.
 2 I bow down^d toward Thy holy Temple^d,
 And thank Thy Name, for Thy lovingkindness and Thy
 truth:
 For Thou hast magnified Thy Word^e above all Thy Name. ^e or *promise*
 3 In the day I called Thou answeredst me,
 And didst elate my soul with much strength.

The whole world justifies God's choice of the lowly.

- 4 All the kings of the earth praise Thee, O YHVH,
 For they have heard the words of Thy mouth:
 5 And they sing in the ways of YHVH;
 For that great is the glory of YHVH.
 6 For YHVH is high^f and seeth that which is low:
 And the lofty He noteth from afar.

The lowly - one trusts God to complete what God has begun.

- 7 If I go through distress Thou revivest me:
 'Gainst the wrath of my foes Thou puttest forth Thine hand,
 So that Thy right-hand saveth me.
 8 YHVH will complete^g that which concerns me:
 YHVH, Thy lovingkindness is for ever;
 Forsake^h not the work of Thine hands.

v. 1. After v. 1^a the Sept. have a line which is not in the Hebrew, viz. "For Thou hast heard all the words of my mouth," cf. v. 4^b. The verse may be compared with Ps. xviii. 49.

v. 2. "For Thou hast magnified Thy Word...." God's "Word" here signifies His "Promise." This Promise God has magnified *above all His Name*, i.e. above all things, in Heaven and Earth, whereby He has been hitherto known and revealed.

The *Promise* is the promise to the lowly-one, i.e. to the ideal David as pictured by the later Prophets.

Thus we are justified in illustrating the Psalm from 2 Sam. vii. (a late prophetic passage), where David confesses that God's Promise to his house goes beyond his widest thoughts (vv. 18—21), and where he expresses his trust that God would complete that Promise (vv. 28, 29; cf. Psalm v. 8).

Those who accept the results of criticism are as fully justified in using the above illustration as those are who can believe that the Psalm was written by David and that 2 Sam. vii. represents David's own words.

v. 6. God's choice of things lowly is itself an anticipation of the Incarnation. See note on Ps. cxiii. 5, 6, p. 465.

Keble paraphrases: "How high the Lord! and yet His eyes
 Behold the lowly nestling heart;
 At distance He the proud espies,
 And keeps them far apart."

v. 7. All outward obstacles become, through God, aids to progress. See Ps. xxiii.

^a Sept.
^b Ps. cxix. 46
^c *Elohim*;
 Sept. "An-
 gels"
^d Ps. v. 7

^f Ps. cxiii. 4:
 Is. lvii. 15

^g Ps. lvii. 2:
 cf. Phil. i. 6

^h Deut. iv. 31:
 xxxi. 6, 8:
 Jos. i. 5

v. 8. "YHVH will complete...." He who gave the Promise (v. 2) will complete the work. See note on Ps. lvii. 2 :

"I trust Thee to the end,
 Creator, Saviour, Friend,
 Whatever name Thou deignest that we call.
 Art Thou not good and just?
 I wait, and watch, and trust
 That Love is still the holiest name of all."

[J. J. Murphy.]

"Forsake not."—Rather, "Nay, Thou never canst forsake." Delitzsch translates, "The undertaking of Thine own hands—Thou wilt not abandon it."

PSALM CXXXIX.

The casual reader would very naturally suppose that this Psalm, at least, was individualistic: but to the student such a view is quite impossible (see notes on vv. 3, 14, 17, 18, 24). It is the experience of Israel conscious of the Divine Presence (vv. 1—5), from which he could not escape if he would (vv. 7—12; cf. the story of Jonah). He feels that this distinguishing mark (v. 14 note) of the Divine Presence implies, on God's part, a great purpose for himself (vv. 13—18; cf. Browning's Poem, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*).

This thought fills him with indignation against the false prophets and apostates who are hindering the good purpose of God (vv. 19—22).

Finally he closes (vv. 23, 24) with four lines of prayer which sum up the four thoughts of the Psalm (see marginal notes).

The Psalm contains many Aramaic forms and many parallels with the Book of Job (see Job x. 7—11; xi. 7—11; xxiii. 8—10; xxvi. 6; xxviii. 24; xxxiv. 21 f.). There is, however, this important difference that, whereas in Job the Presence of God is regarded almost as a terror, that same Presence is by our Psalmist regarded as Israel's chiefest privilege and hope.

The key to the Psalm, in the Old Testament, is Exod. xxxiii. 15, 16 (see note on v. 14). The key to its Christian application is the Divine Indwelling in the Church accomplished through the Incarnation.

PSALM CXXXIX.

N.B. *The Aramaic words are marked with an asterisk.*

The All-searching
God (cf. Heb. iv.
12 f.).

- 1 O YHVH, Thou searchest* me and knowest.
2 THOU^b knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising;
Thou understandest my thought* from afar^c.
3 My journeying and reposing* Thou sifest;
Thou acquaintest^d Thyself with all my ways.
4 Though there be not a word*, in my tongue
Lo, YHVH, Thou knowest it all!
5 Thou hast beset me behind and before,
And hast laid Thine hand upon me.
6 [Too wonderful^e is knowledge for me ;
It is high, I cannot attain unto it.]

^a v. 23

^b Emphatic

^c Ps. cxxxviii.
6

^d Job xxii. 21

Misplaced, see v. 18.

^e Jud. xiii. 18:
cf. Job xlii. 3

v. 2. "my thought." The Aramaic word ܘܪܝܢܐ , "thought," is only found here and in verse 17, where it is used of God's thoughts. The Septuagint translate the word rightly in v. 2, but in v. 17 confuse it with ܘܪܝܢܐ "a friend." Jerome goes wrong in both instances, "malum meum" (v. 2), "amici tui" (v. 17).

v. 3. "Thou sifest." The verb properly denotes to winnow corn with a fan. It is constantly used of God as thus scattering Israel. The use of such a word seems to show that the Psalmist, while speaking as an individual, is thinking not of himself but of the nation.

"Thou acquaintest Thyself," not merely "Thou art acquainted." The Midrash quotes Job xiv. 16, "Thou numberest all my steps."

v. 4. "a word." The Aramaic form (*milla*) is only found in one other passage of the Psalter (xix. 4) but it occurs thirty-four times in the book of Job. The Septuagint, quite unnecessarily, have given it a bad sense.

v. 5. "Thou hast beset me..." The verb may either signify, "to besiege," "to beset" (E.V.; R.V.), or, "to frame" (as a potter, cf. Ex. xxxii. 4), hence "to fashion" (P.B.V.). Again, "Thou hast laid Thine hand upon me" may either denote, a laying of the hand in judgment, as when Job says "withdraw Thine hand from me" (xiii. 21, quoted in Midrash), or, possibly, a laying of the hand in blessing (Gen. xlviii. 14, 17; though here the word for hand is different).

On the whole it is more probable that the Psalmist intends, in both members of the verse, to picture the besetting power of God from which man cannot escape.

v. 6. ["Too wonderful &c."] These two lines interrupt the sense. I suggest that they have been misplaced and that their proper position is after v. 18^a, where they seem to be required (see note).

v. 9. The "sea," in Hebrew, also signifies "the West." The poet means that if he could imitate the flight of the winged Dawn from east to remotest west he could not so evade the eye of God.

v. 11. "darkness shall overcome me." The verb is only found here and in two other passages, viz. Job ix. 17, "He overcometh me with a tempest," and Gen. iii. 15 (*bis*), "It shall bruise (R.V. marg. lie in wait for) thy head, and thou shalt bruise (R.V. marg. lie in wait for) his heel" (E.V.). There is, however, an interesting passage (S. John i. 5) in which the Evangelist clearly had this verb in his mind, "And the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness overcame it not." The struggle between Light and Darkness is an emblem of the age-long struggle between the Seed of the woman and the Serpent. In both cases the final victory is sure. There is no reason (with Graetz, Duhm, Wellhausen) to change the text.

The verse ends abruptly and would be better balanced if we might here insert v. 18^b. It would then read, "Or should I say, Sheer darkness shall overcome me; and light around me become night. I awake, and am still with thee." Verse 11 would then have three lines like v. 12.

The God in Whom
we live and move.

7 Whither shall I go from Thy spirit?
And whither shall I flee^a from Thy presence?

^a Jon. i. 10

8 If I ascend* to heaven, Thou art there :
If I make my bed in Sheôl, lo, Thou art there.

9 If I take the wings of the Dawn,
And dwell in the furthest sea^b,

^b Job xxxviii.
16; or *west*

10 Even there Thy hand would lead me,
Thy right-hand would hold me.

11 Or should I say, Sheer darkness shall overcome me ;
And light around me become night—

See v. 18^b.

12 Yea darkness cannot darken from Thee,
But night shineth like day :
Darkness and light are as one !

The Potter and life's
wheel. This implies
a purpose.

13 Surely it was THOU^c that didst frame my reins ;
That didst weave me in my mother's womb.

^c Emphatic

14 I thank Thee, for that with terrible^d (deeds) I have been^d
singled^e out :

^d Ps. lxxv. 5
^e Ps. iv. 3

Wonderful are Thy works ;
As my soul knoweth well.

15 My frame^f was not hidden from Thee,
When I was made in secret,
Fashioned in the lowest parts of the earth.

^f *bone*

16 Thine eyes did see my life-roll,
And in Thy book they all were written,
Even the days that were formed,
So that not one of them tarrieth.

17 And, to me, how precious are Thy thoughts*, O God !
How vast the sum of them !

18 Would I tell them*?—they outnumber the sand !

^{*} Ps. xl. 5

Misplaced, see v. 11.

[I awake, and am still with Thee.]

v. 13—17. These verses are very similar to Job x. 8—12 which Bernard translates as follows :

- 8 "Thine *own* hands fashioned me and moulded me
Altogether round about ; and *now* Thou hast destroyed me !
9 Remember, I beseech Thee, that Thou didst mould me as the clay,
And that to dust Thou wilt cause me to return !
10 Didst Thou not pour me out like milk,
And curdle me like cheese ?
11 *With* skin and flesh Thou didst clothe me,
With bones and sinews fence me in.
12 *Life*—yea favour didst Thou grant me,
And Thy care preserved my spirit."

There is, however, this great difference, that whereas Job calls to mind God's care of him in the

Such a God must
cleanse away all evil
(cf. Ps. ci.).

19 Truly God^a shall slay* the wicked—
Ye bloodstained men, depart^b from me!—
20 Even those who speak (of) Thee for wickedness,
Thine enemies*, that take Thy Name in vain.
21 Should I not hate them, YHVH, that hate Thee?
And set myself against them that oppose Thee?
22 With a perfect hatred I hate them,
They are accounted as foes of my own.

^a *Eloah*

^b Ps. vi. 8,
note

past only to contrast it with the present, in which God has *rejected the work of His own hands* (v. 3), our Psalmist looks upon that same care as the pledge of a great purpose for good which exceeds his power of thought (vv. 17, 18) and which assures him that *God can never reject the work of His own hands* (Ps. cxxxviii. 8).

v. 14. "with terrible (deeds)." The word is used of those acts of redemption whereby God has manifested His choice of Israel (see Ps. lxxv. 5 note).

Dr Kay well says, "The *national* reference seems here unmistakable. *Noraath* is used in 2 Sam. vii. 23 (1 Chr. xvii. 21) of the 'terrible deeds' by which God 'redeemed Israel for a people to Himself.' So too in Deut. x. 21; Ps. cvi. 22. (Cp. Ps. xlv. 4, lxxv. 5, cxlv. 6; Is. lxiv. 2.)"

"*I have been singled out.*" The only other passage in which the Niphal of this verb is used is Ex. xxxiii. 16, "*so shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are on the face of the earth.*" The Hiphil of the same verb is used in Ps. iv. 3 (4), "*YHVH has singled me out as His loved one.*"

The translation of the E.V., R.V., and P.B.V., "*I am fearfully and wonderfully made,*" is without justification, and tends to obliterate the historical allusion to Israel.

The Sept. read a different text. Jer. "*terribiliter magnificasti me.*"

"*Wonderful are Thy works.*" Lit. "*wonders are Thy works.*" God's "*Wonders*" have, almost always, a reference to His dealings with the nation (Pss. xl. 5(6); lxxi. 17; lxxii. 18; lxxv. 1; lxxviii. 4, 11, 32; lxxxvi. 10; xcvi. 3; cv. 2, 5; cvi. 7, 22; cxi. 4 (note)).

v. 16. "*my life-roll.*" The only other passage in Biblical Hebrew in which this word is used is as a verb in 2 Kings ii. 8, "*and he wrapped (it) together.*" In the present passage the Greek versions translate the substantive as if it signified "*my unformed mass,*" "*my amorphous being.*" Thus, in later Hebrew, it signified "*the embryo*" (see Buxtorf's Lexicon).

But surely it is better to assume that the Psalmist used the word in the Biblical sense of "*that which is rolled together.*" We have a similar idea in Is. xxxviii. 12, "*I have rolled up, like a weaver, my life; from the warp he will cut me off*" (Cheyne's translation).

Thus I suggest that the Psalmist regards the *web* of life, or *life-roll*, as a ball not yet unrolled. In God's eyes this wrapped-up web of life is already open.

"*that were formed.*"—As the potter *forms* the clay. Compare Browning's Poem, *R. Ben Ezra*.

"*So that not one of them tarrieth.*" Lit. "*and there is not that tarrieth among them.*" I suggest תרין "*tarrieth*" instead of תרין "*one.*" This reading has the authority of Symmachus, οὐκ ἐνδεύουσιν οὐδέμῃς. On this Jerome says, "Hunc locum Symmachus ita transtulit: 'Dies quibus formati sunt, ne una quidem deest ex his.' Et est sensus: Omne tempus aetatis, cui jam ab exordio vitae istius sunt curricula deputata, certo fine decurrit: nec una dies aut plus aut minus est, quam tu conditor esse voluisti."

v. 17. "*And, to me, how precious...*" In the O.T. the *precious* promises of God are His thoughts and purposes for the nation (see notes on Pss. xxxvi. 7; xl. 5; xcii. 5; and cf. Jer. xxix. 11). In the present Psalm we must think especially of the promises to the House of David (see on Ps. cxxxviii. 2, 8). In the N.T. God's precious promises imply our participation in the Divine Nature (2 Pet. i. 4).

"*Thy thoughts.*" The Aramaic word for "*thought,*" only here and in v. 2, suggests a comparison between these verses: God understands man's thought "*from afar*" (v. 2), but man fails utterly to grasp the thought of God.

Search me! (*vv.* 23 Search^a me, O God^b, and know my heart;
1—4).
Know me! (*vv.* Test me, and know my inmost-thoughts^c;
5—12).
Cleanse me! (*vv.* 24 And see if any way of sorrow be in me;
19—22).
Perfect me! (*vv.* And lead me in the way everlasting.
13—18).

^a *v.* 1
^b *El*
^c Ps. xciv. 19
only

v. 18. The close parallel in Ps. xl. 5 should be noted, suggesting, as it does, that the speaker is not to be regarded as an individual but as a representative of the Nation.

If the transposition that I have suggested (on *v.* 6) be accepted, *v.* 18 would read, "*Would I tell them?—they outnumber the sand! Too wonderful is (their) knowledge for me; It is high, I cannot attain unto it.*"

[*"I awake, and am still with Thee."*] This line is clearly out of place, whereas it is needed to complete *v.* 11.

vv. 19—22. The Psalmist having contemplated God's exceeding great and precious promises to Israel, now breaks forth in indignation against those who hinder His good purposes.

The words are not the words of an individual. At the same time Christians would wish to express their hatred of evil rather in the spirit of *v.* 24.

v. 20. "*who speak (of) Thee.*" The text can scarcely be right. Most scholars, instead of *amar*, "*to speak,*" read here the *Hiphil* of *marah*, "*to rebel against,*" "*to provoke*" (cf. Pss. lxxviii. 40, 56; cvi. 7, 43).

v. 23. "*Search me.*" See Ps. xlv. 21 and Jer. xvii. 10 (with context).

"*my inmost-thoughts.*" The Hebrew suggests *the ramification of anxious-thoughts.* These *anxious-thoughts* are all open to such a God as is described in *vv.* 5—12. The only other passage in which this word occurs is in the closely parallel Psalm (xciv. 19), "*In the multitude of my inmost-thoughts, Thy consolations have delighted my soul.*" It may be worth noting that the group of *Psalms of the Kingdom* (xc.—xciv.) were read, in the triennial cycle, at the same season of the Jewish year as the present group; and also that, in both these groups, parallels with the Book of Job are strikingly numerous (see *Additional Note*, p. 399).

v. 24. "*way of sorrow.*" The word has two meanings: (a) "*sorrow*" (Is. xiv. 3; 1 Ch. iv. 9), (b) "*idols*" (Is. xlvi. 5). The best illustration is from Heb. xii. 15, where the "*root of bitterness*" (see Deut. xxix. 18) suggests the presence of idolaters or apostates in the Church. The words are not those of an individual Psalmist but of the Jewish Church, in the person of its ideal King (cf. *vv.* 19—22 and notes on Ps. ci.).

PSALM CXL.

Psalm cxl. has many points in common with the fast-day Psalms (see marginal references and note on *v.* 3), so much so that our Introduction to Ps. lxxi. (p. 295) might be repeated word for word. What we have there remarked about the fast of Purim would more especially apply in the present instance (see note on *v.* 11), not only because the enemy is a national enemy who, like Haman, works by slander, but because the position of the Psalm in the triennial cycle, coming as it does at the close of the year, agrees pretty accurately with Purim, the fast of the 12th month (see *Introduction, Influence of the triennial cycle upon the Psalter*).

Such Psalms as those of the present group might be regarded as Psalms of the Persecution, and when once their national character was forgotten they might be assigned "to David."

PSALM CXL.

Israel prays against the *cunning* of the traitor-foe (cf. Pss. x.; xxxv.; lv.; lviii.; lxiv. 1—6),

- 1 DELIVER ME, O YHVH, FROM THE EVIL MAN!
FROM THE MAN OF VIOLENCE^a PRESERVE ME!
2 Who devise^b evil^a with the heart;
Continually do they band^c for war.
3 They have whet their tongue like a serpent;
Adders' poison is under their lips^d.

^a plural

^b *v.* 4

^c or *stir up war*

^d See Rom. iii. 10 ff.

v. 1. "The man of violence." Three times in this Psalm (see *vv.* 4, 11). The context in each case shews that "man of violence" = "violent man" (as in Ps. xviii. 48). "Violence" is often applied to "false witness" (Deut. xix. 16; Ps. xxxv. 11) and denotes the cruelty of unjust accusations brought by the neighbouring nations against Israel (Obad. 10).

v. 3. "They have whet their tongue like a serpent," cf. Ps. lxiv. 3, "Who have whet their tongue like a sword." The verb probably denotes the rapid *doubling* movement of a sword upon a whetstone or of the tongue of a snake. Thus in Deut. vi. 7 it is used of the *repetition* of catechising and is translated (E.V.), "Thou shalt teach them diligently (marg. *whet* or *sharpen*)."

St Paul's quotation of this verse in Rom. iii. 10—18 is specially interesting as grouping together kindred Psalm-passages, thus:—

"There is none righteous, no, not one;" (Ps. xiv. 3; liii. 4).

"There is none that understandeth,

There is none that seeketh after God;

They have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable;

There is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one;" (Ps. xiv. 4 in substance).

"Their throat is an open sepulchre;

With their tongues they have used deceit;" (Ps. v. 9).

"The poison of asps is under their lips;" (Ps. cxl. 3).

"Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness;" (Ps. x. 7).

"Their feet are swift to shed blood;

Destruction and misery are in their ways;

And the way of peace have they not known;" (Is. lix. 7).

"There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Ps. xxxvi. 1).

and against his *violence* (cf. Pss. xxii.; xxxv. 7; lvii. 6; lxiv. 4 f.)

- 4 KEEP ME, O YHVH, FROM THE HAND OF THE WICKED!
FROM THE MAN OF VIOLENCE^a PRESERVE ME!
Who devise to thrust^b down my steps,
- 5 Proud-ones that have hid a snare for me, and cords,
They have spread a net by the wayside,
Traps have they set for me.
- 6 I say unto YHVH, Thou art my God^c;
O YHVH, give ear to the voice of my supplications^d.
- 7 O YHVH Adonai, the strength of my salvation,
Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.
- 8 Grant not, O YHVH, the desires^e of the wicked,
Let not his plan^f obtain. Let them (not) be exalted.
- 9 The venom of their feasts, the mischief^g of their lips, may
it cover them!
- 10 May He rain^h upon them burning coals,
May He cast them into the fire—
Into abysses where they shall not arise.

^a plural
^b Ps. cxviii. 13

^c *Eli*, Ps. xxii.
10
^d cf. Ps. v. 2

^e Aramaic
^f Ps. xxxvii.
12
^g Ps. vii. 17

^h Ps. xi. 6

v. 7. Aben Ezra explains that, "in the day of arming," God is a "helmet of salvation." (Cf. Eph. vi. 17.)

v. 8^b. Aben Ezra suggests that the word *al*, "let not," does double duty. This was probably what the Sept. intended, though they failed to translate it correctly. Hence the error of the P.B.V.

v. 9. Almost every word of this verse involves a difficulty. Thus, *rosh* may signify "the head," or it may signify "venom," "poison," "gall" (Deut. xxix. 18 (17); xxxii. 33; Job xx. 16; Ps. lxix. 21 (22), note). Indeed Sym. reads ὁ κικρασμός, Jer. *amaritudo*.

Again, *m'sibbi* (or *m'sibbam*, as the Sept. read) may either signify, "those that are round about (me or them)" or "(their) sessions (at table)" i.e. "their feasts." This reading is suggested by Graetz, "Das Gift ihres Rundgelages"; cf. Jerome, "*Amaritudo conviviarum meorum*." The Hebrew verb *sbb*, "to come round," "to encompass," was used, even in Biblical Hebrew, for "sitting at table," see 1 Sam. xvi. 11, "we will not sit round till he be come." In later Hebrew this was the general use (see Buxtorf).

Thus we may either read, with Jerome, "the venom of them that sit at table with me" (cf. Pss. xli. 9; lxix. 21, 22) or "the venom of their feasts." This rendering is the more probable from the fact that the enemies in question have (in v. 3) been compared to serpents with "poison under their lips." These enemies seem to be apostles or false prophets like those described in 2 Peter and Jude (cf. Pss. xiv. (liii); xxxv. 16; lv.; lix. 15).

v. 10. "May He rain." Adopting a slight change in the text as suggested by Hupfeld and approved by most modern scholars.

The Masoretic text would require "Let them (i.e. the avenging powers) cast down..."

"Into abysses." This word, which, in Biblical Hebrew, is only found here, seems, from *Mo'ed Katan*, i. 5 (quoted by Delitzsch), to signify some receptacle or pit in which dead bodies might be consumed. We naturally think of Dante's fiery tombs; see note on Ps. xlix. 14.

v. 11. "posthaste." The *substantive* only occurs here, but the *verb* is found in four late passages (Esth. iii. 15; vi. 12; viii. 14; 2 Ch. xxvi. 20). These passages from Esther would be a good illustration of the present verse.

In the first (Esth. iii. 15) "The posts went out *posthaste*" carrying Haman's cruel plan.

In the second (vi. 12) "Haman goes *posthaste* to his house, mourning."

In the third (viii. 14) "The posts went out...hurrying and *posthaste*" with the decree of vengeance.

In 2 Pet. ii. 12 the thought is similar.

Retribution comes
apace (cf. Pss. x. 11 ff.;
xxxv. 18 ff.; lv. 22 f.;
lviii. 10 f.; lxiv. 7—
10).

- 11 THE MAN OF SLANDER SHALL NOT BE ESTABLISHED IN
THE EARTH :
THE MAN OF VIOLENCE—EVIL SHALL HUNT HIM POST-
HASTE.
12 I know that YHVH will make good
The cause of the afflicted, the right of the needy.
13 But righteous-ones shall give thanks to Thy Name :
The upright^a shall dwell in Thy Presence.

^a Ps. xi. 7

PSALM CXLI.

This Psalm, like others of the group, is directed against the lurking temptation to apostasy (*v.* 4), which was not confined to the Greek age (cf. Is. lxv. 3 ff.; lxvi. 17).

It would seem to have been sung by the Levites at the time of the "Evening Oblation" (*v.* 2 note); it became *the* Evening Psalm of the Christian Church, and would well harmonise with the Collect "*Lighten our darkness....*"

PSALM CXLI.

Evening Prayer for
loyalty, in virtue of
the Sacrifice.

- 1 YHVH, I call Thee :—Hasten unto me !
Give ear to my voice while I call unto thee.
2 Let my prayer be set forth (as) incense before Thee ;
The lifting up of my hands (as the) Evening Offering^a.
3 Set, O YHVH, a watch before my mouth ;
A guard^b over the door of my lips.
4 Incline^c not mine heart to evil,
To work vile wickedness
Along with men that are workers of iniquity :
And may I never have a taste for their dainties.
5 The righteous may smite me in kindness, and reprove me ;
But let not the oil of the wicked enrich mine head.

^a Mal. i. 11

^b or *guard* *thou*

^c Ps. cxix. 36

v. 2. "*my prayer*," i.e. the prayer of the Congregation.

"*be set forth*." The word implies *an orderly arrangement*. It is used, 2 Ch. xxix. 35; xxxv. 10, 16, of the Service of God as "*set in order*" by the Levites.

"(as) *incense before Thee*." The reference may either be to the incense used with the *askara*, i.e. "*the memorial*" (see on Ps. xxxviii. p. 151 f. and p. 161), or it may refer to the incense offered Morning and Evening on the Golden Altar of Incense which stood in the Holy Place (Exod. xxx. 7 f., P).

In either case it will be seen that the Incense implies an Atonement (see also Nu. xvi. 46; Lev. xvi. 12 f.).

When the Priest burnt the Incense in the Holy Place the whole Congregation in the Outer Court, at a given signal, fell down in Prayer (Edersheim, *Temple*, p. 138; cf. Luke i. 10). At such a time we

Text very doubtful,
cf. Pss. xlix. 14; liii. 5.

For while yet my prayer was against their wickedness,
6 And they heard my words that were sweet,
Their judges were swallowed up^a by the rocks;
7 Their bones were scattered^b before Sheól,
As though one were cutting and cleaving^c in the earth.

^a See Sept.

^b Ps. liii. 5

^c Nu. xvi. 31

may suppose the Levites to have sung this Psalm. The very suggestive references to Incense in Rev. v. 8 f.; viii. 3 f. should be studied in this connexion.

"*The lifting up of my hands* (lit. *my palms*)." This is not a mere synonym for *prayer*. The only exact parallels are Pss. lxiii. 4 (see note, p. 264); cxix. 47; Lam. ii. 19; iii. 41.

Of these the first signifies *joyous acceptance of revelation*: the second, *the joyous acceptance of God's commandments*: the third and fourth, *passionate supplication with uplifted heart*.

When the word *kaph*, "*hand*" (lit. "*palm*"), is used with a verb denoting *prayer*, that verb is not "*to lift up*" but "*to spread forth*" (Ex. ix. 29, 33; 1 Kings viii. 22, 38, 54; 2 Ch. vi. 12, 13, 29; Ezr. ix. 5; Pss. xlv. 20; lxxxviii. 9; Is. i. 15).

Thus, by the "*lifting up of the hands*" our Psalmist implies an act of *self-oblation*. Compare Rom. xii. 1.

For other passages, in which the word for "*hand*" is not *kaph* but *yad*, see Pss. xxviii. 2; cxxxiv. 2 (note, p. 507); Neh. viii. 6.

"*Evening Offering*." *Minḥah*, "*offering*" or "*oblation*," constantly signifies "*a present*" (Gen. xliii. 11, 15, 25, 26; Judg. iii. 15, 17, 18; &c.). When used of an Offering to God in the earliest time (J) it might signify any kind whether animal sacrifice or otherwise (Gen. iv. 3 ff.); but, in later times (P) it came to denote the *meal-offering*, as distinguished from sacrifices involving shedding of blood (Lev. ii. 1 ff.). Thus, in the time of our Psalmist, the "*Offering*" consisted of fine flour cooked with oil but without leaven. But since this was offered Morning and Evening why does our Psalmist specify the "*Evening*" Offering? The "*Evening*" oblation was the time of Elijah's Victory (1 Kings xviii. 29, 36). It was the time chosen by Ezra for his great appeal (Ezr. ix. 4 f.). It was also the hour when Gabriel appeared to Daniel (Dan. ix. 21). In still later times the single word *Minḥah* came to signify the *evening oblation*. The Christian will remember *the evening oblation of Christ* (Mark xv. 33—37).

v. 3—5. Sirach xxii. 27—xxiii. 2 is, by some, supposed to contain a reference to our Psalm, as follows:

"Who shall set a watch over my mouth,
And a seal of shrewdness upon my lips,
.
.
.
Who will set scourges over my thought,
And a discipline of wisdom over mine heart?
That they spare me not for mine ignorances." (R.V.)

v. 4. The speaker is conscious of a temptation to apostasy of the vilest kind. If the speaker had been merely an individual such a temptation would scarcely have been conceivable; but if, as I believe, the words are spoken in the name of the Congregation then the prayer is mindful of the weaker members who may be tempted by the sensuous luxury of apostates.

"*Along with men*." The word for "*men*," *ishim*, suggests "*great men*," "*princes at wickedness*" as we might say.

"*workers of iniquity*," see also v. 9. The phrase is a very common one, especially in Psalms of this type (see Pss. v. 5; vi. 8; xiv. 4; lix. 2; lxiv. 2; xcii. 7, 9; xciv. 4, 16; ci. 8; cxxv. 5). In every case I believe it refers to apostates.

"*their dainties*." Rashi paraphrases thus: "*I will not be one-setting-at-table* (cf. Ps. cxl. 9) *at their feasts*." Undoubtedly the heretics are the same as those alluded to in the 9th verse of the preceding Psalm (cf. Is. lxxv. 3—5; 2 Peter and Jude).

v. 5—7. It is impossible to get any meaning from these words without taking some slight liberties with the text. The Septuagint gives, I think, a useful hint by translating *κατεβόησαν ἐχθμενα πέτρας οἱ κραιαὶ αὐτῶν*. Now the verb *καταβῆναι* is used by the Septuagint three times of the earth *swallowing up* Korah in that locus classicus for Apostates, Numb. xvi. 30—34, and also in Ps. cv. (cvi.) 17, "*The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan*." I suggest this as the key, and would paraphrase as follows:

- The Prayer resumed (cf. *v.* 1—4).
- 8 But unto Thee, YHVH Adonai, are mine eyes;
In Thee do I trust, pour not out my soul^a. a life
- 9 Guard me from the snare which they have laid for me;
And from the toils of the workers of iniquity^b. b *v.* 4
- 10 May the wicked fall into their own nets;
Whereas I^c—I pass on. c emphatic

'Even as Moses prayed against the wickedness of those apostates and, *while he was yet speaking* (Nu. xvi. 31), the ground "*clave*" under them and the earth "*swallowed them*," and they went down to "*Sheol*," even so I picture it again; these apostates will come to a speedy end' (cf. Jude, *v.* 11).

PSALM CXLII.

As to the primary meaning of this Psalm we may compare Ps. xxii. and other Psalms which speak of the sufferings of Israel and the glory that should follow through the gathering in of many souls to God (*v.* 7 note). It need scarcely be said that, if we regard Christ as the true expression of God's thought for Israel, since the Psalm refers to Israel it must have a still deeper and fuller application to Christ.

In the Latin Church it was appointed for use on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

PSALM CXLII.

- I appeal to Thee
in sore trouble.
- 1 "My voice is unto YHVH—I cry!
My voice is unto YHVH"^a—I make my supplication^b! a Ps. lxxvii. 1
b Ps. xxx. 8
c Ps. lxiv. 1;
d cii. (Title);
Ps. lxxvii. 3
- 2 I pour out my plaint^c before him
While "my spirit is overwhelmed^d" within me.
- See the dangers that
beset me!
- 3 Yea THOU knowest my path;
In this way wherein I walk
They have hidden for me a snare!
- Of the people there
is none with me! (cf.
Ps. xxii. 6—11).
- 4 Look unto the right hand, and see!
That there is none that acknowledges^e me!
All refuge has failed me,
And there is none that taketh thought for my soul. e Is. lxiii. 16

v. 4. "*Look unto the right hand*," i.e. (as the Midrash rightly explains) "See that there is none that recognises me or that stands at my right hand except Thyself."

"*that taketh thought*." Lit. "*that seeketh after*." The word is used in Jer. xxx. 17, "because they call thee an outcast, This is Zion whom *none seeketh after*."

Yet I am not alone
(cf. Ps. xxii. 19 f.).

5 I cry unto Thee, YHVH,
I say, Thou art my Shelter,
My Portion in the land of the living.

6 Give ear unto my cry
For I am brought very low ;
Deliver me from my persecutors
For they are too strong for me.

The end of this sor-
row will be a crown
of souls (cf. Ps. xxii.
12—31).

7 Bring forth my soul out of prison
To give thanks unto Thy Name.
Righteous-ones will gather round me as a crown^a
When Thou shalt deal bountifully^b with me.

^a Sept. differs

^b Pss. xiii. 6;
xviii. 20;
cxvi. 7;
cxix. 17

v. 5. "*My Portion.*" See Pss. xvi. 5; lxxiii. 26; cxix. 57, with Jer. x. 16; li. 19; Lam. iii. 24. It will be seen that, in every passage, the speaker is Israel.

v. 6. "*I am brought...low.*" In two other passages only in the Psalter is this verb used, viz. Pss. lxxix. 8; cxvi. 6. In the *Niphal* it is used of Israel *being impoverished* in Jud. vi. 6; Is. xvii. 4.

v. 7. The unusual word for "*prison,*" which occurs, in this sense, only here and in two late passages of Isaiah, recalls Is. xlii. 7 (see Graetz), "to bring forth the prisoners *from the prison.*" Here "*the prison*" signifies the bondage of body soul and spirit in the Captivity. That which Israel, as the "Suffering Servant," does *in part* Christ does *completely.*

The Title which assigns the Psalm to David *when he was in the Cave* was, doubtless, due to this verse.

"*will gather round me as a crown.*" Lit. "*will crown me*" (cf. Prov. xiv. 18). Thus St Paul pictures his converts as *his crown* (Phil. iv. 1; 1 Th. ii. 19). It is a frequent thought in the Psalms that God's deliverance of Israel will be a call to the righteous among the Gentiles (Pss. xxii. 23 ff.; xl. 3 (note); xlvii. 8 f.; lvii. 9 (note); lxxv. 5 (note); lxxvi.; lxxviii. 28 ff.; lxxxvi. 9). This fact is interesting especially in connexion with the reference to Is. xlii. 7 quoted in our last note.

If we apply the verse to Christ it would picture the fruits of His Resurrection.

PSALM CXLIII.

Anyone who will verify the marginal references will see that this Psalm is a mosaic of Psalm fragments, and also that it is most closely related to those Psalms which might be called Jonah Psalms. Thus, like others of this group, it would be very suitable for use in the Temple on national fast-days.

It is reckoned as the Seventh Penitential Psalm in the Christian Church, and is, in our Prayer Book, a Proper Psalm for Ash Wednesday.

PSALM CXLIII.

The Suffering Servant prays.	1 O YHVH, hear my prayer; Give ear to my supplications: In Thy Faithfulness ^a answer me, In Thy Righteousness ^a !	^a cf. 1 John i. 9
	2 And enter not into judgment with Thy Servant ^b ; For none that liveth can be righteous before Thee ^c .	^b v. 12 ^c cf. 1 John i. 8
He has gone down into the waters of death (Ps. lxxxviii. 5—7; Lam. iii.; Jon. ii.).	3 For an enemy pursueth my soul ^d ; Crusheth to the earth my very life; "Maketh me to dwell in deep darkness ^e , Like the age-long dead ^f ."	^d Ps. vii. 5 ^e Pss. lxxiv. 20; lxxxviii. 6, 18 ^f Lam. iii. 6
	4 "And my spirit is overwhelmed ^g "; My heart within me is dumfounded.	^g Ps. cxlii. 2; Jonah ii. 7 (8)
He "remembers YHVH" (Jon. ii. 7 (8); Ps. lxxvii. 11 f.).	5 I remember "the days of old ^h "; I meditate on all Thy doings: I muse ⁱ on the work of Thy hands;	^h Ps. lxxvii. 5 ⁱ Ps. lxxvii. 6, 12
	6 I spread out my hands unto Thee: My soul is unto Thee as a weary ^k land.	^k Ps. lxiii. 1

vv. 1, 2. Both here, and in the parallel passage 1 John i. 8, 9, the consciousness of sin is based on the recognition of God's perfection, "for merit lives from man to man, and not from man, O Lord, to Thee." But, at the same time, the one word "*Thy Servant*" implies a knowledge on the part of the speaker that he is called to share that perfection (see *v.* 12 and cf. Lev. xi. 44; Matt. v. 48) and that he has a claim upon the Righteousness and Faithfulness of God (cf. Ps. cxxx. *vv.* 1—4).

v. 3. "*Maketh me to dwell.....age-long dead.*" The words seem to be a verbal quotation from Lam. iii. 6, where, of course, the speaker is Israel.

The rare word "*deep-darkness*" also occurs twice in Ps. lxxxviii. (see references).

That which in the present Psalm is the work of "*an enemy*" is, in Lam. iii. 6 and Ps. lxxxviii., regarded as the work of God.

v. 4. "*is dumfounded.*" The verb has the double sense of *astonishment* (Dan. viii. 27) and *desolation*. It is used twice of the Divine wonder; Is. lix. 16, "*He wondered* that there was no intercessor"; Is. lxiii. 5, "*I wondered* that there was none to uphold." Cf. Matt. xxvi. 38.

v. 6. "*as a weary land.*" We have the same expression in Ps. lxiii. 1, "My soul thirsts for Thee,...Like a land parched and *weary* without water" (cf. Ps. xlii. 2). The earth longs for the rain; but the rain also longs for the earth (cf. Ps. lxxv. 9, note).

Neale quotes a fragment of Euripides, which he translates thus:

"The parched earth loves the rain,
And holy heaven, which is full of rain,
Loves upon earth to fall."

Heseeks the "Face"
of God toward him
(Ps. lxxxviii. 1-4),

and to be led by
Lovingkindness (Ps.
xxv. 4-7),

as when led by the
Spirit in the Wilder-
ness (Pss. xlii. 8;
xlili. 3; lvii. 3; Is.
lxiii. 9 ff.).

"For I am Thy
Servant" (cf. *vv.* 1,
2).

- 7 Speedily answer me, O YHVH;
My spirit fainteth:
Hide not Thy Face from me;
"Lest I become as those that go down to the Pit^a."
8 O let me hear Thy Lovingkindness in the morning^b;
For in Thee do I trust:
O let me know the way wherein I should walk;
"For, unto Thee, I lift up my soul^c."
9 Deliver me from mine enemies, O YHVH:
Unto Thee I betake me for refuge^d.
10 Teach me to do Thy good-pleasure;
For Thou art my God:
Let Thy good Spirit lead me
Into the level Land.

- 11 For Thy Name's sake, O YHVH, cause me to live:
In Thy Righteousness^e bring forth my soul out of affliction^f.
12 And in Thy Lovingkindness^g slay mine enemies,
And destroy all the adversaries of my soul;
For I am Thy Servant^h.

^a Ps. xxviii. 1,
lxxxviii. 4

^b Ps. xc. 14

^c Ps. xxv. 1,
lxxxvi. 4

^d See Sept.

^e *v.* 1

^f Jon. ii. 2

^g *v.* 8

^h *v.* 2; Ps.
lxxxvi. 16,
cxvi. 16

v. 7. "Speedily answer me." Compare Ps. lxix. 17 (in a passage parallel with Lam. iii. 55-63) and the penitential Psalm cii. 2. It will be noticed that these Psalms are of the Jeremiah type (cf. Ps. lxxxix. 8), i.e. they refer to Israel as the Suffering Servant.

"My spirit fainteth," i.e. *is consumed with longing*. (Cf. Pss. lxix. 3; lxxiii. 26; lxxxiv. 2; cxix. 81, 82, 123.)

v. 8. "in the morning" or "betimes." The P.B.V. has expressed both renderings. *The morning* is a type of the coming joy of Redemption. (See note on Pss. xxx. 5; xlvi. 5; xc. 14; xcii. 2; cxxx. 6.)

"I lift up my soul," cf. Ps. cxli. 2.

v. 10. "Thy good Spirit." The more strictly grammatical form occurs in Neh. ix. 20, where, after speaking of the Pillar of Cloud which God gave "to lead them" in the Wilderness, he adds, "Thou gavest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them."

"Let Thy good Spirit lead me." Compare Ps. xliii. 3, "Send forth Thy Light and Thy Truth, they shall lead me on," where again we have a reference to the Pillar of Cloud and to the Holy Spirit (see p. 178 f.).

In Is. lxiii. 10, 11, 14, the locus classicus for the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, the thought is again coupled with that Guidance whereby God led His People in the Wilderness.

"Into the level Land," lit. "Into the land of levelness" (cf. Ps. xxvii. 11). But since the word "level" has also the meaning of "equity" or "uprightness" the Psalmist's words have, as he intended, a double meaning. The "level land" into which he wishes to be led is the Land of Uprightness in which the "crooked" and "rough places" are made "level" by the Glory of God (Is. xl. 4; xlii. 16).

v. 11. "out of affliction." The "affliction" was, no doubt, the "deep-darkness" of *v.* 3 and the "prison" of Ps. cxlii. 7.

In both passages there is reference to Israel's house of bondage, but it does not follow from this that the Psalm was written in the Captivity.

The same word is used in the Psalm of Jonah (ii. 2), "I cried out of my affliction unto YHVH, and He answered me; out of the belly of Sheól I cried, and Thou didst hear my voice."

v. 12. "Thy Servant." A title of Israel (Baethgen).

PSALM CXLIV.

Duhm, Cheyne, and others maintain that this Psalm consists of two independent parts, Part I (*vv.* 1—11) being based chiefly on Ps. xviii. while Part II (*vv.* 12—15) is a fragment from some unknown source. It is, no doubt, true that Part I is a mosaic of passages from earlier Psalms, and especially from Ps. xviii., while Part II, which differs also in style and metre, is much more original. But I have endeavoured to shew that the whole Psalm is related, like Ps. xviii., to the "Blessing of Moses" in Deut. xxxiii. and that it has a distinct unity of its own, which we may briefly indicate as follows:—The high calling of Israel (*vv.* 1, 2) suggests the feebleness of man (*vv.* 3, 4). Hence it follows (*vv.* 5—8) that God Himself must come down (compare the thought in Browning's *Saul*). This new Redemption calls for a "*New Song*" (*vv.* 9—11). The New Song (*vv.* 12—15) recounts the blessings of a People redeemed by the Lord in the language of Deut. xxxiii. 28, 29.

PSALM CXLIV.

[*Aramaic words marked with an asterisk.*]

The high calling of Israel (Deut. xxxiii. 26 ff., cf. Ps. xviii. 37—48).

- 1 Blessed be YHVH "my Rock*,"
Who "traineth^b my hands for battle,"
My fingers for 'war.
2 My Merciful-one, and "my Fortress*,"
"My Tower," and "my Deliverer^c,"
"My Shield," and (the one) in Whom I take refuge;
"Who subdueth Peoples under me^d."

* Ps. xviii. 2;
xxxi. 3; lxxi.
3

^b Ps. xviii. 34

^c Ps. xviii. 2

^d Ps. xviii. 47

v. 1. "my Rock." The locus classicus is Deut. xxxii. 4. See also Ps. xviii. 1 f.

v. 2. "My Merciful-one." Lit. "My lovingkindness," i.e. "My God of lovingkindness." Cf. Ps. lix. 17, "For God is He that sets me on high, My merciful God (lit. the God of my lovingkindness)."

"My Tower." God is called by this title in Pss. ix. 9; xviii. 2; xlv. 7; xlvi. 3; lix. 9, 16, 17; lxii. 2, 6; xciv. 22.

"My Shield." The word is applied to God three times in Ps. xviii. (*viz.* *vv.* 2, 30, 35). The other Psalm passages are iii. 3; vii. 10; xxviii. 7; xxxiii. 20; lix. 11; lxxxiv. 9, 11; lxxxix. 18; cxv. 9, 10, 11; cxix. 114.

The locus classicus for God as the *Shield* of Israel is Deut. xxxiii. 29. This passage is evidently in our Psalmist's mind (see context and compare Ps. xviii. 1—3). The references of Deut. xxxiii. are most important for the study of this Psalm.

"Who subdueth." A rare verb; used only, in this sense, in one other passage, *viz.* Is. xlv. 1 "to subdue nations before him." In the parallel texts, Ps. xviii. 47, 2 Sam. xxii. 48, two other verbs are used.

"Peoples." This, and not "my people," is the right reading. Aquila, well, ὁ σπρώσας τοὺς λαοὺς ἰπ' ἐμέ. Jer. qui subjecit populos mihi.

This also is borne out by the parallel texts (Ps. xviii. 47; 2 Sam. xxii. 48), both of which read "peoples" with an obvious reference to the "Blessing of Moses" in Deut. xxxiii. 29 "So shall thine enemies pay thee homage (lit. "come cringing unto thee"; the same word as in Ps. xviii. 44 (45)) and thou shalt tread upon their high places" i.e. "march over them in triumph" (Driver).

The reference is not to God subduing David's own people under him, but to the subjugation of the nations of the world under the ideal "David."

Yet, what is man?
(cf. Pss. viii., xxxix.).

3 YHVH, what is man that Thou shouldst note him?
Mortal man, that Thou shouldst give him thought?

4 Man is like unto vanity^a;
His days like a shadow^b that passes.

^a Ps. xxxix. 5,
11

^b Pss. cii. 11;
cix. 23

Therefore God Him-
self must come (Deut.
xxxiii. 1, 26 f., cf. Ps.
xviii. 7—19).

5 O YHVH, bow Thy heavens and come down;
Touch the mountains that they smoke.

6 Let glitter Thy lightnings^c, and scatter^c them;
Send forth Thine arrows, and rout^c them.

^c Ps. xviii. 14

7 Send forth Thine hand from on high;
FREE* ME, AND DELIVER ME from many waters^d;
FROM THE HAND OF ALIENS^e;

^d Ps. xviii. 16

^e Ps. xviii. 44,
45

8 WHOSE MOUTH SPEAKETH VANITY,
AND THEIR RIGHT-HAND IS A RIGHT-HAND OF FALSEHOOD.

The new redemp-
tion calls for a "New
Song."

9 O God, I would sing a New Song^f unto Thee;
On the ten-string^g lute I would hymn unto Thee.

^f Ps. xxxiii. 3
note

10 He it is that giveth victory unto Kings:

^g Pss. xxxiii.
2; xcii. 3

That freeth* David His Servant from the hurtful sword.

11 FREE* ME AND DELIVER ME FROM THE HAND OF ALIENS;
WHOSE MOUTH SPEAKETH VANITY,
AND THEIR RIGHT-HAND IS A RIGHT-HAND OF FALSEHOOD.

The blessings of
Messianic times
(Deut. xxxiii. 28f.).

12 ...our sons as saplings
well-grown in their youth;

Our daughters as corner-pillars,
shaped palace-fashion;

13 Our garner^{*}s well-filled,
bursting with store^{*} and store^{*};

Our sheep bearing thousands
by myriads in our fields;

v. 12. If the present text be right we ought, with the Septuagint, to translate "*whose sons*," lit. "*which our sons*," exactly as in *v.* 8 "*Whose mouth*," lit. "*which their mouth*." The usual rendering "*In order that*" is very doubtful, very prosaic, and gives no sense. I have therefore left the word 𐤒𐤓 untranslated, though I suspect that the Psalmist wrote אשרי "*Happy are...*" with a reference to Deut. xxxiii. "*Happy art thou, O Israel....*" If this correction be accepted *vv.* 12—15 would be complete in themselves. See note on *v.* 15.

vv. 12, 13. Keble's version here is good:

"So may our sons as saplings grow
In youth's gay hour of bloom;
As pillar'd shafts our daughters shew,
In modell'd arch or dome.
Our garner full, aye dealing forth
Their treasure, store on store."

14 Our oxen fully-laden,
 with no breaking-down;
 No going^a forth (to war),
 no outcry in our streets.
 15 Happy^b is the People
 with whom it is thus!
 Happy is the People
 whose God is YHVH!

^a Amos v. 3^b Ps. cxlvi. 5

v. 14. "No going forth." The *fem. participle* refers, I think, to *the City*; as in Amos v. 3, "the City that went forth by a thousand," i.e. went forth *to war*. The participle is constantly used in this sense of *going forth to war*.

Keble renders:

"Our oxen burden'd; no decay,
 No exil'd wandering train,
 No sound of wailing by the way
 In street or lonely plain."

v. 15. "Happy is the People...." I suggest that the Psalmist alludes to Deut. xxxiii. 29, "*Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee? A People saved by YHVH, The Shield (see note on v. 2) of thy help..... So that thy enemies pay homage unto thee, And thou shalt tread on their high-places*" (see note on "Peoples," v. 2).

If this be so we see that the whole Psalm is a unity, being based on Deut. xxxiii., which, as we have seen, is also the basis of Ps. xviii.

PSALM CXLV.

This Psalm, being alphabetical, has been included in the group of Alphabetical Psalms in Part I. pp. 64—66. We may, however, note that the 2nd verse has been quoted in the *Te Deum*; and that vv. 15, 16 have been used as a Grace both in the Jewish Church (T. B. *Berachoth* 4^b) and in later Christian times. Thus Grünwald quotes a Latin Grace by G. Fabricius, as follows:—

*Omnium spectant oculi levatis
 Vultibus caelum veniam precantes,
 Inque te sperant dominum, creator
 maxime rerum.*

*Singulis vitam tribuis, procuras
 Singulis victum: nec eget quod undas
 Tranatat, transit per inane, ne quod
 vivit in agris.*

*Cuncta tu servas, recreas, et implet
 Viribus, verbo, benedictione,
 De manu cujus bona liberali
 omnia manant.*

PSALM CXLVI.

With this Psalm there commences the final group of the five Halleluyah Psalms which close the whole cycle of the Psalter. The leading thought of the present Psalm, and indeed of the whole group, is the happiness of Israel, who trusts in God and not in any human help (cf. Deut. xxxiii. 29). The group fitly ushers in the final Sabbath when God shall become King over His whole Creation.

It should be noted that the signs of the coming Kingdom are exactly those acts of Divine mercy (*vv.* 7—9) to which Christ twice appealed (Lk. iv. 18 f.; vii. 22).

Ps. cxlvi. is linked to Ps. cxlv. by a certain similarity of thought and language (see marginal references).

PSALM CXLVI.

Halleluyah!

	1 Praise "YHVH, O my soul ^a !"	^a Pss. ciii. 1. civ. 1
	2 I would praise "YHVH while I live; I would hymn unto my God while I have being ^b ."	^b Ps. civ. 33
The folly of trust in man.	3 Trust ye not in princes ^c ;— In man ^d in whom is no salvation:	^c cf. Ps. cxviii. 9 ^d <i>a son of man</i>
	4 Whose breath goeth forth (and) he returns to the ground ^e ; In the same day his plans ^f perish.	^e Gen. iii. 19; cf. Ps. civ. 29 ^f only here
The happiness of trust in God.	5 Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob; Whose hope ^g is (fixed) on YHVH his God,	^g Pss. cxix. 116; cxlv. 15
Signs of the coming Kingdom.	6 That maketh heaven and earth, the sea, And all that is in them; That keepeth ^h truth for ever;	^h Neh. ix. 32
	7 That doeth justice ⁱ to the oppressed ^j ; That giveth bread ^k to the hungry.	ⁱ See Ps. ciii. 6 ^j cf. Ps. cxlv. 15 f.

vv. 1, 2. These verses are identical with Ps. ciii. 1; civ. 1, 33, except that the verb "praise" is substituted for "bless" in *v.* 1, and for "sing" in *v.* 2.

v. 3. A characteristic thought of the Hallel: see margl. references. Wolsey and Strafford may well have quoted the words, but the Psalmist does not intend to imply any special fallibility in *princes*, but rather that man *at his best and strongest* is no stay on which to rest.

v. 4. "he returns to the ground." Lit. "to his ground," *i.e.* to the ground from whence he was taken.

The quotation in 1 Macc. ii. 62 f. is interesting:—"And be not afraid of the words of a sinful man; for his glory shall be dung and worms. To-day he shall be lifted up, and to-morrow he shall in no wise be found, because he is returned unto his dust, and his thought is perished."

vv. 6—7^b. "That maketh"... "That keepeth"... "That doeth"... "That giveth." These *present participles* remind us of the similar *participles* in Ps. ciii. 3—5, a passage which is actually quoted in *v.* 7.

Verse 6 is quoted in Acts iv. 24; xiv. 15. The thought of Creation as a pledge of Redemption is characteristic of Jeremiah (see notes on Pss. lxxiv. 17; lxxxix. 9 ff.).

- YHVH that looseth the prisoners!
 8 YHVH that giveth sight to the blind!
 YHVH "that uplifteth^a them that are bowed down^a!" ^a Ps. cxlv. 14
 YHVH that loveth the righteous!
 9 YHVH that guardeth the strangers^b! ^b Sept. *prose-*
 The orphan and the widow He lifteth^c up *lytes*
 And the way of the wicked He perverteth^d. ^c Ps. cxlvii. 6
^d Job viii. 3;
 Eccl. vii. 13
 The Kingship of 10 "YHVH shall-become-King for ever^e!" ^e Ex. xv. 18
 God, and the Song
 of Moses. Thy God, O Zion, for all generations.
Halleluyah.

v. 7^c. The word "*prisoners*" must here, as in Ps. cvii. 10 ff., be understood as referring to the Captivity. Cf. Is. xlii. 7, "*To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison...*," also Is. xlix. 9; lxi. 1. It should be noted that these attributes of God are, in the Second Isaiah, ascribed to the Messiah.

v. 8^a. "*giveth sight to the blind.*" Lit. "*openeth (the eyes of) the blind.*"

Another distinct reference to the Second Isaiah. Cf. Is. xxxv. 5, "*Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened.*" See also Is. xxix. 18; xlii. 7, 16, 18, 19; xliii. 8. In all these passages blindness is moral rather than physical. The Sept. translate "*The Lord maketh wise the blind*" giving the word that sense of mental illumination which it has in late Hebrew (see Buxtorf) and, possibly, in Ex. xxiii. 8. Jerome takes this view:—"Si de caecis istis loqueretur, debuit dicere, Dominus illuminat caecos. Sed non dixit hoc: sed secundum hebraicam et graecam veritatem quid dixit? *Dominus sapientes facit caecos.*" [*Tract. de Ps. cxlv.* ed. Morin.]

v. 8^b. The rare words "*uplifteth*," "*bowed down*," mark a distinct allusion to Ps. cxlv. 14. The five attributes of God in that Psalm (see notes on p. 66) should be compared with the five titles of YHVH in *vv.* 7^c—9^a of the present Psalm.

vv. 6—9^a. The verse division here is misleading.

There is, I believe, a relationship between the five titles of God in *vv.* 6—7^b and the five titles in *vv.* 7^c—9^a. Thus:—

v. 6^a. The Creator of heaven, earth, and sea.
v. 6^b. The Giver of life to all creatures.
v. 6^c. The Keeper of covenant and mercy.
v. 7^a. The Righter of wrong.
v. 7^b. The Giver of food to the hungry.

v. 7^c. The Redeemer from captivity.
v. 8^a. The Restorer of spiritual sight.
v. 8^b. The Uplifter of the fallen.
v. 8^c. The Lover of good men.
v. 9^a. The Guardian of the weak.

v. 10. Note the quotation from the Song of Moses.

The *Kingship of God upon earth* is ever a thought of the final Sabbath. We have seen it to be a characteristic of the Korah Psalms (Part II. *Introd.* p. x.; Pss. xlv. 4, p. 183 f.; xlvii. p. 200 f.) and also of a group of Psalms xciii.—c. (see xciii. 1, p. 392 f.; xciv. p. 401; xcvi. 10; xcvi. 1; xcix. 1).

It should be noted that in the reading of the Psalms in the triennial cycle both these groups come at the conclusion of a year, exactly as the present group does. See Part III. *Introd.* on the Influence of the triennial cycle.

PSALM CXLVII.

A lovely Psalm in three closely related Parts. Each Part begins with a call to praise (cf. *vv.* 1, 7, 12). If we compare Part I. (*vv.* 1—6) with Part III. (12—20) we find the same three leading thoughts:—(a) *God as the Builder of Jerusalem* (cf. *vv.* 2, 3 with 13, 14), (b) *God as shewing His power in Creation* (cf. *vv.* 4, 5 with 15—18), (c) *God as caring chiefly for His People*. But though these leading thoughts are identical the reader will note a progression; the *Builder* in Part I. (*vv.* 2, 3) becomes the *Restorer* in Part III. (*vv.* 13, 14); the *Creator of the stars* in Part I. (*vv.* 4, 5) is, in Part III. (*vv.* 15—18), the *Provider of fruitful seasons*, whose wind and rain are types of His Spirit's activity, while the *care of God for His People* which He manifests in Part I. as "*the Uplifter of the meek*" (*v.* 6) becomes, in Part III., the gift of Revelation (*v.* 19).

If, after comparing Parts I. and III., we turn to Part II. (*vv.* 7—11) we shall find that though the thought of God as *the Builder of Jerusalem* is absent yet the two other thoughts of Parts I. and III. are harmonised. Thus, in *vv.* 8, 9 God is seen as the *Creator and Provider*, while *vv.* 10, 11 remind us that His strength is made perfect in weakness. Thus *vv.* 10, 11 are needed to explain both *v.* 6 and *v.* 19 f.

The whole Psalm might be called the Psalm of the Faithful Creator. Compare Ps. xxxiii.

PSALM CXLVII.

(Part I.)

Cf. <i>vv.</i> 7, 12.	1 <i>Halleluyah.</i> " <i>For He is good</i> ^a ." Hymn unto our God, for it is lovely; Befitting is the Praise-song.	^a Pss. cvii. 1; cvii. 1; cxviii. 1; cxxxv. 3; cxxxvi. 1
He is the Builder of His fallen City (<i>vv.</i> 13, 14).	2 He that buildeth Jerusalem is YHVH; "Israel's scattered ones He gathereth together" ^b ; 3 He is the Healer of the broken-hearted ^c ; And One that bindeth up their sorrows.	^b Is. lvi. 8 ^c Is. lxi. 1

v. 1. See note on Ps. cxxxv. 3, which is almost identical.

v. 2. *God is building—God is gathering together.* The two thoughts are really one; see note on Ps. cxvii. 1, p. 492, and observe the reference to the promise of the Second Isaiah.

v. 3. Another allusion to the Second Isaiah; where, however, the title is given not to God but to His Anointed (cf. Lk. iv. 18 ff.). See also Ps. cxlvi. 7^o, 8.

His Providence is
shewn in Creation
(*vv.* 8, 9; 15—18).

- 4 He counteth the number of the stars,
“And nameth them all by names^a.”
5 Great is our Lord and “mighty in strength^a”;
“There is no limit to His understanding^b.”

^a cf. Is. xl. 26

^b cf. Is. xl. 28

Yet chiefly in His
care for His People
(*vv.* 10 ff.; 19 f.).

- 6 YHVH is the Uplifter of the meek,
While He bringeth low^c the wicked to the ground.

^c 1 Sam. ii. 7

(Part II.)

Cf. *vv.* 1, 12.

- 7 Respond ye to YHVH with the Thanksgiving;
Hymn ye to our God with the harp.

His Providence is
shewn in Creation
(*vv.* 4 f.; 15—18).

- 8 He that o'ercovers the heavens with clouds,
That prepareth rain for the earth,
That maketh the mountains spring with grass,
9 That giveth to the beast its food,
(And) to the young ravens when they cry.

His chief delight is
in His People (*vv.* 6;
19 f.).

- 10 Not in the might of the horse is His joy;
Nor His pride in the warrior's limbs.
11 YHVH's pride is in them that fear Him,
That await His Lovingkindness.

vv. 4, 5. In thus mentioning the stars the Psalmist has in mind not only the promise to Abraham (Gen. xv. 5, E) but also, and more especially, Is. xl. 26 ff., “Who hath created these? He who bringeth forth their host by number; to all of them He giveth names...there is no searching of His understanding.” See the whole context, with the same allusion to God's care for Israel. He who shepherds the stars is, by a still dearer title, the Shepherd of Israel.

v. 6. “the Uplifter.” The same rare word as in Ps. cxlvi. 9, a verse which is closely parallel. Compare also the *Song of Hannah* and the *Magnificat*.

v. 7. “Respond ye...with the Thanksgiving.” The “Thanksgiving” (*Thoda*) was itself a musical procession (see notes on Ps. l. 14, 23, p. 219 f.; Ps. xciv. 2, p. 402). If the present Psalm was used at the Dedication of the Walls by Nehemiah then the two “thanksgiving processions” (Neh. xii. 31) would certainly “respond” to one another. In any case *v.* 7 “responds” to *v.* 1 and to *v.* 12.

v. 8^c. There is an interesting note on the adaptation of mountain grasses in Hugh Macmillan's “*Bible Teachings in Nature*.”

The P.B.V., following the Sept., adds the line, “And herb for the use of men,” which is borrowed from Ps. civ. 14.

v. 11. “That await His Lovingkindness.” He who feeds the young ravens (*v.* 9) that look to Him for food will not forget His own children.

(Part III. A separate Psalm in the Sept.)

- Cf. *vv.* 1, 7. 12 Glorify^a YHVH, O Jerusalem!
Praise Thy God, O Zion! ^a Ps. cxvii. 1
- He is the Builder
of His fallen City
(*vv.* 2 f.). 13 For He hath strengthened the bars of thy gates;
He hath blessed thy children within thee.
- 14 He maketh thy border Peace;
He filleth thee "with the fat of wheat^b." ^b Deut. xxxii. 14
- His Providence is
shewn in seasons of
refreshing (*vv.* 4 f.;
8 f.). 15 He sendeth forth His message^c to the earth;
His word^d runneth very swiftly. ^c Deut. xxxii. 2
- 16 He giveth snow like wool^e;
He scattereth the hoarfrost^f like ashes. ^d *v.* 18
- 17 He casteth forth His ice^g like crumbs:
Before His cold who^h can stand^h? ^e Is. i. 18
- 18 He sendeth forth His wordⁱ, and melteth them;
He letteth His wind^j blow and the waters flow. ^f Ex. xvi. 14;
Job xxxviii. 29
- His chief manifes-
tation is for His own
People (*vv.* 6; 10 f.). 19 He sheweth His word unto Jacob,
His statutes and judgements unto Israel. ^g i.e. *hail*
- 20 He hath not dealt so with any nation:
And as for His judgements—they know^k them not. ^h or, *the waters stand*

Halleluyah.

v. 14. "He maketh thy border Peace." See the Babylonian Hymn quoted on Ps. cxxxii. 6, p. 484. In *vv.* 14, 15 the allusions to Deut. xxxii. should be specially noticed with reference to the fact that in the triennial cycle the present group of Psalms was appointed for use in the Temple at the same season in which Deut. xxxii., xxxiii. were being read as the 'special lessons.' See Introduction, *Influence of the triennial cycle.*

v. 15. "His message," Jer. "eloquium suum." The word *imra* occurs nineteen times in Ps. cxix. where we have translated it "Oracles" (see p. 51 f.) generally with a sense of the Divine *promise*. See also Pss. xii. 6, p. 71; xviii. 30, where the allusion to Deut. xxxii. 4 should be noted. It occurs in Deut. xxxii. 2 where it is translated "speech." Thus:—"Give ear, ye heavens, and I will speak: And let the earth hear the words of my mouth: My doctrine shall drop as the rain, *My speech* shall distil as the dew." If we bear in mind this passage we shall better understand the words of our Psalm, "He sendeth forth His *message* to the earth." The dew and rain are, in Nature, an emblem of the *message* of Revelation (see Is. lv. 10 f.; lxi. 11).

"runneth." St Paul may have had this verse in his mind when he wrote 2 Thess. iii. 1 "that the word of the Lord may run" (R.V.).

v. 16. "snow like wool." Neale quotes Martial, *Epig.* iv. 3:—

"Aspice quam densum tacitarum vellus aquarum
Defluat."

"See, what a thick fleece of silent waters falls."

But the Psalmist does not mean *like wool in warmth* but *like wool in whiteness* (Is. i. 18). It is quite true that snow and ice do their part in preparing for the Spring, but that thought is here latent; we must fix our minds rather upon the rigour of Winter and the breaking up of the frost in Spring (*v.* 18). Such a season Israel had experienced in the Return from Babylon.

v. 17^b. Duhm and Cheyne (1904) read, "By reason of his frost the waters stand still." This is tempting, as it necessitates only a slight change in the Hebrew, and it explains "melt them" in the next line.

PSALM CXLVIII.

The two Parts of this Psalm are clearly marked (compare *v.* 1 with *v.* 7), each Part being summed up in the same Refrain (*v.* 5 and *v.* 13). Part I. (*vv.* 1—6) records the Glory of God *in heaven*, where, however, His creatures are constrained by an *unbreakable law* (*v.* 6). Part II. (*vv.* 7—14) calls upon *earth* through all its voices, and above all through its high priest, Man (*vv.* 11, 12), to imitate this praise of heaven, but without its constraint (contrast *v.* 14 with *v.* 6). How different is the desponding verse of Keble!

“All true, all faultless, all in tune,
Creation’s wondrous choir,
Opened in mystic unison,
To last till time expire.
And still it lasts; by day and night,
With one consenting voice,
All hymn Thy glory, Lord, aright,
All worship and rejoice.
Man only mars the sweet accord,
O’erpowering with harsh din
The music of Thy works and word,
Ill-matched with grief and sin.”

Our Psalmist does not appear to follow the order of Creation in Genesis i. (compare notes on Ps. ciii. 19—civ.); but see note on *v.* 2. The *Benedicite* and the *Te Deum* are both moulded on the pattern of our Psalm, as also the beautiful Hymn of Praise in the Preface to the Clementine Liturgy (quoted by Neale).

PSALM CXLVIII.

Part I. (“as in heaven”).

- Praise in the height. 1 Praise ye YHVH from the heavens :
Praise ye Him in the Highest.
2 Praise ye Him, all His angels^a :
Praise ye Him, all His host^b.
3 Praise ye Him, sun and moon :
Praise ye Him, all stars of light.
4 Praise ye Him, ye heavens of heavens ;
And ye waters that are above the heavens.
5 LET THEM PRAISE THE NAME OF YHVH :
For HE^c commanded and they were created.
6 And He stationed them for ever and for aye :
He gave them a decree unbreakable^d.

All creatures are stationed to serve (cf. *v.* 14).

^a Ps. ciii. 20

^b Gen. ii. 1 ;
Ps. ciii. 21

^c Emphatic

^d cf. Ps. civ. 9

Part II. ("so on earth").

Praise in the depth
(cf. v. 1).

- 7 Praise ye YHVH from the earth :
Ye monsters and all depths :
8 Fire and hail, snow and vapour :
Storm-wind^a that worketh His word^b :
9 Ye mountains and all hills ;
Fruit-trees and all cedars ;
10 Beasts and all cattle ;
Creeping things and winged birds :

^a Ps. cvii. 25
^b cf. Ps. ciii. 20

Praise from man.

- 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples ;
Princes and all judges of the earth :
12 Young men as well as maidens ;
Old men along with children :
13 LET THEM PRAISE THE NAME OF YHVH :
For His Name alone is exalted ;
His majesty is over earth and heaven.
14 And He hath set up the horn for His People,
Even praise for all His saints^c,
For the children of Israel, the People near unto Him.

^c *His beloved*
Ps. cxlix. 9

Israel is stationed
to praise (cf. v. 6).

Halleluyah.

v. 2. The close parallel in Ps. ciii. 20 f. should be carefully noted.

If after v. 2 we might insert v. 8 Parts I. and II. would be exactly uniform, each consisting of five verses before the Refrain.

v. 5. The P.B.V., following the Sept., here inserts a line, "*For he spake the word and they were made,*" which is not in the Hebrew, but which seems to have been borrowed from the parallel passage in Ps. xxxiii. 9.

v. 6. Compare and contrast the service man must offer (v. 14). "*Grandis hominis honor, et grandis infelicitas*" is the comment of Jerome. St Jerome seems to have observed that the first half of the Psalm ends with this verse, for he says;—"Dixit de invisibilibus, dixit et de visibilibus, sed de visibilibus caelestibus: nunc etiam de terra. Videte ordinem laudationis. Primum laudant invisibilia, deinde visibilia et ipsa visibilia dividuntur in duo, in caelestia et in terrestria. Dixit de caelestibus, nunc dicit de terrestribus. *Laudate Dominum de terra*" [*Tract. de Ps. CXLVIII*, Morin, p. 309].

v. 7. "*Ye monsters,*" E.V. "*dragons*" (as in Is. xxvii. 1, li. 9, &c.) The word is translated "*whales,*" in the work of the fifth 'Day' (Gen. i. 21); but our Psalmist uses it here in contrast to the creatures "*from the heavens*" in v. 1.

"*all depths.*" The "*depths,*" here almost personified, are again contrasted with "*in the highest*" (v. 1).

v. 13^c. "*His majesty is over earth and heaven.*" The nearest parallel is Ps. viii. 1, "*...Thy majesty upon the heavens,*" where also the reference is to the work of man in Creation in praising God.

v. 14. "*He hath set up the horn for His People,*" i.e. He hath given them a high post of honour. (Cf. 1 Sam. ii. 1, 10; Luke i. 68.)

"*Even praise...*," lit. "*praise-song.*" This is the distinction of Israel, to sing God's praise. So the next Psalm (v. 1) says, "*His praise is in the congregation of the saints.*"

"*The People near unto Him.*" When man is said to be "*near*" to God in the O.T. the word implies *ministry*, e.g. Lev. x. 3, "I will be sanctified *in them that are near Me*" (i.e. in my priests);

PSALM CXLIX.

The final victory of the word of God is depicted in this Psalm, a victory which is based upon the Song of Moses in Deut. xxxii. and is expounded in Rev. xix.

PSALM CXLIX.

Praise God with a new 'Song of Moses.'

1 "Halleluyah^a."

Sing unto YHVH a New Song.^b

(Let) His praise^b (be) in the congregation of the saints^b.

2 Let Israel rejoice in his Maker^c:

Let Zion's sons exult in their King.

3 Let them praise Him in the dance^d;

With tabret and harp let them hymn unto Him.

4 For YHVH is well pleased with His People,

And beautifies the Meek with salvation.

^a Rev. xix. 1

^b Ps. cxlviii. 14

^c Deut. xxxii. 15

^d cf. Ex. xv. 20

Ezek. xlii. 13, "the priests *that are near unto YHVH*" (i.e. those who are actually ministering); Ezek. xliii. 19, "The priests, the Levites...*which are near unto Me* (E.V. "*which approach unto Me*") to minister unto Me." Thus we might paraphrase the verse of our Psalm as follows: 'He hath greatly exalted His People in that He hath made them a Nation of Priests to offer to Him continually the Praise-song of the whole Creation.'

There is a truth in what St Jerome says:

"O homo, universa haec quae dixi, cujus causa facta sunt? Bestiae, serpentes, ligna fructifera, volucres pennatae: haec universa in eo laudant Deum, quia non mutant naturam suam. Praeceptum enim posuit, et non praeteribit. Imitare ergo ea quae tibi serviunt. Illa facta sunt ut tibi serviant; tu factus es ut Deo servias."

But we feel that this is only half the truth. The unconscious worship of the whole creation tends, even now, through man, to become conscious: and we look to such an end as is pictured in Rom. viii. 19—21.

v. 1. On the "New Song" in relation to the "Song of Moses" see notes on pp. 83 ff. 140, 363, 379, 389, 406, 415.

"the congregation of the saints." The Hebrew word "saints" (*Hasidim*) undoubtedly gave rise to the sect of the *Hasidaeans* in the time of the Maccabees (1 Macc. ii. 42, "a company of *Hasidaeans*, mighty men of Israel, every one that offered himself willingly for the law," cf. vii. 13 etc.). It would, however, be quite uncritical to assume that our Psalm was Maccabean simply from the occurrence of such a phrase: indeed the context ("Israel," "Zion's sons") excludes the thought of a mere sect (cf. v. 9).

v. 2. "Maker"... "King." Both titles refer to the "Song of Moses." Thus "God his Maker" occurs in the Song of Moses in Deut. xxxii. 15, while the ground passage for the *Kingship* of God is in the Song of Moses in Exod. xv. 18, "YHVH shall become King for ever and ever."

v. 4. "well pleased." The same word is used for the Suffering Servant by the Second Isaiah (xlii. 1), "Mine elect in whom My soul is well pleased," and is directly applied to Christ in Mt. xii. 18; cf. xvii. 5; Mk. i. 11.

The Psalmist has already used this word in Ps. cxlvii. 10 f., which we might literally translate "Not in the legs of a man is He well pleased. YHVH is well pleased with them that fear Him."

Such Praise is the sword of the Kingdom.

- 5 Let the saints be joyful in glory ;
Let them be jubilant on their beds.
6 Let the high-praise^a of God^b be in their mouth,
Even a two-edged sword^c in their hand ;
7 To work vengeance^d upon the nations,
Vindications upon the peoples ;
8 To bind their kings in chains^e,
Their nobles in fetters of iron ;
9 To work upon them the judgement decreed^f.
He^g is the glory^h for all His saints.

Halleluyah.

- ^a Ps. lxvi. 17
^b *El*
^c Rev. xix. 15
^d Deut. xxxii. 41: cf. Rev. xix. 2
^e Is. xlv. 14

- ^f *written*
^g or *It is*
^h Deut. xxxiii. 17

“*And beautifies the Meek with salvation.*” The Transfiguration is the best illustration. See texts quoted above.

In every passage in which the Second Isaiah speaks of God as “*beautifying*” (E.V. “*glorifying*”) Israel it is always with the thought of the conversion of the Gentiles (Is. lv. 5; lx. 9, 7, 13, 21).

v. 5. “*in glory*”...“*on their beds.*” The rule of Hebrew poetry would lead us to expect here either antithesis or parallelism. It is not easy to see either.

v. 6. “*high-praise.*” Sym. at ὑμολογίαι. Such praise is itself a weapon, whether against sorrow (Ps. lxvi. 17 note) or against *external foes* (2 Chr. xx. 21 f.).

“*Even a two-edged sword.*” The parallelism suggests apposition. The “*high-praise of God*” is itself the “*two-edged sword,*” as Rashi here notes. Compare Is. xlix. 2, “*He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword.*” We must not forget that in an earlier Psalm of the present group (cxlvii. 15 ff.) our Psalmist has spoken of the *swift running word* (message) of God in Nature and in Revelation just as the writer of the Hebrews (iv. 12) speaks of the “*word (message) of God*” as “*living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword.*”

v. 7. “*vengeance.*” Three times in the Song of Moses (Deut. xxxii. 35, 41, 43) the “*vengeance*” of God is promised against the nations.

“*Vindications.*” The root-meaning of the word is that of “*convincing*” or “*convicting.*” Thus, whatever may have been the thought in the Psalmist’s mind, the verse lends itself to that ‘*conviction*’ of sin which is the true ‘*vengeance*’ of God’s Love (John xvi. 8). Aben Ezra thus explains this verse, “*The meaning is to bring them back ‘to serve God with one consent.’ And this will be in the days of the Messiah.*”

v. 8. “*To bind their kings in chains.*” A text much loved by fanatics. But is it by any means certain that the Psalmist is speaking bare literal prose? May he not have intended to allude to that prophecy of the conversion of the nations (Is. xlv. 14) with which he must certainly have been familiar?—“*The labour of Egypt...and the Sabeans, men of stature, shall pass over unto thee, and shall become thine; they shall come after thee; in chains shall they pass over...saying, God is in thee, and there is no other God beside.*” A Psalmist who in v. 4 recognised the deep teaching of the Second Isaiah ought surely to be interpreted here also by the same standard.

v. 9. “*the judgement decreed.*” What was this? We naturally look to the “*Song of Moses*” in Deut. xxxii., which is the basis of the whole Psalm; there we find

“Of a truth I whet My glittering sword,
And Mine hand shall lay hold on judgement;
I will render vengeance (cf. v. 7) to Mine enemies,
And will repay them that hate Me.

Rejoice, O ye Nations, His People;
For He will avenge the blood of His servants,
And will render vengeance to His adversaries,
And will atone His Land, His People.”

[Deut. xxxii. 41 ff.]

The thought which underlies the "*Song of Moses*," whether in Exod. or in Deut., is *the final triumph of the Kingdom of God*. No doubt the mode in which this was to be brought about appeared differently to the saints of the Old Testament:—

"To (them) it glar'd afar,
A token of wild war,
The banner of (their) Lord's victorious wrath :
But close to us it gleams,
Its soothing lustre streams
Around our home's green wells, and on our churchway path."

But though the point of view in the O.T. was different from that in the N.T. it is easy to exaggerate this difference.

PSALM CL.

It is not an accident that the final Halleluyah-Psalm, which closes the whole Cycle of the Psalter and forecasts the Sabbath of Creation, should itself be "*ten-string*" (Pss. xxxiii. 2, xcii. 3, cxliv. 9), containing as it does *ten* successive lines beginning with the word "*Hallelu*," "*Praise ye*." Whatever the modern reader may think as to the significance of numbers there can be no question but that the *ten* 'Words' of Creation, the *ten* 'Words' of Sinai, the special use of *ten* in the Priest-code and in the Alphabetical Psalms (pp. 34, 40, 139), the *ten* Sefiroth¹ of the Kabala, the *ten* Heavens of Dante, are all directly related to the same thought which has its origin in the natural religion of the Calendar.

¹ The Sefiroth were as follows:—1 *Kether*, "the Crown"; 2 *Hachma*, "Wisdom"; 3 *Binah*, "Understanding"; 4 *Chesed*, "Lovingkindness"; 5 *Din*, "Judgement"; 6 *Tifereth*, "Beauty"; 7 *Netsach*, "Triumph"; 8 *Hôd*, "Majesty"; 9 *Yasod*, "Basis" (cf. *Primum Mobile*); 10 *Malkuth*, "The Kingdom." The reader is asked to compare these ten spheres of thought with the ten *Hallelus* of the Psalm.

PSALM CL.

Halleluyah.

- 1 Praise ye God^a in His Sanctuary;
Praise Him in the firmament of His power:
- 2 Praise Him in His mighty deeds^b;
Praise Him according to His abundant greatness:
- 3 Praise Him in the blast of the trumpet^c;
Praise Him in the lute and harp:
- 4 Praise Him in the tabret^d and dance^d;
Praise Him in the stringed instruments and pipe:
- 5 Praise Him in the clang^e of fame;
Praise Him in the clang of shouting:
- 6 Let everything^f that hath breath praise Yah.

^a *El.*^b Ps. lxxi. 16.^c i.e. *ram's horn.*^d 1 Sam. xviii. 6; Ps. cxlix. 3.^e or *cymbals*, 2 Sam. vi. 5.^f Rev. v. 13.*Halleluyah.*

v. 1. "*His Sanctuary.*" We need not confine the thought to the earthly Temple. See note on Ps. lxiii. 2.

v. 2. The prefix ך, which is here translated "*according to,*" is so similar to ך "*in,*" which occurs in all the other nine lines (*vv. 1—5^b*), that we are driven to suspect the text. Surely "*in*" would be better.

It is true that this prefix ך might be translated "*in*" or "*with*" &c.: but to translate it, as the R.V. does, in these nine lines by "*in*" (*v. 1*) "*for*" (*v. 2*) "*with*" (*vv. 3, 4*) "*upon*" (*v. 5*), destroys the unity of thought for the English reader.

v. 3. "*the trumpet,*" or "*cornet*" (*shōphar*) is mentioned in three other passages in the Psalter (xlvii. 5 (6); lxxxi. 3 (4); xcvi. 6) always with reference to the Kingship of God upon earth (see notes).

v. 5. "*the clang.*" The Hebrew word (*tz'latzal*) is onomatopoeic. In Is. xviii. 1 it should be translated "*clanging,*" "*Ah, land of a clanging of wings.*" In Deut. xxviii. 42 it is one of the many names of the *locust*, so called from the *clang* of its flight; while in Job xli. 7 (xl. 31) it seems to signify a *spear* (for fish). It is true that in one passage (2 Sam. vi. 5) it denotes some musical instrument (E.V. "*cymbals*"), but we cannot be sure what this instrument was. On the whole it seems better in our Psalm to give the word its root-meaning of "*clang*" without denying that some clanging instrument whether trumpet or cymbal may have been in the poet's mind; just as we might speak of the "*trumpet of fame.*"

"*the clang of fame.*" The E.V., R.V., "*loud cymbals,*" P.B.V. "*well-tuned cymbals,*" are all without justification. *Shema*, "*hearing,*" always denotes "*tidings,*" "*fame,*" "*report*" (e.g. 1 Kings x. 1 "*the fame of Solomon*"; Hab. iii. 2, "O YHVH I have heard Thy fame"); I therefore suggest that the expression "*the clang of fame*" denotes music and song like that which proclaimed the fame of David (1 Sam. xviii. 6 f.), here directed to the fame of YHVH.

"*the clang of shouting.*" The "*shout*" is the shout or *trumpet blast* which welcomes a King (Nu. xxiii. 21; 2 Sam. vi. 15). On the connexion of this word with the Kingship of God on earth see notes of Pss. xxvii. 6; xxxiii. 3; xlvii. 5; lxxxix. 15. As the ten Sefiroth end with the "*Kingdom*" so the ten *Hallelus* close with the welcome of the Divine King.

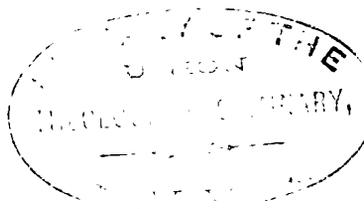
v. 6. Note the same thought in Pss. xcvi. 11^b—13; xcvi. 7—9 and compare Rev. v. 13 f.

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