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THE  
BOOK OF PSALMS:

A NEW TRANSLATION,

WITH

INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES

EXPLANATORY AND CRITICAL.

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THE PSALMS.



BOOK III.

PSALMS LXXIII.—LXXXIX.



## PSALM LXXIII.<sup>1</sup>

THERE are some questions which never lose their interest, some problems of which it may be said that they are ever old and yet ever new. Not the least anxious of such questions are those which deal with God's moral government of the world. They lie close to man's heart, and are ever asking and pressing for solution. They may differ in different times, they may assume various forms; but perhaps no man ever looked thoughtfully on the world as it is, without seeing much that was hard to reconcile with a belief in the love and wisdom of God.

One form of this moral difficulty pressed heavily upon the pious Jew under the old dispensation. It was this: Why should good men suffer, and bad men prosper? This difficulty was aggravated, we must remember, by what seemed to be the manifest contradiction between the express teaching of his law, and the observed facts of human experience. The law told him that God was a righteous Judge, meting out to men in this world the due recompense of their deeds. The course of the world, where those who had cast off the fear of God were rich and powerful, made him ready to question this truth, and was a serious stumbling-block to his faith. And further, "the Hebrew mind had never risen to the conception of universal law, but was accustomed to regard all visible phenomena as the immediate result of a free sovereign will. Direct interposition, even arbitrary interference, was no difficulty to the Jew, to whom Jehovah was the absolute Sovereign of the world, not acting, so far as he could see, according to any established order." Hence it seemed to him inexplicable that the world of life should not reflect perfectly, as in a mirror, the righteousness of God.

This is the perplexity which appears in this Psalm, as it does in the thirty-seventh, and also in the Book of Job. Substantially it is the same problem; but it is met differently. In the thirty-seventh

<sup>1</sup> For some valuable suggestions on this Psalm I am indebted to a friend, the Rev. J. G. Mould.

Psalm the advice given is to wait, to trust in Jehovah, and to rest assured that in the end the seeming disorder will be set right even *in this world*. The wicked will perish, the enemies of Jehovah be cut off, and the righteous will be preserved from evil, and inherit the land. Thus God suffers wickedness *for a time*, only the more signally to manifest his righteousness in overthrowing it. That is the first, the simplest, the most obvious, solution of the difficulty. In the Book of Job, where the sorrow and the perplexity are the darkest, where the question lies upon the heart, "heavy as lead, and deep almost as life," the sufferer finds no such consolation. As a Gentile, he has no need to reconcile his experience with the sanctions of the Pentateuch. But he has to do that which is not less hard — he has to reconcile it with a life's knowledge of God, and a life's love of God. He searches his heart, he lays bare his life, he is conscious of no transgression, and he cannot understand why chastisement should be laid upon him, whilst the most daring offenders against the majesty of God escape with impunity. Sometimes with a bitterness that cannot be repressed, sometimes with a sorrow hushing itself into resignation, he still turns to God, he would fain stand before his judgment-seat, plead with him his cause, and receive a righteous sentence. But Job does not find the solution of the Psalmist. He is driven to feel that all this is a mystery. God will not give an account of any of his matters. "I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him" (Job xxiii.). And when Jehovah appears, at the end of the book, it is to show the folly of man, who would presume to think that, short-sighted and ignorant as he is, he can fathom the counsels of the Most High. He appears not to lift the veil of mystery, but to teach the need of humiliation and the blessedness of faith.<sup>1</sup>

In this Psalm, again, a different conclusion is arrived at. In part it is the same as that which has already met us in Psalm xxxvii., in part it is far higher. The Psalmist here is not content merely with visible retribution in this world. He sees it, indeed, in the case of the ungodly. When he was tempted to envy their lot, when he had all but yielded to the sophistry of those who would have persuaded him to be even as they, the temptation was subdued by the reflection that

<sup>1</sup> There is a difficulty, no doubt, in reconciling this solution, or rather non-solution, of the problem with that which is given subsequently in the historical conclusion of the book. There we find Job recompensed in this life for all his sufferings. If the historical parts of the book are by the same author as the dialogue (as Ewald maintains), then we must suppose that when Job is brought to confess his own vileness, and his own ignorance and presumption, then, and not till then, does God reward him with temporal prosperity.



such prosperity came to an end as sudden as it was terrible. But he does not place over against this, on the other side, an earthly portion of honor and happiness for the just. Their portion is in God. He is the stay and the satisfaction of their hearts now. He will take them to himself and to glory hereafter. This conviction it is which finally chases away the shadows of doubt, and brings light and peace into his soul. And this conviction is the more remarkable, because it is reached in spite of the distinct promise made of temporal recompense to piety, and in the absence of a full and definite revelation with regard to the life to come. In the clear light of another world and its certain recompenses, such perplexities either vanish or lose much of their sharpness. When we confess that God's righteousness has a larger theatre for its display than this world and the years of man, we need not draw hasty conclusions from "the slight whisper" of his ways which reaches us here.

It is an interesting question suggested by this Psalm, but one which can only be touched on here, how far there is anything in common between doubts, such as those which perplexed the ancient Hebrews, and those by which modern thinkers are harassed.<sup>1</sup> There are some persons, who now, as of old, are troubled by the moral aspect of the world. To some, this perplexity is even aggravated by the disclosures of revelation. And men of pious minds have been shaken to their inmost centre by the appalling prospect of the everlasting punishment of the wicked. But the difficulties which are, properly speaking, modern difficulties, are of another kind. They are, at least in their source, speculative rather than moral. The observed uniformity of nature, the indissoluble chain of cause and effect, the absolute certainty of the laws by which all visible phenomena are governed, these are now the stumbling-blocks, even to devout minds. How, it is asked, can we reconcile these things with the belief in a personal God, or at

<sup>1</sup> This point had been touched on by Dr. A. S. Farrar in his Bampton Lectures, a work which, for breadth and depth of learning, has few parallels in modern English literature, and which combines in no common degree the spirit of a sound faith and a true philosophy. Dr. Farrar says: "It is deeply interesting to observe, not merely that the difficulties concerning Providence felt by Job refer to the very subjects which painfully perplex the modern mind, but also that the friends of Job exhibit the instinctive tendency which is observed in modern times to denounce his doubt as sin, not less than to attribute his trials to evil as the direct cause. The two books of Scripture (Job and Ecclesiastes), together with the seventy-third Psalm, have an increasing religious importance as the world grows older. The things written aforetime were written for our learning."—Lecture I. p. 7, note.

least with an ever-active personal will? Had the world ever a Maker? or, if it had, does he still control and guide it? Knowing as we do that the order of cause and effect is ever the same, how can we accept miracles or divine interpositions of any kind? What avails prayer, when every event that happens has been ordained from eternity? How can any words of man interpret the march of the universe? Ships are wrecked, and harvests are blighted, and famine and pestilence walk the earth, not because men have forgotten to pray, but in accordance with the unerring laws which storm and blight and disease obey. Such are some of the thoughts — the birth, it may be said, of modern science — which haunt and vex men now.

Difficulties like these are not touched upon in Scripture. But the spirit in which all difficulties, all doubts, should be met is the same. If the answer lies in a region above and beyond us, our true wisdom is to wait in humble dependence upon God, in active fulfilment of what we can see to be our duty, till the day dawn and the shadows flee away. And it is this which Scripture teaches us in this Psalm, in Job, and in that other book, which is such a wonderful record of a doubting, self-tormenting spirit, the Book of Ecclesiastes. It has been said that the Book of Job and the seventy-third Psalm “crush free thought.”<sup>1</sup> It would have been truer to say that they teach us that there are heights and depths which the intellect of man cannot fathom; that God’s ways are past finding out; that difficulties, perplexities, sorrows, are best healed and forgotten in the light which streams from his throne, in the love by which his Spirit is shed abroad in the heart.

But the Psalm teaches us also a lesson of forbearance towards the doubter. It is a lesson perhaps just now peculiarly needed. Christian sympathy is felt, Christian charity is extended, toward every form of misery, whether mental or bodily, except toward that which is often the acutest of all, the anguish of doubt. Here it seems as if coldness, suspicion, even denunciation, were justifiable. And yet doubt, even to the verge of scepticism, as is plain from this Psalm, may be no proof of a bad and corrupt heart; it may rather be the evidence of an honest one. Doubt may spring from the very depth and earnestness of a man’s faith. In the case of the Psalmist, as in the case of Job, that which lay at the bottom of the doubt, that which made it a thing so full of anguish, was the deep-rooted conviction of the righteousness of God. Unbelief does not doubt, faith doubts.<sup>2</sup> And God permits the

<sup>1</sup> Quinet, *Oeuvres*, tome i. c. 5, sec. 4.

<sup>2</sup> The expression has been criticised as paradoxical, but the following admirable passages, which I have met with since the first edition of this work was published,

doubt in his truest and noblest servants, as our Lord did in the case of Thomas, that he may thereby plant their feet the more firmly on the rock of his own everlasting truth. There is perhaps no Psalm in which faith asserts itself so triumphantly, cleaves to God with such words of lofty hope and affection, and that precisely because in no other instance has the fire been so searching, the test of faith so severe. It may be well to remember this when we see a noble soul compassed about with darkness, yet struggling to the light, lest we "vex one whom God has smitten, and tell of the pain of his wounded ones." (Ps. lxxix. 26).

The Psalm consists of two parts :

I. The Psalmist tells the story of the doubts which had assailed him, the temptation to which he had nearly succumbed (ver. 1-14).

II. He confesses the sinfulness of these doubts, and explains how he had been enabled to overcome them (ver. 15-28).

These principal portions have their further subdivisions (which are in the main those given by Hupfeld) :

I. *a.* First we have, by way of introduction, the conviction to which his struggle with doubt brought him, (ver. 1) ; then the general statement of his offence, (ver. 2, 3).

*b.* The reason of which is more fully explained to be the prosperity

may justify my language. They are quoted by Archbishop Whately in his Annotations on Bacon's Essays, pp. 358, 359. The first is from a writer in the Edinburgh Review for January, 1847, on 'The Genius of Pascal': "So little inconsistent with a habit of intelligent faith are such transient invasions of doubt, or such diminished perceptions of the evidence of truth, that it may even be said that it is only those who have in some measure experienced them, who can be said in the highest sense to believe at all. He who has never had a doubt, who believes that he believes for reasons which he thinks as irrefragable (if that be possible) as those of a mathematical demonstration, ought not to be said so much to believe as to know; his belief is to him knowledge, and his mind stands in the same relation to it, however erroneous and absurd that belief may be. It is rather he who believes — not indeed without the exercise of his reason, but without the full satisfaction of his reason — with a knowledge and appreciation of formidable objections — it is this man who may most truly be said intelligently to believe." The other is from a short poem by Bishop Hinds :

"Yet so it is; belief springs still  
In souls that nurture doubt.

. . . . .  
Did never thorns thy path beset ?  
Beware — be not deceived ;  
He who has never doubted yet  
Has never yet believed."

of the wicked (ver. 4, 5), and their insolence and pride in consequence, ver. 6-11.

c. The comfortless conclusion which he had thence drawn (ver. 12-14).

II. a. By way of transition, he tells how he had been led to acknowledge the impiety of this conclusion, and how, seeking for a deeper, truer view, he had come to the sanctuary of God (ver. 15-17), where he had seen the *sudden* and *fearful* end of the wicked (ver. 18-20), and so had learned the *folly* of his own speculation.

b. Thus recovering from the almost fatal shock which his faith had received, he returns to a sense of his true position. God holds him by his right hand, God guides him for the present, and will bring him to a glorious end (ver. 23, 24); hence he rejoices in the thought that God is his great and only possession (ver. 25, 26.)

c. The general conclusion, that departure from God is death and destruction; that in his presence and in nearness to him are to be found joy and safety (ver. 27, 28).

[A Psalm of Asaph.<sup>a</sup>]

1 SURELY<sup>b</sup> God is good to Israel,

(Even) to such as are of a pure heart.

2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone,<sup>c</sup>

My steps had well-nigh slipped.

1. SURELY. This particle, which occurs twice again in this Psalm, is rendered differently in each case by the E.V.; here *truly*, in ver. 13 *verily*, in ver. 18 *surely*; but one rendering should be kept throughout. The Welsh more correctly has, *yn dŷiau* (ver. 1), *dŷiau* (ver. 13, 18). The word has been already discussed in the note on lxii. 1, where we have seen it is capable of two meanings. Here it is used affirmatively, and expresses the satisfaction with which the conclusion has been arrived at, after all the anxious questionings and debates through which the Psalmist has passed: "Yes, it is so; after all, God is good, notwithstanding all my doubts." It thus implies at the same time a tacit opposition to a different view of the case, such as that which is described afterwards. "Fresh from the conflict, he somewhat abruptly opens the Psalm with the confident enunciation of the truth, of which victory over doubt had

now made him more, and more intelligently, sure than ever, that God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart." — *Essential Coherence of the Old and New Testament*, by my brother, the Rev. T. T. Perowne, p. 85, to which I may perhaps be permitted to refer for a clear and satisfactory view of the whole Psalm.

It is of importance to remark that the result of the conflict is stated before the conflict itself is described. There is no parade of doubt merely as doubt. He states *first*, and in the most natural way, the *final* conviction of his heart.

ISRAEL. The next clause limits this, and reminds us that "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." To the true Israel God is love; to them "all things work together for good."

OF A PURE HEART; lit. "pure of heart," as in xxiv. 4. Comp. Matt. v. 8.

2. BUT AS FOR ME. The pronoun is emphatic. He places himself, with

- 3 For I was envious at the arrogant,  
 When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
- 4 For they have no bands in their death,<sup>d</sup>  
 And their strength<sup>e</sup> (continues) firm.
- 5 They are not in trouble as (other) men,  
 Neither are they plagued like (other) folk.

shame and sorrow, almost in opposition to that Israel of God of which he had just spoken. He has in view the happiness of those who had felt no doubt. Calvin somewhat differently explains: Even I, with all my knowledge and advantages, I who ought to have known better.

GONE; lit. "inclined," not so much in the sense of being bent under him, as rather of being turned aside, out of the way, as in Num. xx. 17; 2 Sam. ii. 19, 21, etc. The verb in the next clause expresses the giving way from weakness, fear, etc., HAD . . . SLIPPED; lit. "were poured out" like water.

3. ENVIOUS, as in xxxvii. 1; Prov. xxiii. 17, wishing that his lot were like theirs who seemed to be the favorites of heaven. Calvin quotes the story of Dionysius the Less, who, having sacrilegiously plundered a temple, and having sailed safely home, said: "Do you see that the gods smile upon sacrilege?" The prosperity and impunity of the wicked invite others to follow their example.

THE ARROGANT. The word denotes those whose pride and infatuation amounts almost to madness. It is difficult to find an exact equivalent in English. Gesenius renders it by *superbi, insolentes*, and J. D. Michaelis by *stolide gloriosi*, "vain boasters." It occurs in v. 5 [6], where see note<sup>d</sup>, and again in lxxv. 4 [5]. The LXX, in all these instances, render vaguely, *ἄνομοι, παράνομοι*.

4. BANDS. This word "bands," or "tight cords, or "fettters," occurs only once besides (Isa. lviii. 6). I have now [2d ed.] adopted the simplest and most straightforward rendering of the words, "They have no bands in their death"

(lit. *at or for* their death, i.e. when they die), because the objection brought against it, that such a meaning is at variance with the general scope of the Psalm, the object of which is not to represent the *end* of the ungodly as happy (the very reverse is asserted ver. 17, etc.), but to describe the general prosperity of their *lives*, no longer appears to me to be valid. For we must remember that the Psalmist is describing here not the fact, but *what seemed to him* to be the fact, in a state of mind which he confesses to have been unhealthy. Comp. Job xxi. 13, and see the note on ver. 18 of this Psalm. Otherwise it would be possible to render [as in 1st ed.], "For no bands (of suffering) (bring them) to their death." No fetters are, so to speak, laid upon their limbs, so that they should be delivered over bound to their great enemy. They are not beset with sorrows, sufferings, miseries, which by impairing health and strength bring them to death. This sense has been very well given in the Prayer-book version, which follows Luther:

"For they are in no peril of death,  
 But are lusty and strong."

5. The literal rendering of this verse would be:

"In the trouble of man they are not,  
 And with mankind they are not  
 plagued."

The first word used to express *man* is that which denotes man in his frailty and weakness. See on ix. 19, 20, note<sup>1</sup>; x. 18, note<sup>1</sup>. The other is the most general term, Adam, man as made of the dust of the earth. These men seem exempt not only from the frailties and infirmities of men, but even from the common lot of men. They appear

- 6 Therefore pride is as a chain <sup>f</sup> about their neck ;  
 Violence covereth <sup>g</sup> them as a garment.  
 7 Their eye <sup>h</sup> goeth forth from fatness ;  
 The imaginations of (their) heart overflow.  
 8 They scoff <sup>i</sup> and speak wickedly,  
 Of oppression loftily do they speak.  
 9 They have set their mouth in the heavens,  
 And their tongue walketh <sup>k</sup> through the earth.  
 10 Therefore his people are turned <sup>l</sup> after them,  
 And at the full stream would slake their thirst : <sup>m</sup>

almost to be tempered and moulded of a finer clay than ordinary human nature.

PLAGUED ; lit. "smitten," i.e. of God ; a word used especially of divine chastisement. Comp. Isa. liii. 4.

6. IS AS A CHAIN ABOUT THEIR NECK, or "hath encircled their neck." See for the same figure, Prov. i. 9 ; iii. 22. The neck (the *collum resupinum*) is regarded as the seat of pride ; comp. lxxv. 5 [6] ; Isa. iii. 16.

7. FROM FATNESS, i.e. from a sleek countenance, conveying in itself the impression of worldly ease and enjoyment. The whole figure is highly expressive. It is a picture of that proud satisfaction which so often shines in the eyes of well-to-do men of the world.

OVERFLOW. The metaphor is from a swollen river which rises above its banks. The verb is used absolutely, as in Hab. i 11, "Then (his) spirit swells and overflows," where the same figure is employed in describing the pride and insolence of the Chaldeans. See also Isa. viii. 8. This is better than, with the E.V., to take the verb as transitive, "They have more than heart could wish" (lit. they have exceeded the imaginations of the heart) ; the two clauses of the verse correspond, the proud look being an index of the proud heart ; these being followed, in the next verse, by the proud spirit.

8. According to the Masoretic punctuation, the verse would be arranged thus :

"They scoff and speak wickedly of oppression,

Loftily do they speak."

But the LXX arrange the clauses as in the text and render the latter, *ἀδικίαν εἰς τὸ ὕψος ἐλάλησαν*, and so *Λα. συκοφαντίαν ἐξ ὕψους λαλοῦντες*.

LOFTILY, or "from on high," not "against the Most High," as the Prayer-book version. See note on lvi. 2.

9. IN THE HEAVENS, not "against the heavens." The stature of these men seems to swell till it reaches heaven. Thence they issue their proud commands, the whole earth being the theatre of their action.

10. THEREFORE. This, as Mendelssohn has observed, is co-ordinate with the "therefore" in ver. 6. Both depend on the statement in ver. 4, 5. Because the wicked have no bands, etc., therefore pride compasseth them, etc., and therefore others are induced to follow their example.

HIS PEOPLE. This is capable of two interpretations. (1) In accordance with a common Hebrew idiom, there may be an abrupt transition from the plural to the singular, an individual being now substituted for the mass. "*His* people," in this sense, are the crowd who attach themselves to *one and another* of these prosperous sinners, that they may share *his* prosperity, and then "*his* people" is equivalent to "*their* people," the crowd which follows them. (2) The pronoun may refer to God (so the Chald. and LXX). Even his people,

11 And they say : "How doth God know ?

And is there knowledge in the Most High ?

12 Lo, these are the wicked,

And (these men) ever prosperous, have increased wealth.

13 Surely in vain have I cleansed my heart,

And washed my hands in innocency,

14 And have been plagued all the day long,

And chastened every morning.

forsaking him, are led away by the evil example, just as the Psalmist confesses he himself was.

AFTER THEM; lit. "thither," i.e. to the persons before described, and, as is implied, *away from* God. The next clause of the verse is more difficult of explanation. The E.V. by its rendering, "And waters of a full (cup) are wrung out to them," probably means us to understand that the people of God, when they turn hither, i.e. to the consideration of the prosperity of the wicked, are filled with sorrow, drink as it were the cup of tears; the image being the same as in lxxx. 5 [6]. The Prayer-book version comes nearer to the mark, —

"Therefore fall the people unto them,  
And thereout suck they no small  
advantage," —

only that apparently in the second clause the pronoun *they* refers, not to the people, but to the wicked mentioned before. Whereas it is the people, the crowd of hangers-on, who gather like sheep to the water-trough, who suck this advantage, such as it is, as the reward of their apostasy.

AND AT THE FULL STREAM, etc.; lit. "and fulness of water is drained by them"; i.e. broad and deep are the waters of sinful pleasures, which they, in their infatuation, drink.

11. AND THEY SAY. The reference of the pronoun has again been disputed. Mostly it is referred to those just spoken of, who have been led astray by the prosperity of the wicked to follow them. Hupfeld thinks it is the wicked themselves (of ver. 3) who thus speak, and certainly the boldness of the language

employed, which questions the very being of a God, is more natural in the mouth of those whose long prosperity and long security have made them unmindful of his providence.

But much depends on the view we take of the next three verses. Do these continue the speech, or are they the reflection of the poet himself? The former is the view of Ewald, Stier, Delitzsch, and others. In this case the words must be throughout the words of those who have been tempted and led astray by the untroubled happiness of the wicked. They adopt their practically atheistical principles; they ask, "How doth God know," etc.; they point, with a triumph not unmingled with bitterness, at their success: Lo, these are the ungodly, whose sudden and utter overthrow we have been taught to expect; they come to the conclusion that the fear of God is in vain, for it does not save a man from suffering and disappointment, and thus they justify their choice. It is certainly in favor of this view that ver. 15 seems naturally to introduce the reflections of the Psalmist himself, who had almost been carried away by the same sophistry. On the other hand, Hengstenberg and Hupfeld suppose the reflections of the Psalmist to begin at ver. 12. Verses 13, 14 will then describe the temptation which pressed upon him, the thoughts which forced themselves into his mind, and which, as verses 15, 16 show, he only with difficulty repressed. He did utter his disappointment, he was gliding on to something worse, to the atheistic language of ver. 11, when he checks

15 If I had said,<sup>n</sup> 'I will utter (words) like these,'<sup>o</sup>

Lo, I should have been faithless to the generation of thy children.

16 And when I pondered<sup>p</sup> it that I might know this,

It was a trouble in mine eyes ;

17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God,

(Until) I considered their latter end.

18 Surely in slippery places dost thou set them,

Thou hast cast them down to ruin.<sup>a</sup>

himself as in ver. 15. In favor of this interpretation it may be urged, that the LXX have introduced a *καὶ ἐπὶ* at the beginning of ver. 13.

I confess that, while inclining to the former, I feel it difficult to decide between these two views ; and the decision must, after all, rest upon a certain feeling and instinct, rather than upon critical grounds.

15. IF I HAD SAID, i.e. to myself (as the verb is constantly used) ; if I had given way to the temptation to utter thoughts and misgivings like these. "The Hebrew Psalmist," it has been well said, "instead of telling his painful misgivings, harbored them in God's presence till he found the solution. The delicacy exhibited in forbearing unnecessarily to shake the faith of others is a measure of the disinterestedness of the doubter." — *Farrar, Bampton Lectures*, p. 27.

I WILL UTTER (WORDS) LIKE THESE, or, "I will recount the matter thus."

THE GENERATION OF THY CHILDREN. AS in xiv. 5, "the generation of the righteous." So the people at large are called (Dent. xiv. 1; Hos. ii. 1). Here, however, the true Israel, "the clean of heart," are meant. But the *individual* is not called a son of God under the Old Testament, except officially, as in ii. 7.

16. I PONDERED. See the same use of the verb in lxxvii. 5 [6], "the days of old"; Prov. xvi. 9, "one's way." THAT I MIGHT KNOW, i.e. reconcile all that I saw with the great fact of God's moral government.

A TROUBLE, or a weariness, as of a great burden laid upon me (comp. Eecl. viii. 17). Thought could not solve the problem. The brain grew wearier, and the heart heavier. Light and peace come to us, not by thinking, but by faith. "In thy light we shall see light." God himself was the teacher.

17. THE SANCTUARY is the place of his teaching ; not heaven, as Kimchi and others, but the temple, as the place of his special manifestation, not only by Urim and Thummim, but in direct answer to prayer. There, in some hour of fervent, secret prayer, like that of Hannah (1 Sam. i. 13, comp. Luke xviii. 10), or, perhaps, in some solemn service — it may have been (who can tell?) through the words of some inspired Psalm — a conviction of the truth broke upon him. The word SANCTUARY is in the plural, which is used here, as in xliii. 3 ; lxviii. 35 [36], for the singular.

18. The conclusion is remarkable. That which dispels the Psalmist's doubts, and restores his faith, is the end of the ungodly in this world, — their sudden reverses, their terrible overthrow in the very bosom of their prosperity. Hitherto he has not taken notice of this fact as he ought ; he has been so dazzled with the prosperity of the wicked, that he has forgotten by what appalling judgments God vindicates his righteousness. He does not follow them into the next world. His eye cannot see beyond the grave. Even the great horror of an evil conscience is scarcely, in his view, a part of their punishment, unless the expression "be-



- 19 How are they brought to desolation as in a moment,  
 They have come to an end, they are cut off because of  
 terrors.<sup>f</sup>
- 20 As a dream, when one awaketh,  
 (So), O Lord, when thou stirrest up thyself,<sup>g</sup> dost thou  
 despise their image.

cause of terrors," in ver. 19, may be supposed to point that way, which, however, is very doubtful. But this Théodicée was the only one then known, and is in fact based upon the law, which, resting upon temporal sanctions, justified the expectation of visible retribution in this world. The judges of Israel were appointed, as Delitzsch has observed, as the vicegerents of God, to execute this retribution. Hence the deep-rooted conviction on this point, even in the minds of the godly. It was not till a later period, and especially till after the Exile, that the judgment after death was clearly recognized. Comp. Mal. iii. 13, etc.

It is singular that in Job xxi. 13 (comp. ix. 23) it is reckoned as an element in the good fortune of the wicked, that they die not by a lingering disease, but suddenly; but it may be that Job, perplexed and eager to make everything tell on his side, which his friends would urge against him, is determined not to admit their inference from the facts of divine providence. Otherwise this passage of Job supports the obvious rendering of ver. 4, "They do not die by lingering diseases, but easily," this being the mistaken view afterwards corrected. "We come to the conclusion," it has been well said, "that in the case of the wicked this Psalm does not plainly and undeniably teach that punishment awaits them after death; but only that in estimating their condition it is necessary, in order to vindicate the justice of God, to take in their whole career, and set over against their great prosperity the sudden and fearful reverses and destruction which they not unfrequently encounter. But in turning to the other side of the comparison, the case of the

righteous, we are not met by the thought, that as the prosperity of the wicked is but the preparation for their ruin, so the adversity of the godly is but an introduction to worldly wealth and honor. That thought is not foreign to the Old Testament writers (see Psalm xxxvii. 9-11); but it is not so much as hinted at here. The daily chastening may continue, flesh and heart may fail, but God is good to Israel notwithstanding. He is their portion, their guide, their help, while they live, and he will take them to his glorious presence when they die. "Nevertheless I am continually with thee," etc. The New Testament has nothing higher or more spiritual than this." — *Essential Coherence*, etc., pp. 86, 87.

19. This verse, taken in connection with ver. 27, seems almost to point, as Ewald has remarked, to some particular instance of the divine judgment which had recently been witnessed.

20. AS A DREAM, the unreality of which is only seen when a man awakes. Comp. xc. 5; Job xx. 8. The first member of this verse is apparently connected by Symm., with what goes before, "they are cut off as a dream," etc.

WHEN THOU STIRREST UP THYSELF. The verb in Hebrew is a different one from that in the previous clause, although in the E.V. both are in this passage rendered by the same word. In xxxv. 23, where the two verbs also occur together, our translators have employed two different words to express them, and I have thought it best to do so here. The figure is carried on. When God thus awakes to judgment, the image, the shadow, of the wicked passes from him as a dream from the mind of a

- 21 For my heart grew bitter,  
 And I was pricked in my reins ;  
 22 So brutish was I myself and ignorant,  
 I became a very beast<sup>t</sup> before thee.  
 23 And yet as for me, — I am always with thee,  
 Thou hast holden my right hand ;  
 24 Thou wilt guide me in thy counsel,  
 And afterward thou wilt take me (to) glory.

sleeper. He "despises" it, as a man in his waking moments thinks lightly of some horrible dream.

21. FOR. There is no reason to depart from this, the common meaning of the particle. (See Critical Note.) It explains the whole of the previous struggle. I was tempted to think thus, *for* I brooded over these difficulties till I became no better than the dumb cattle. So it ever is. Man does not show wisdom when he wearies himself to no purpose with the moral and speculative problems which beset him. His highest wisdom is to stay himself upon God.

22. SO BRUTISH; lit. "And I myself (the pronoun is emphatic) was brutish." Comp. Prov. xxx. 2, 3.

A VERY BEAST. The noun is in the plural, which is here used in a superlative or emphatic sense (see note on lxviii. 35), so that we need not render "like the beasts," still less "like Behemoth," as though some particular beast were meant.

23. The words that follow, in their exquisite beauty, need not comment or interpretation, but a heart in unison with them. They lift us up above the world, above doubts, and fears, and perplexities, into a higher and holier atmosphere; we breathe the air of heaven. The man who can truly use these words is not one who has "crushed free thought," but one who has seen all his doubts swallowed up in the full light of God's love. "Though all else in heaven and earth should fail, the one true, everlasting Friend abides." — *Ewald*.

It strangely mars the force of such a passage to limit its application to this

life. To render the words of ver. 24 as Grotius and others do, "Thou shalt receive me with honor" (in allusion to David as placed on the throne), or "bring me to honor," i.e. in this world, is to rob the whole passage of its divine significance. The verb "Thou shalt take me," is the same as that employed in xlix. 15 (where see note), and Gen. v. 24, to which last passage there is doubtless an allusion in both places in the Psalms. But this Psalm is an advance on Ps. xlix.

The great difference, though with essential points of contact, between the hope of the life to come, as portrayed even in such a passage as this, and what we read in the New Testament, will best be understood by comparing the language here with St. Paul's language in the fourth and fifth chapters of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and the first chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians, ver. 21-23.

THOU HAST HOLDEN; either implying that thus he had been saved from falling altogether, when his feet were almost gone (ver. 2), or perhaps rather as stating more broadly the ground of his abiding communion with God, at all times and under all circumstances. Cf. lxiii. 8 [9].

24. THOU WILT GUIDE ME. "With confidence he commits himself to the divine guidance, though he does not see clearly the mystery of the divine purpose (counsel) in that guidance." — *Delitzsch*. It is because he has forgotten to look to that counsel, and to trust in that counsel, that his faith has received so startling a shock.

25 Whom have I in heaven (but thee) ?

And there is none upon earth in whom I delight beside thee.

26 (Though) my flesh and my heart fail,

(Yet) God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever,

27 For behold they that are far from thee must perish ;

Thou hast destroyed every one that goeth a whoring from thee.

28 But as for me—it is good for me to draw near unto God ;

I have made in the Lord Jehovah my refuge,

That I may tell of all thy works.

25. BUT THEE, or “beside thee”; lit. “with thee.” These words are to be supplied from the next clause, a word or a phrase belonging to two clauses being commonly in Hebrew expressed only in one.

THERE IS NONE, etc. ; lit. “I have no delight (in any) upon the earth.”

26. FAIL ; lit. “have failed,” i.e. “may have failed,” the preterite being here used hypothetically.

27. The figure is very common. Israel is the spouse of God, and idolatry is the breaking of the marriage vow. But here it seems to be used, not merely of idolatry, but of departure from God, such as that described in ver. 10.

28. At the end of this verse the LXX add, “in the gates of the daughter of Zion,” whence it has passed through the Vulgate, into our Prayer-book version.

<sup>a</sup> See Psalm l. note <sup>a</sup>, and General Introduction, vol. i. pp. 75, 77.

<sup>b</sup> אַךְ, *surely*, or as it may be rendered, with Mendels. and others, even more pointedly, *nevertheless*. The exact force of the particle here has been best explained by Calvin: “Quod autem abruptum facit exordium, notare operae pretium est, antequam in hanc vocem erumperet David, inter dubias et pugnantes sententias aestuasse. Nam ut strenuus athleta seipsum exercuerat in pugnis difficillimis: postquam vero diu multumque sudavit, discussis impiis imaginationibus, constituit. Deum *tamen* servis suis esse propitium, et salutis eorum fidum esse custodem. Ita subest antithesis inter pravas imaginationes quas suggererat Satan, et hoc verae pietatis testimonium quo nunc se confirmat: *acsi malediceret carnis suae sensui* qui dubitationem admiserat de providentia Dei. Nunc tenemus quam emphatica sit exclamatio . . . quasi ex inferis emergeret, pleno spiritu jactare quam adeptus erat victoriam.” This has been seen also by some of the older interpreters (Symmachus, πλὴν; Jerome, *attamen*), as well as by the Rabbinical and other expositors. In like manner we have in Latin writers passages beginning with a *nam* or *at*, where something is implied as already existing in the mind of the writer, though not expressed.

נָשִׂי. "The K'thibh is part. pass. sing., either absol. with the accus. following, or in the stat. constr. נָשִׂי, with the gen., either construction of the part. pass. being admissible. Comp. 2 Sam. xv. 32 with 2 Sam. xiii. 31; Ezek. ix. 2 with 11 (Gesen. § 132). For this the K'ri very unnecessarily substitutes 3d pl. perf. נָשִׂי, but in the full form, which would only be suitable in pause. In the same way the following שָׁפְחָה, which is no doubt שָׁפְחָה, 3d fem. sing., with the plur. noun אֲשִׁיחֵרִי (a not uncommon construction, as in xxxvii. 31, see Gesen. § 143, 3), has been just as unnecessarily corrected in the K'ri to שָׁפְחוּ. It is, however, possible that the punctuation, הִגְלִי and אֲשִׁיחֵרִי, as plur., depends on the K'ri of the verbs, and that these words in the K'thibh are meant to be singular (as xlv. 19; Job xxxi. 7). So Cler., Hasse, and others." — *Hupfeld.*

לְמִוְתָם. This, as it stands, must mean "for, or at, or belonging to, their death," i.e. when they die. So the E.V. "in their death," and so the Welsh, "yn eu marwolaeth." But this, it has been said, does not fall in with the general scope of the passage, where not the death, but the life, of the wicked is described as one that seems enviable. Hence Hupfeld would render, "till their death" and refers to the use of the prep. in Isa. vii. 15 to justify this interpretation, but there לְרֵצְחוֹ means not "till he knows," but "when he knows," as both Ewald and Knobel take it; and Drechsler, on the passage, has clearly shown, in opposition to Gesenius, that the prep. לְ is in no instance used to mark duration of time up to a certain point, and therefore never means *until*. Bates, quoted by Horsley, proposed to make of לְמִוְתָם two words, לְמוֹתָם, joining לְמוֹתָם with the first clause, "they have no bonds," and מוֹתָם, as an adjective, with what follows, "sound and fat is their body." This has been adopted by Strut, Fry, etc., and by Ewald, who defends this sense of מוֹתָם (which is nowhere used of physical, but always of moral, soundness), by the use of the noun מוֹתָם in Job xxi. 23 [Delitzsch refers to the similar use of מוֹתָם, xviii. 33; Prov. i. 12; but the first of these seems doubtful]. Mendelssohn supposes לְמִוְתָם to be for לְמוֹתָם, and renders: "Kein Knotten hemmt ihrer Tage Lauf"; the figure being that of the thread of life, which, if it becomes knotted and entangled, is liable to be broken. But retaining the reading of the present Masoretic text, two interpretations are possible: (1) "They have no fetters for their death," which may either mean, if we take *fetters* (as in Isa. lviii. 6, the only other passage in which the word occurs) in the literal sense, "they are not delivered over bound to death"; or, if we take it metaphorically, "they have no sufferings, diseases, etc., which bring them to death. So Hulsius: "Nulla sunt ipsis ligamenta ad mortem

*eorum*, i.e. nullis calamitatibus, nullis morbis sunt obnoxii; morbi sunt mortis ligamenta quod in mortis potestatem homines conjiciant." And Delitzsch, in his first edition, "Denn keine Qualen gibts, daran sie stürben." (2) "They have no fetters (i.e. troubles, cares, sufferings) in their death." In this case the Psalmist is stating here by anticipation, not his *present* conviction as to the death of the wicked, but the view which he *once* took of it, in a mood of mind which he afterwards discovered to be wrong. So Aq. οὐκ εἰσὶ δυσπάθειαι τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτῶν. It is of importance to observe, however, that Symm. and Jerome seem to have had a different reading. The former has οὔτι οὐκ ἐνεθυμοῦντο περὶ θανάτου αὐτῶν, the latter, "quod non cogitaverint de morte sua." Did they read אֵין הַשְּׂבָרִים? Or did they intend to explain the present text in this sense, "they have no troubles, anxious reflections, etc., with reference to their death"? The Syr. also here, as indeed throughout the Psalm, differs from the Heb. It has לֹא סוֹף, "there is no end to their death," the exact meaning of which is not very clear. The rendering of the LXX is equally obscure: οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνάενυσις ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτῶν. With all this variation in the ancient versions, they agree in one respect—they all have the word *death*. But for this, I should be disposed to accept the alteration of the text proposed above, as the simplest solution of the difficulty. Delitzsch has now (in his 2d ed.) accepted this, and renders: Denn keine Qualen leiden sie, Gesund und mastig ist ihr Wanst.

<sup>e</sup> אִיָּלָם, from the noun אִיָּל, *strength* (connected with אִיָּלִיָּתָי, etc., from the root אִיָּל), with the suffix, and occurring only here (an alleged plur. form, 2 Kings xxiv. 15, is doubtful). Symm. and others of the ancient interpreters, supposed it be the noun אִיָּלָה, meaning *vestibule*, *portico*, etc., and hence the rendering of Symm. στερεὰ ἦν τὰ πρόπυλα αὐτῶν, and Jerome, *vestibula*. The LXX have καὶ στερέωμα ἐν τῇ μάστιγι αὐτῶν.

<sup>f</sup> אֶת־הַתְּהַיָּוָה, a denominative from תְּהַיָּוָה, *a necklace*, and occurring in the Kal only here.

<sup>g</sup> רִבְצָה. The second clause of this verse will admit of four renderings: (1) רִבְצָה may be in constr. with תְּהַיָּוָה (comp. Isa. lix. 7), "a clothing of violence," and רִבְצָה, the object of the verb (which is the construction of other verbs of *clothing*, comp. לְבַשׁוּתָהּ, Isa. xi. 9); (2) רִבְצָה may be the predicate (which the accent *Rebia Geresh* would indicate), "violence covereth them as a garment"; (3) רִבְצָה may belong to תְּהַיָּוָה, and the object of the verb be understood, "their violence covereth (them) as a garment" [this rendering is most in accordance with the accents]; (4) By an enallage of number, sing. for plur., "they cover (themselves)

with their own violence as with a garment." So the LXX, περιεβάλοντο ἀδικίαν; Symm., ὑπερηφανίαν ἡμφιάσαντο, and Jerome, *Circum-dederunt sibi iniquitatem*.

<sup>b</sup> עֵינֵיהֶם [or עֵינֵיהֶם, which is found in some mss., the dual noun being with the sing. verb. Stier, indeed, maintains that this is the only correct form, as עֵינֵי is not used with a singular noun, but we have עֵינֵיהֶם in ver. 5, which is only a plena scriptio for עֵינֵיהֶם, עֵינֵי having no plural; lit. "their eye goeth forth (looks out proudly) from fatness (i.e. a sleek countenance)." Comp. Job xv. 27. Aq. ἐξήλθον ἀπὸ στέατος ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν, and Symm. προέπιπτον ἀπὸ λιπαρότητος (al. ἐξήγσαν ἀπὸ λίπους) οἱ ὀφθ. αὐτ., take עֵי as plural. Ewald, Hupfeld, and others, following the LXX, ἐξελεύσεται ὡς ἐκ στέατος ἡ ἀδικία αὐτῶν, would read עֵינֵיהֶם, "their iniquity," or without changing the word, would take עֵי here to stand for עֵי, as in Zech. v. 6, and the K'ri in Hos. x. 10. (And so the Syr. ܥܝܢܝܗܡ). They also take עֵי, as in xvii. 10, in the sense of *heart*, or, as Ewald renders, *aus feistem Innern*, the word *fatness* denoting *a stupid, insensible heart*. And so Gesen. *Thesaur.* in v.

<sup>i</sup> רִמְזוּ. The word occurs only here. It is doubtless to be connected with the Aramaic רִמְזוּ, Eng. *mock*. Comp. the Greek, μῦκος, *μυκτήρ*, *the nose*, as expressing scorn *μυκτηρίζω*, etc. So Symm. καταμωκόμενοι, and Jerome, *irriserunt*. The Chald., Rabb., and others, wrongly connected the word with רָמַז, either (1) trans. "they make to melt, i.e. afflict, others"; or, as the Prayer-book version, "they corrupt others"; or (2) "they melt away, i.e. they are dissolute, corrupt," etc.

<sup>k</sup> עָתָה, as in Ex. ix. 23, for עָתָה, though it looks almost like an abbreviated Hithpael, a form which would be peculiarly suitable here in its common meaning, *grassari*. עָתָה in the first clause of the verse is for עָתָה, as in xlix. 15, and with the tone on the ult. The perfect, followed by the future, shows that the second clause is subordinated to the first: "*They have set, etc., whilst their tongue goeth,*" etc. The construction is the same as in ver. 3.

<sup>l</sup> רִשְׁיָם. If we retain the K'thibh, we must assume that the sing. is here put for the plur., the subject being virtually the same as that of the plur. verbs in ver. 7, 8, only that now these prosperous sinners are regarded singly, not collectively. "He, i.e. one and another of these proud, ungodly men, makes his people (those whom he draws after him) turn hither, i.e. copy his example"; or, more generally, "one turns his people," which is equivalent to the passive, "his people are turned." Hence the K'ri, according to which עָתָה is the subject, is unnecessary. Phillips, who adopts the K'ri, refers the suffix to Jehovah.

His people, i.e. the people of God. And so the Chald., and Abu Walid, and the LXX, who have *ὁ λαός μου*.

<sup>m</sup> מִצָּרַף, from the root מִצַּרַף, *to wring out, to drain*. The verb is several times used with שָׂתַה, *to drink*, in order to convey the idea of draining to the dregs. So in lxxv. 9; Isa. li. 17; Ezek. xxiii. 34. It is used of *wringing out* (a) the dew from the fleece, in Judges vi. 38; (b) the blood of the sacrifices, Lev. i. 15; v. 9. Our version has everywhere employed *wring out* as the equivalent, except in Ezek., where it has *suck out*. Mendelssohn renders:

Bethöret folgt ihm das Volk in ganzen Haufen,  
Strömt ihm, wie Wasserfluthen, nach.

In the Beor, “waters to the full” is explained to mean “the waters of a full river, which rush along with strength,” and to be used as a figure or comparison; “so the men of their generation run after them”; and מִצָּרַף is said to be for מִצָּרַף־אֵף, the אֵף being dropped, as in Num. xi. 11 and Ezek. xxviii. 16. So this word was taken, too, by the older interpreters. The LXX, ἡμερὰι (reading מִצָּרַף־אֵף) πληρεῖς ἐνευρεθήσονται ἐν αὐτοῖς; Sym. καὶ διαδοχῆ πλήρης εὐρεθήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς; Jerome, *quīs (מִצָּרַף) plenus invenietur in eis*.

<sup>n</sup> אֶמְצַא־תִּי. The word, Hupfeld thinks, is out of place. What is the meaning, he asks, “If I had said (or thought, i.e. said to myself) let me declare thus”? Not the forming the purpose to speak so, but the speaking so itself, would have been the treachery against the children of God. And therefore he would transpose the word either before the particle אֵף, “I said (thought) if I should declare thus,” etc., or to the beginning of ver. 13. See on xxxii. note <sup>e</sup>. But is it not possible that אֶמְצַא־תִּי may stand parenthetically: “If (methought) I should declare thus”?

<sup>o</sup> כִּמֹּד. If the reading be correct, this word must here stand as an adverb, in the sense *so, thus* = כִּן, a meaning, however, in which it never occurs anywhere else. Maurer, however, contends for this as the primary meaning, כִּי being abbreviated from כִּן and מִו = מִוּ, indefinite, *quidquam*; hence the compound כִּמֹּד means *tale quid*.] Some would punctuate כִּמֹּד־כִּי, and suppose it to stand for כִּי־מִו, *like them* (the persons mentioned before), or *like these things* (such words as those just repeated), but this form, again, is never found. Ewald would read כִּמֹּד־כִּי־מִו, and supposes the מִו to have been dropped out because of the following מִו, and we must either adopt this supposition, or, with Gesen., Hupfeld, and Delitzsch, conclude that the word כִּמֹּד is here used abnormally as an adverb, as the older interpreters take it. LXX, εἰ ἔλεγον, διηγῆσομαι οὕτως; Aq. (perhaps Symm.), Theod., εἰ ἐ. δ. τοιαῦτα.

Delitzsch compares the elliptical use of the prep. כִּי, Isa. lix. 18, and the absolute use in Hos. vii. 16; xi. 7.

<sup>p</sup> וַיִּחְשְׁבֶנָּה. The punctuation of the ו with Pathach here, instead of Kametz, appears to be arbitrary. Delitzsch, indeed, draws a distinction, and says that with ו the word would mean *et cogitavi*, whereas with ו it means *et cogitabam* (or, which would be unsuitable here, *et cogitare volo*). But in other passages where this last form occurs, as lxix. 21; Judges vi. 9; Job xxx. 26, it is joined either with another verb in the fut., with ו, or with a verb in the pret., without any mark of difference of time. There is more force in what Delitzsch says as to the cohortative form of the fut., which often serves, without a particle of condition, to introduce the protasis. (See on xlii. note <sup>c</sup>.) So here we might render, "And *when* (or *if*) I thought to understand," etc., καὶ εἰ ἐλογιζόμεην, as Aq. and Theod.

In the next clause it is unimportant whether we adopt the K'thibh הַיָּא, or the K'ri הַיָּא. The former may refer more immediately to the preceding זֶה, and the latter to the whole preceding sentence; but either must be taken equally in a neuter sense.

<sup>a</sup> מְשִׂאוֹת occurs again only in lxxiv. 3. It is related, as Hupfeld remarks, to such forms as מְשִׂאוֹת, and the like, but is not to be derived from שָׂא, as if it were for מְשִׂאוֹת, "an impossible form," but from a root נָשָׂא, with the common interchange of letters in weak stems. (See next note.) The LXX, κατέβαλες αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ἐπαρθῆναι, connecting the word with the root נָשָׂא.

<sup>r</sup> בְּקִלְוֹת. The noun is apparently, by transposition of letters, for בְּקִלְוֹת. It occurs once in the sing. in Isa. xvii. 14, elsewhere only in Job and Ezekiel, and there always in the plural.

<sup>s</sup> בְּעִיר. So far as the grammatical form goes, this might mean *in the city*, as the ancient interpreters understood (whence our Prayer-book version, but in defiance of grammar, "Thou shalt make their image vanish *out of the city*"). But the sense is not suitable. The word is evidently a contracted form of Hiphil infin. for בְּעִיר, and is used intransitively, as in xxxv. 23. For other instances of this contracted infin. see Jer. xxxix. 7; 2 Chron. xxxi. 10; Prov. xxiv. 17.

<sup>t</sup> כִּי. According to Hupfeld, this introduces the protasis "*when* my heart," etc., the apodosis beginning with ו in ver. 22, and the imperfects (futures) being relative preterites. Similarly Ewald. But I know of no instance by which such a construction can be defended. Commonly when כִּי introduces the protasis, followed by a verb in the future, that tense is used in its proper *future* (not its *imperfect*) meaning. Comp. lxxv. 3; 2 Chron. vi. 28. Delitzsch, feeling this, supposes that the



Psalmist is speaking, not of the past, but of a possible return of his temptation, and renders, *si exacerbaretur animus meus atque in renibus meis pungerer*, "if my mind should grow bitter, etc., . . . then I should be," etc. But I cannot see why, if וְ be taken simply as a conjunction, (LXX, Aq., ὄτι) *for*, and not as governing the clause, the verbs may not be regarded as imperfects, describing continued past action. The first verb means, properly, "to turn acid" (lit. "make itself acid"). Flam. *acescere*; Calvin, *acidum esse instar fermenti*. Perhaps Aq. meant this by his rendering ἐτροπόδο. The second is also strictly a reflexive, "to prick oneself." Both verbs, misunderstood by the ancient interpreters, were first rightly explained by Rashi.

<sup>u</sup> וְבוֹרָה. The Hebrew will admit of the rendering, "Thou wilt receive me *with* glory" (accus. of instrument). So the LXX, μετὰ δόξης προσελάβον με. Symm. takes בּ as the nominative, and the verb as in the 3d pers. καὶ ὕστερον τιμὴν διεδέξατό με. Contrary to the accents, others would take אַחֲרַי as a prep. (referring to Zech. ii. 12, which is not really analogous): "Thou leadest me *after* glory," i.e. as my aim (Ewald, Hitzig), or *in the train of* glory" (Hengst.). But the other interpretation, "*to* glory," i.e. "to the everlasting glory of God's presence," is far better. אַחֲרַי is an adverb, as in Gen. x. 18; xxx. 21; Prov. xx. 17, and many other places. On the use of the verb לָקַח in this sense, see xlix. 16. The whole context is in favor of the rendering "to glory."

## PSALM LXXIV.

THIS Psalm and the seventy-ninth both refer to the same calamity, and were, it may reasonably be conjectured, written by the same author. Both Psalms deplore the rejection of the nation, the occupation of Jerusalem by a foreign army, and the profanation of the sanctuary; but the seventy-fourth dwells chiefly on the destruction of the temple; the seventy-ninth on the terrible slaughter of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Assuming that both Psalms refer to the same event, we have to choose between two periods of Jewish history and only two, to which the language of the sacred poet could reasonably refer. The description might apply either to the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, or to the insolent oppression of Antiochus Epiphanes; and with one or other of these two occasions it has been usually connected.

That no presumption can be raised against the latter of these dates

from the history of the canon, I have already shown in the General Introduction to Vol. i. pp. 15, 16, and the introduction to Ps. xlv.; and there are, more particularly in this Psalm, some expressions which are most readily explained on the supposition that it was composed in the time of the Maccabees.

(a) One of these is the complaint (ver. 9), "There is no prophet any more." It is difficult to understand how such a complaint could have been uttered when Jeremiah and Ezekiel were both living; or with what truth it could be added, "Neither is there any among us who knoweth how long," when Jeremiah had distinctly foretold that the duration of the captivity should be seventy years (Jer. xxv. 11; xxix. 10).<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, such words are perfectly natural in the mouth of a poet of the Maccabean age. For two hundred and fifty years, from the death of Malachi, the voice of prophecy had been silent. During that long interval no inspired messenger had appeared to declare and to interpret the will of God to his people. And how keenly sensible they were of the greatness of their loss in this respect we learn from the frequent allusions to it in the First Book of Maccabees (iv. 46; ix. 27; xiv. 41). The language of this Psalm, then, is but the expression of what we know to have been the national feeling at that time.

(b) Another feature of this Psalm is the description of the profanation of the sanctuary, and the erection there of the signs (ver. 4), the military standards or religious emblems, of the heathen. The Book of Maccabees presents the same picture. There we read that Antiochus, on his return from the second Egyptian campaign, "entered proudly into the sanctuary, and took away the golden altar, and the candlestick of light, and all the vessels thereof" (i. 21). Two years later, the king sent a division of his army against Jerusalem, which fell upon the city, and having made a great slaughter of the inhabitants, plundered it, set it on fire, pulled down the houses and walls, and carried away captive women and children and cattle. A strong garrison was placed in the city of David, the sanctuary was polluted, and the sabbaths and festival days profaned. The abomination of desolation was set up on the altar, and sacrifice offered "on the idol altar, which was upon the altar of God." (1 Macc. i. 30-53; see also ii. 8-12; iii. 48-51.)

On the other hand, it has been urged that there is nothing in the language of the Psalm inconsistent with the supposition that it refers

<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested to me by a friend, that this complaint would not be unsuitable to the time of Esar-haddon's invasion (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11). That period was singularly barren in prophets.

to the Chaldean invasion. The desolation of Jerusalem and the profanation of the sanctuary are described in terms quite as suitable to that event. Indeed, one part of the description, "They have cast thy sanctuary into the fire" (ver. 7), it is argued, would only hold good of the destruction of the temple by the Chaldeans. Antiochus Epiphanes plundered the temple, but did not burn it. On the contrary, we are particularly informed that not the temple itself, but the gates of the temple (1 Macc. iv. 38; 2 Macc. viii. 33), and the porch of the temple (2 Macc. i. 8), were burned, nor is the complete destruction of the whole building implied in the same way as it is in the Psalm.

It has also been contended that even the complaint of the cessation of prophecy is not absolutely at variance with the older date, provided we suppose that the Psalm was written during the Exile, when both Jeremiah and Ezekiel had ceased to prophesy, and before Daniel entered upon his office. (So Delitzsch; and Calvin admits this to be possible.) Tholuck, however, observes that verses 10, 18, 23, lead us to infer that the Chaldean army was still in the land, and even in Jerusalem itself, and therefore that the Psalm must have been written when Jeremiah had already been carried away in chains to Ramah, on his way to Babylon (Jer. xl. 1). He suggests further, that these words (and the same may be said of the words which immediately follow, "Neither is there any among us who knoweth," etc.), need not be taken in their exact, literal meaning. The deep sorrow of the poet would lead him to paint the picture in colors darker and gloomier than the reality. Seventy years—who could hope to see the end of that weary length of captivity?—who knew if the end would ever come? Such was the language of despondency. To one who refused to be comforted, the end promised was as though it were not.

Further, both Jeremiah and Ezekiel, it has been observed, indulge in a similar strain. Thus the former sings: "Her gates are sunk into the ground; he hath destroyed and broken her bars: her king and her princes are among the Gentiles: the law is no more; *her prophets also find no vision from Jehovah*" (Lam. ii. 9). And the latter threatens: "Then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients" (Ezek. vii. 26). Neither of these passages, however, so absolutely denies the existence of a prophet as that in the Psalm. One other expression in the Psalm (ver. 3), "Lift up thy feet to the everlasting ruins," seems, it must be confessed, most suitable in the mouth of an exile during the Babylonish captivity.

The relation both of this Psalm and the seventy-ninth to the writings of Jeremiah, presents another difficulty. Jer. x. 25 is almost

word for word the same as Ps. lxxix. 6, 7. Again, Lam. ii. 2 resembles lxxiv. 7, and Lam. ii. 7 is very similar to lxxiv. 4; and, as we have already seen, there is at least a point of connection between lxxiv. 9 and Lam. ii. 9; besides these, other minor similarities may be observed, on a comparison of the Psalmist with the prophet. Now we know that it is the habit of Jeremiah to quote largely and frequently from other writers, and in particular from the Psalms and the prophets. But on either of the hypotheses above mentioned, as to the date of our two Psalms, the writer of these must have imitated the language of Jeremiah. This is, of course, quite possible. A similar problem, and a very interesting one, arises out of the relation of Jeremiah to the later chapters of Isaiah, xl.-lxvi. That one of the two writers was familiar with the other is beyond a doubt.

On the whole, I am inclined to think that this Psalm may be most naturally explained by events that took place in the time of the Maccabees. If, in any particular, the language seems too strong as applied to that time—as, for instance, the description of the burning of the temple—this may be as readily explained by poetic exaggeration, as verse 9 is so explained by those who hold the opposite view. Or, perhaps, as Calvin suggests, the writer, overcome by the mournful spectacle before his eyes, could not but carry back his thoughts to the earlier catastrophe, and thence borrowed some images, blending in his imagination the two calamities in one.

The Psalm does not consist of any regular system of strophes.

It opens with a cry of complaint, and a prayer that God would remember his people in their desolation (ver. 1-3).

It then pictures the triumph of the enemy, the destruction of the sanctuary, and the loss of divine counsel in the day of peril (ver. 4-9).

Then again there is an appeal to God for help (ver. 10, 11), and a calling to mind of God's past wonders on behalf of his people, and of his almighty power as seen in the world of nature (ver. 12-17).

And finally, based upon this, a prayer that God would not suffer reproach to be brought upon his own name by the triumph of the heathen over his people (ver. 22, 23).

[A Maschil of Asaph.<sup>a</sup>]

1 O GOD, why hast thou cast (us) off forever,

(Why) doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy  
pasture?

1. HAST THOU CAST OFF. See note supplied from the next clause, viz. "the  
on xlv. 9. The object here may be sheep of thy pasture."

2 Remember thy congregation which thou hast purchased of old,  
 Which thou hast ransomed to be<sup>b</sup> the tribe of thine  
 inheritance,  
 (And) the mount Zion wherein thou hast dwelt.

WHY DOTH THINE ANGER SMOKE. For the figure, compare xviii. 8 [9], where see note. There is a change in the tenses, the preterite in the first clause being used to denote *the act* of casting off, the future (present) here to denote the continuance of the same. See on xlv. 9.

SHEEP OF THY PASTURE; a favorite figure in those Psalms which are ascribed to Asaph. (See Introduction, vol. i. pp. 77-79. It is found also in Jer. xxiii. 1. The name contains in itself an appeal to the compassion and tender care of the shepherd. Can the shepherd slay his sheep?

2. THOU HAST PURCHASED . . . THOU HAST RANSOMED. Both verbs contain in themselves a reason why God should remember his people. The first verb (*kānāh*) may mean only *to get, to acquire*, the idea of a price paid for the acquisition being not necessarily contained in the word. So Gen. iv. 1, "I have *gotten* a man with (the help of) Jehovah"; Gen. xiv. 22, "the most High God, *possessor* of heaven and earth"; Prov. viii. 22, "Jehovah *possessed* me in the beginning of his way." And Jerome renders here *possedisti* and the LXX, ἐκτήσω. Exactly analogous is the use of the Greek περιποιεῖσθαι; Acts xx. 28, "The church of God which he purchased (acquired) with his own blood." 1 Tim. iii. 13: "Purchase (acquire) to themselves a good degree." Comp. Eph. i. 14 and 1 Thess. v. 9, where see Vaughan's note. The second verb (*ga-al*, to ransom, whence *go'el*) from a root meaning *to loosen* [see Fürst's Concord.], is the technical word for every kind of redemption under the law, whether of fields (Lev. xxv. 25), tithes (Lev. xxvii. 13, 15, etc.), or slaves (Lev. xxv. 48, 49). The next of kin was called *Go'el*, because on him devolved the duty of redeeming land which his poor relation had been compelled to sell (Lev. xxv. 25), and also because on him fell the obligation

of redeeming, demanding satisfaction for the murder of a kinsman (Num. xxxv. 12, 19, and often). A third word is common in Hebrew (*padah*), which means properly *to separate*, and then *to loosen*, and so *to redeem*, as in Dent. ix. 26, "Thine inheritance which thou hast redeemed." This word is also employed, but more rarely, in the technical sense of the redemption of the first-born of animals for instance (Ex. xiii. 13; xxxiv. 20). Both this and the verb *ga-al* are frequently used of the deliverance from Egypt and from Babylon.

OF OLD, as in xlv. 2, with reference, doubtless, to the deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

THE TRIBE. Such is, apparently, the meaning of the word here, the whole nation being regarded, not as many tribes, but as one tribe, probably in reference to other nations. The same expression occurs besides only in Jer. x. 16 and li. 19, whereas in Isa. lxiii. 17 we have the plural form, "*the tribes of thine inheritance.*" The E.V. has here "*rod of thine inheritance,*" and so Luther, Calvin, and others, and the word frequently means "*rod, staff*" (as in xxiii.), *sceptre* (as in xlv. 6 [7]), etc., but here it is usually explained to mean *measuring-rod*, and so *the portion measured out*, — a meaning, however, in which the word never occurs. Jerome explains it by *sceptre* and so Theophylact, δηλοῖ δὲ ἡ ῥάβδος τὴν βασιλείαν.

THE CONGREGATION represents the people in their religious aspect, THE TRIBE in their national and political aspect, or as distinct from other nations (Delitzsch); cf. Jer. x. 16; li. 19, with Isa. lxiii. 17. The two great facts, the redemption from Egypt, and God's dwelling in the midst of them, the one of which was preparatory to the other, seem here, as in the sixty-eighth Psalm, to sum up all their history.

3. LIFT UP THY FEET (lit. *footsteps*,

3 Lift up thy feet unto the everlasting ruins!<sup>c</sup>

The enemy hath laid waste all in the sanctuary;

4 Thine adversaries have roared in the midst of thine assembly;<sup>d</sup>

They have set up their signs as signs.

the word being a poetical one), i.e. Come speedily to visit those ruins which seem as though they would never be repaired. A similar phrase (though the words in the original are different) occurs in Gen. xxix. 1, where it is said of Jacob, that after his vision "he lifted up his feet," a phrase "which in Eastern language still signifies to walk quickly, to reach out, to be in good earnest, not to hesitate." — Kitto, *Bible Illustrations*, i. 305.

EVERLASTING, the same word as in ver. 1, "forever," i.e. which seem to human impatience, *looking forward*, as if they would never be built again. In Isa. lxi. 4, "the everlasting ruins," (where, however, the Hebrew words are different) are so called, *looking back* on the long past continuance of the desolation.

IN THE SANCTUARY. This is his greatest grief. His country has been laid waste with fire and sword, his friends slain or carried into captivity, but there is no thought so full of pain as this, that the holy and beautiful house wherein his fathers worshipped has been plundered and desecrated by a heathen soldiery. Instead of the psalms, and hymns, and sacred anthems which once echoed within those walls, has been heard the brutal shout of the fierce invaders, roaring like lions (such is the meaning of the word in the next verse) over their prey. Heathen emblems, military and religious, have displaced the emblems of Jehovah. The magnificent carved work of the temple, such as the cherubims, and the palms, and the pillars, with pomegranates and lily-work (1 Kings vi. 15, etc., if the allusion be to the first temple) which adorned it, have been hewed down as remorselessly as a man would cut down so much wood in the forest. And then that splendid pile, so full of sacred memories, so dear to the heart of every true Israelite, has

been set on fire, and left to perish in the flames. Such is the scene as it passes again before the eyes of his mind.

4. THINE ASSEMBLY, i.e. here evidently "place of assembly," a word originally applied to the Mosaic tabernacle, and afterwards to the great national festivals. Here it would seem the temple is meant. Comp. Lam. ii. 6, where the word occurs in both senses. "He hath destroyed *his assembly* (or temple; E.V. *his places of assembly*) . . . He hath caused to be forgotten *solemn feast and sabbath*," etc. It comes from a root signifying to *fix to establish*, etc., and hence is used both of a fixed time (see on lxxv. 2) and a fixed place.

THEIR SIGNS. An emphasis lies on the pronoun, comp. ver. 9. I have retained the literal rendering, together with the ambiguity of the original. These were either military ensigns, standards, trophies, and the like (as in Num. ii. 2 ff.), the temple having been turned into a barrack; or, religious emblems, heathen rites and ceremonies, perhaps even idols, by which the temple and altar of Jehovah were profaned. (In this last sense the words would aptly describe the state of things under Antiochus Epiphanes. Comp. 1 Macc. i. 54 and 59, "Now the five-and-twentieth day of the month they did sacrifice upon the idol altar, which was upon the altar of God." Again in chap. iii. 48, it is said that "the heathen had sought to paint the likeness of their images" in the book of the law.) This last sense is further confirmed by the use of the word in ver. 9. But both meanings may be combined, the word *sign* being here used in its most general sense of all symbols of a foreign power of whatever kind. So Geier: "Ita ut accipiat pro indicio potestatis alienae, quae est tum politica, tum religiosa: ita namque hostes mutaverant quoque signa priora, quibus tum

- 5 It seems<sup>e</sup> as though one lifted up on high  
 Axes against the thickets of the wood :
- 6 And now the carved work thereof<sup>f</sup> altogether  
 With hatchet and hammers they break down.
- 7 They have set on fire thy sanctuary,  
 They have profaned the dwelling-place of thy name (even)  
 unto the earth.
- 8 They have said in their heart : " Let us make havoc<sup>g</sup> of them  
 altogether."  
 They have burnt up all the houses<sup>h</sup> of God in the land.

Dei, tum magistratus proprii jurisdictione  
 ac veneratio designabatur."

5. This verse has been completely  
 misunderstood by our translators, who  
 have here followed Calvin, as well as  
 by nearly all the older interpreters. It  
 does not describe the preparation once  
 made for building the temple, by hewing  
 down cedars in the forest of Lebanon,  
 but it compares the scene of ruin in the  
 interior, the destruction of the carved  
 work, etc., to the wide gap made in some  
 stately forest by the blows of the wood-  
 man's axe. See the use of the same  
 figure, Jer. xlv. 22. Buchanan's par-  
 aphrase gives the true meaning :

Aedis rucntis it fragor :

Quales sub altis murmurant quercus  
 jugis

Caesae bipenni quum ruunt.

It SEEMS; lit. "it is known, makes  
 itself known, appears," etc. as in Gen.  
 xli. 21; Ex. xxi. 36; xxxiii. 16. Or  
 possibly, "he, i.e. the enemy, makes  
 himself known as one who lifts up," etc.

7. THEY HAVE SET ON FIRE; lit.  
 "They have cast into the fire." Hup-  
 feld compares the German, "in Brand  
 legen, stecken," and the French, "mettre  
 à feu."

THEY HAVE PROFANED . . . UNTO  
 THE EARTH, i.e. "by casting it to the  
 earth," as the expression is filled up in  
 the E. V., but in the Prayer-book version  
 the English idiom is made to adapt  
 itself to the Hebrew, and this I have  
 followed. We have a similar construc-  
 tion in lxxxix. 39 [40], "Thou hast

defiled his crown to the earth," i.e. by  
 casting it to the earth. For the fuller  
 expression on the other hand, see Lam.  
 ii. 2.

8. ALL THE HOUSES OF GOD IN THE  
 LAND; lit. "all the assemblies," which  
 must here mean "places of assembly,"  
 as in ver. 4, and Lam. ii. 6. The work  
 of devastation does not stop short with  
 the temple. The plain meaning of the  
 words is, that there were many other  
 places for religious worship in the land  
 beside the temple, and that these, as  
 well as the temple, were destroyed. All  
 attempts to get rid of this meaning are  
 utterly futile. It is assumed that this  
 Psalm refers to the Chaldean invasion,  
 and as we hear of no synagogues or  
 legalized holy places before the Exile,  
 therefore it is said the temple must be  
 meant, the plural being here used for  
 the singular. It is quite true that we  
 have other plural forms applied to the  
 temple. Thus in xliii. 3, "Thy taber-  
 nacles," lxxii. 17, "the sanctuaries of  
 God," the plural being used to denote  
 the several parts, courts, chambers, etc.,  
 of the one building. But it is not only  
 the plural word that we have here, but  
 the far wider phrase "all the places of  
 assembly in the land." Hupfeld tries to  
 escape from this difficulty by saying that  
 all the previous different names of the  
 sanctuary are finally comprised in one —  
 that one house which may be called  
 "all the houses of God," because it  
 represents and is the substitute for all;  
 and he attempts to defend this by Isa.

- 9 Our signs we see not : there is no prophet any more,  
 Neither is there with us any who knoweth how long.
- 10 How long, O God, shall the adversary reproach ?  
 Shall the enemy despise thy name forever ?

iv. 5, where, however, "every dwelling-place," and "her assemblies," are expressly confined to "Mount Zion." Mendelssohn has a similar explanation, except that he supposes the expression to be used from the point of view of the enemy: "They say in their heart, that by destroying this house, we shall destroy all the assemblies of God together"; Israel having but one sanctuary, while all other nations build houses of assembly for their gods in every city and district. But all this is the merest trifling, and it is surprising that commentators of unquestioned ability should have recourse to such strained interpretations. Such interpretations are unnecessary, even on the assumption that this Psalm refers to the Chaldean invasion. Before that time synagogues are not mentioned, it is true, nor indeed are they in the Books of the Maccabees; still it is scarcely credible that even before the Exile there were no houses of God, no places for religious worship, except the temple in Jerusalem. Without holding, as Vitringa surmised, and as others have thought, that sacred places, such as those consecrated by the patriarchs and others, in early times — Ramah, Bethel, Gilgal, Shiloh — are meant, or "the high places" (see 2 Chron. xxxiii. 17; comp. 1 Kings xviii. 30, from which it appears that in [? before] Elijah's time there was an altar of Jehovah on Mount Carmel), there must have been buildings where it was customary to meet, especially on the Sabbath (which in Lev. xxiii. 3 is called "an holy convocation"), and to pray, turning towards Jerusalem. There must surely have been some public worship beyond the limits of the family, and if so, places, houses, for its celebration. If, however, the Psalm be of the age of the Maccabees, there is no difficulty, for before that time, there can be little doubt, synagogues were estab-

lished. Our translators would seem by their rendering "synagogues," to have regarded this as a Maccabean Psalm. See more in Critical Note.

9. OUR SIGNS, i.e. the signs of God's dominion and presence in the midst of us. Taken in connection with what immediately follows, "There is no prophet," etc., these may mean miraculous signs, in which sense the word frequently occurs. Or it may only denote here religious emblems, which were displaced to make room for the signs of the heathen. See ver. 4.

NO PROPHET. Such a complaint seems most suitable to the time of the Maccabees, when, in fact, the complaint was frequent. See introduction to the Psalm. Stier draws attention to the emphatic way in which the lament here closes; no signs — religion destroyed and rooted out; no prophet — to announce approaching consolation, or to begin the work of restoration; none of us all, therefore, knows how long this sad state of things shall last. The latter expression refers, not to the prophet (as Hupfeld), but to the mass of the people.

10. Taking up that word, How long? the Psalmist turns with it to God, beseeching him not to suffer this reproach to be cast upon his name. Twice the same appeal is made (see ver. 18 and 22). This holy jealousy for the honor of God, as bound up with his people's deliverance, is characteristic of the Old Testament. The feeling is strikingly exemplified in the prayers of Moses, Ex. xxxii. 12, 13; Num. xiv. 13-16; Dent. ix. 28, comp. xxxii. 27.

11. WHY WITHDRAWEST THOU; lit. why makest thou to return, i.e. into thy bosom. See Ex. iv. 7, where the full expression occurs; it denotes, of course, a state of inactivity, the hand being enveloped in the ample folds of the Eastern robe.



- 11 Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand?  
 (Pluck it out) from the midst of thy bosom, consume  
 (them)!
- 12 Surely God is my King of old,  
 Working deliverances in the midst of the earth;
- 13 THOU didst divide the sea through thy strength,  
 Thou brakest the heads of the monsters upon the waters.
- 14 THOU didst crush the heads of Leviathan,  
 That thou mightest give him as food to the people  
 inhabiting the wilderness.<sup>1</sup>

(PLUCK IT OUT.) It seems necessary to supply the ellipse in this way. The construction is a pregnant one, similar to that which we have already had in ver. 7. For the absolute use of the verb, CONSUME, comp. lix 13 [14]. It may either be rendered as above, or perhaps, as Meyer, Stier, and others, "Make an end," i.e. of this state of things.

12. SURELY, or, "and yet," in spite of this seeming inactivity. The appeal rests, first, on the fact that God has already manifested his power in signal instances on behalf of his people, and next, on the dominion of God as Creator and absolute Ruler of the universe.

MY KING, expressive of the strong personal feeling of the Psalmist. See note on xliv. 4, and comp. Hab. i. 12, where, in like manner, the prophet claims his own covenant relation to God, whilst speaking as the representative of the people, "Art thou not from everlasting, O Jehovah my God, my Holy One?—we shall not die."

13-15. Special instances of God's wonder-working power in the passage of the Red Sea, in bringing water from the rock, and in the passage of the Jordan.

THE MONSTERS. (Symmachus, τῶν κητῶν, the whales.) A symbolical description of the Egyptians. Comp. Isa. li. 9 and Ezek. xxix. 3, where Pharaoh is called the "monster which is in the sea." The E.V. has in all these places "dragon" as the equivalent word.

Here the LXX have δράκων, to express both this word and *Leviathan* in the next clause. The same Hebrew word, *tannin*, is employed again cxlviii. 7, and also Gen. i. 21 (where it is rendered *whales*), to denote huge sea-monsters; lit creatures *extended, stretched out*, hence serpents, crocodiles, etc. Perhaps the crocodile (as in the next verse *Leviathan*) is meant here as emblematic of Egypt. The head of the monster has been smitten, and the huge unwieldy carcass lies floating on the waters. The plural HEADS has been supposed to refer to Pharaoh and his princes, but it may be only poetic amplification.

14. LEVIATHAN, i.e. the crocodile, as in Job xl. 25 (E.V. xli. 1). In what sense is this said to be given as food to the people inhabiting the wilderness? Bochart, who is followed by Hengstenberg and others, supposes that the allusion is to the Ichthyophagi who, according to Agatherides, fed on the sea-monsters which were thrown up on their shores. Comp. Herod. ii 69. Similarly, the LXX render λαοῖς τοῖς Αἰθίοψι. Others, again, think that by the people inhabiting the wilderness are meant the Israelites, to whom the Egyptians are said, figuratively, to be given as food, i.e. as plunder. But by far the simplest way is to understand the passage as meaning that the corpses of the Egyptians were cast upon the shore, and so became the prey of the wild beasts, which are here called a *people* inhabiting the wilderness, as in Prov. xxx. 25, 26 the

15 THOU didst cleave fountain and brook ;

THOU driedst up everflowing rivers.

16 Thine is the day, thine also is the night,

THOU hast established the light and the sun.

17 THOU hast set all the borders of the earth :

THOU hast formed summer and winter.

18 Remember this, how the enemy hath reproached Jehovah,

And how a foolish people have despised thy name.

ants and the conies are called "a people." Comp. also Joel i. 6 ; Zeph. ii. 14.

INHABITING THE WILDERNESS. On this word see on lxxii. note <sup>b</sup>.

15. THOU DIDST CLEAVE FOUNTAIN, etc. Another instance of a pregnant construction : for "Thou didst cleave the rock, whence fountain and brook issued forth." Comp. lxxxviii. 15 ; Hab. iii. 9. The reference, is, no doubt, to Ex. xvii. 6.

THOU DRIEDST UP. The same word is used, Josh. ii. 10 of the Red Sea, and iv. 23 ; v. 1, of the Jordan.

EVERFLOWING RIVERS ; lit. "streams of constant flow." The same word occurs in Ex. xiv. 27, "The sea returned to its *constant flow*, its usual current." See also Deut. xxi. 4 ; Amos v. 24. Here the Jordan is meant, the plural being used, not to denote the several streams by which it is fed (as Kimchi), but merely by way of poetic amplification. Δρ., ποταμούς στερούς ; Sym., π. ἀρχαίους.

16. From the wonders wrought by God on behalf of his people in their history, the poet rises to the wider view of his ever-continued, ever-displayed power and majesty in the world of nature. The miracle does not lead him to forget God's power and goodness in that which is not miraculous. The one is rather a witness to, and an instance of, the other.

LIGHT, or rather "luminary," corresponding to the Greek φωστήρ (which Aquila employs here). It is the same word which occurs in Gen. i. 14, 16, and is there rendered "lights." The singular is used collectively for the plural, all the heavenly bodies being meant,

and then of these the sun is named as chief. In the same way we have, as Hupfeld remarks, Judah and Jerusalem, Ephraim and Samaria, and so the Greeks say, Ἑλληνές τε καὶ Ἀθηναίους, and the like.

17. THE BORDERS OF THE EARTH, i.e. not those merely by which the land is divided from the sea (Gen i. 9, comp. Prov. viii. 29 ; Job xxxviii. 8, etc.), but all the boundary lines by which order is preserved, as those of the seasons, those of the nations (Deut. xxxii. 8 ; Acts xvii. 26), etc.

SUMMER AND WINTER, as before, DAY AND NIGHT, as marking the everlasting order of the world, and perhaps with reference to Gen. viii. 22. The literal rendering is, "Summer and winter—thou hast formed them." This verb is used of the fashioning of men and the animals (Gen. ii. 7, 19), from the dust, and here it is applied to the seasons, as in Isa. xlv. 7 to "the light and the darkness," as creatures of God's hand.

18. REMEMBER. The petition recurs (comp. ver. 2) with renewed force after the Psalmist has comforted himself with the recollection of God's almighty power, as both ruling the history of Israel, and giving laws to the material universe.

A FOOLISH PEOPLE, i.e. the heathen oppressors of Israel, whether Chaldean or Syrian. In ver. 22, again, we have the same word, "the foolish (man)." There the Targum has, "a foolish king," which has been supposed to mean Antiochus Epiphanes, though it might, of course, refer to Nebuchadnezzar. The same Chaldee word (ܢܘܦܫܐ *tiphsa*) is in the Targum on Deut. xxxii. 21 the

- 19 Give not the soul of thy turtle-dove to the wild beast,  
The life of thine afflicted forget not forever.
- 20 Look upon the covenant;  
For the dark places of the land are full of the habitations  
of violence.
- 21 O let not the oppressed turn back confounded,  
Let the afflicted and the poor praise thy name!
- 22 Arise, O God, plead thine own cause;  
Remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee all the  
day long.
- 23 Forget not the voice of thine adversaries,  
The tumult of them that rise against thee which goeth  
up forever.

equivalent of the same Hebrew word, where again the reference is to a heathen nation employed as the instrument of Israel's chastisement. In Lev. xxvi. 41, it is equivalent to the Hebrew *uncircumcised*. In Eccles. i. 26, the Samaritans are called "that foolish people."

20. LOOK UPON THE COVENANT. The appeal lies to that, not to anything in the Psalmist himself, or in his people. "This," says Tholuck, "is the everlasting refuge of the saints of God, even in the greatest dangers. And even if they have broken it, can the unbelief of men make the truth of God of none effect?" The covenant is that made first with Abraham, and then renewed with him and with the fathers. Comp. lxxviii. 10; Isa. lxiv. 8.

THE DARK PLACES, or, "darknesses." The word occurs elsewhere of the darkness of the grave (lxxxviii. 6 [7]; exliii. 3; Lam. iii. 6), and hence it may be used here in a figurative sense, merely

as expressing, generally, *misery, gloom*, etc., or as Delitzsch explains (who understands the Psalm of the Chaldean invasion), "Turn where we may, the darkened land is full of abodes of tyranny and oppression." It seems most probable, however, that those spots are meant which were the best fitted for scenes of violence and murder—the haunts of robbers, who there lay in wait for their victims. The banditti would speedily become numerous in a country where law and order were at an end. Comp. x. 8.

21. THE OPPRESSED; literally "the crushed"; TURN BACK, as in vi. 10 [11], or, perhaps, simply "return" (the usual meaning of the verb), i.e. from his approach and entreaty to thee.

22. REMEMBER HOW, etc.; lit. "Remember thy reproach from a foolish man all the day." See note on ver. 18.

23. GOETH UP, i.e. whence ascends to heaven, crying aloud for vengeance.

<sup>a</sup> On Maschil, see above on xxxii. note <sup>a</sup>, and General Introduction, Vol. i. p. 69; on Asaph, see l. note <sup>a</sup>, and General Introduction, Vol. i. p. 77.

<sup>b</sup> חַיִּים אֱלֹהִים. These words seem to be a predicate, the relative being supplied before אֱלֹהִים. So Ewald: "Hast erlöst zum Stamme," etc. Mendels. renders somewhat differently, as if אֱלֹהִים depended on יְהוָה, and

וְחַי were the predicate: “(Denke), Des Stammes, dir zum Eigenthum befreiet.” But in the Beor it is explained as I have rendered it above. Delitzsch (1st ed.) takes this clause as parenthetical, and says that the relative form of expression is here given up, though the next clause depends on וְזָכַר; but in his 2d ed. renders as in text.

<sup>c</sup> מְשִׁיבֵי רוּחַ. On the form and derivation of this word see on lxxiii. note <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>d</sup> מוֹצֵי קֶדֶד. A large number of mss. and editions have the plur. מוֹצֵי קֶדֶדִּים, as in ver. 8. The Chald., Kimchi, and others, have also adopted it, and it is in itself admissible, even if the temple be meant. See note on ver. 8.

<sup>e</sup> יָדָעָה. *It is known*, and so *it appears*, see note on ver. 5. This word puzzled all the ancient interpreters. The Chald. omits it altogether, but gives the true sense of the passage, which all the others have missed. As regards the construction, either this and the next verse describe, as in a parenthesis, the scene of destruction, and hence the verbs are *presents*, giving more vividness to the narration; or perhaps the two verses may be taken as protasis and apodosis. *As . . . so now* (יָעֲשֶׂה). פְּמַבְרִיא, lit. *as one causing to come in*, or perhaps *as one bringing*. So Gesen. *Thesaur. in v.* בְּרִיא, comp. Job xii. 6. In סָקָה the vowel is Kametz, not Kametz-Khatuph, as Nurzi calls it. Comp. פְּתַח־הַחַיִּת, Esth. iv. 8.

<sup>f</sup> פְּתַח־הַחַיִּת, *carved wood-work*, as in 1 Kings vi. 29. The fem. suff., cannot refer immediately to any of the preceding nouns. It seems to be used here as a neut., in an indefinite sense, referring generally to the “sanctuary” and “assembly” mentioned before.

<sup>g</sup> יָנִים. Kimchi first rightly explained this as 1st plur. fut. Kal. of יָנָה (elsewhere, except in the Part., occurring only in Hiph.), with suff. יָנִי instead of יָנִי, as יָנִים, Num. xxi. 30.

<sup>h</sup> מוֹצֵי קֶדֶדִּים. The word מוֹצֵד, as has been remarked, may be used either of a fixed *place* of meeting (hence the tabernacle was called מִצְחָה, *tent of meeting*, i.e. where God met the people; or of a fixed *time*, and so of the festivals, as in Lev. xxiii. 2, 4, 37. The ancient interpreters were divided as to the signification here. Aq. has ἐνέπρησαν πάσας τὰς συναγωγὰς. On the other hand, Symm., πάσας τὰς συναγαγὰς τοῦ Θεοῦ; Theod., πάντας καιρούς. And the LXX, who put the words into the mouth of the enemy, render, δεῦτε, καταπαύσωμεν (πάσας) τὰς ἑορτὰς τοῦ Κυρίου ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς. The sixth translator in the Hexapla (Montf.) has κατακαύσωμεν, which may have been the original reading of the LXX, as Jerome (in his Ep. to Sunnia and Fretela) contends. It might easily have been altered to avoid the awkwardness of saying,

“Let us *burn up* all the *feasts*.” Jerome translates the LXX, *Quiescere faciamus omnes dies festos Dei in terra*; but his own rendering of the Hebrew is *Incenderunt omnes solennitates Dei in terra*.

<sup>l</sup> אֲנִי־בְּעֵבֶר. This is grammatically indefensible. If the two nouns are in apposition, then the first cannot be in the stat. constr. It must be אֲנִי־בְּ. But more probably the second בְּ has been inserted by mistake before אֲנִי־בְּ. See a similar instance in Isa. xxxii. 1. The LXX, λαοῖς τοῖς Αἰθίοσιν; Aq., τοῖς ἐξέλευσομένοις; Theod. (λαῶ) τῶ ἐσχάτῳ, Εἴ (λαῶ) τῶ ἐξέλελυθότι.

<sup>k</sup> אֲנִי־בְּ. According to the accents, this word is not to be joined with what follows; hence many regard it as the constr. state put for the absol. But there is no instance of such usage. Others would supply אֲנִי־בְּ or some such word, *beast of (the field)*. It is better to regard it as an instance of a feminine noun terminating in its absolute state, in *-ath* instead of *-âh*. See on lxi. note <sup>a</sup>, and Kimchi's remark there quoted. It is, then, doubtful whether we should take אֲנִי־בְּ in the sense of *wild beasts*, or in the sense of *host* (sc. of enemies). Delitzsch contends that the latter is required, because in the very next clause it occurs in this sense, “*the congregation or host of thine afflicted*.” Comp. lxxviii. 10 [11], and note there.

Others would connect אֲנִי־בְּ אֲנִי־בְּ together, taking אֲנִי־בְּ in the sense of *eagerness*, as in xvii. 9 (where see note). Hence אֲנִי־בְּ אֲנִי־בְּ would either mean *to the eager host* (sc. of enemies) — so Gesen, Maurer, and others — or, *to the eager (fierce, devouring) wild beast*.

Hupfeld thinks the difficulty at once got over by the simple remedy of transposition, אֲנִי־בְּ אֲנִי־בְּ אֲנִי־בְּ, “Give not to rage (to the fierce will of the enemy) *the life of thy turtle-dove*.” He tries to defend this absolute use of אֲנִי־בְּ in the sense of *fierce desire*, by reference to xxvii. 12; xli. 2 [3], where the word, however, occurs with a genitive (“will of mine enemies”), which he thinks may be supplied here from the context. In the next clause he keeps the same meaning of אֲנִי־בְּ, “*the life of thine afflicted*.”

None of these explanations is satisfactory, though there can be no doubt as to the general sense of the passage. All the ancient versions have misunderstood אֲנִי־בְּ. The Chald. seems to have read אֲנִי־בְּ, as it paraphrases, “the souls of them that teach thy law.” Symm., (ψυχῶν) ἦν ἐδίδαξας τὸν νόμον; Jerome, *animam eruditam lege tua*. Others, apparently, as the LXX, Syr., Arab., and Ethiop., read אֲנִי־בְּ, “the soul (which) confesseth, or giveth thanks, to thee.” All agree in rendering the first part of the sentence alike, “Give not to the wild beasts,” except the Syr., which has אֲנִי־בְּ, “ne des fractioni”

(Dathe); but why not *praedae*? as in Isa. v. 29. Does not this point to a reading תַּיִתָּה or תַּיִתָּה, and may not the copyist have fallen into the error by his eye catching תַּיִתָּה in the next line?

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PSALM LXXV.

THE Psalm celebrates in prophetic strain the righteous judgment of God. The voice of God himself from heaven declares his righteousness, announces to the world that he is not, as human impatience has ever been wont to deem, regardless of wrong and suffering; but that he only waits for the moment which to his infinite wisdom seems best, that he may chastise the insolence of evil-doers.

There are no clearly marked historical allusions in the Psalm. It seems, however, not improbable, as has been conjectured by many commentators (Ewald, Tholuck, Delitzsch, etc.), that it may refer to the time of the Assyrian invasion, either as celebrating, or immediately anticipating, the defeat of Sennacherib. Like Ps. xlvi. it bears some resemblance to the prophecies of Isaiah uttered at that time. But there is, as Ewald has observed, a difference in the manner in which the prophet and the Psalmist treats his subject. The prophet adds thought to thought and scene to scene; he expands, enlarges upon, diversifies his theme. He sees in this one act of righteous judgment the prelude to many others. He threatens not the Assyrian only, but other nations who lift themselves up. The poet, on the other hand, seizes upon the one truth, the single thought of God's righteous judgment as manifested in this instance, and strives to present it to others with the same force and vividness with which it has filled his own mind. He, too, is a prophet, a prophet who has heard the word of God (ver. 2, etc.) and seen the vision of the Most High; but a prophet, as it were, under narrower conditions and for a more limited purpose.

The close resemblance between many of the expressions in this Psalm and parts of the song of Hannah in 1 Sam. ii. is very noticeable.

The Psalm opens with the ascription of praise which God's wonders, now and in all past time, have called forth (ver. 1).

It passes then to the prophetic announcement of the truth which has been uttered from heaven and echoed with triumph upon earth, of God's righteous judgment (ver. 2-8).

Finally, it concludes with a determination to publish the praise of Jehovah forever, whilst the same prophetic strain of triumph is heard, as in one last echo, repeating itself (ver. 9, 10).

[For the Precentor. (To the Melody) "Destroy not."\* A Psalm of Asaph, a Song.

1 WE give thanks to thee, O God, we give thanks ;

And (that) thy name is near thy wondrous works have told.

2 "When the set time is come

I myself will judge uprightly.

1, 2. The connection between these verses is not, at first sight, very obvious. It may, perhaps, be traced as follows : first, the Psalmist blends in one the past and the present. God has been, and is now, the object of Israel's praise ; as he has both in the past and in the present displayed his wonders on their behalf. (Hence the use of the perfect tense ; lit. "We have given thanks," etc.) Then he abruptly cites the words of God, words whose fulfilment he had just witnessed, or whose approaching fulfilment he saw in the spirit of prophecy, words that were themselves an exemplification of the truth that God is near, despite the madness of men and the disorders of the world.

AND (THAT) THY NAME IS NEAR. The construction of this member of the verse is doubtful. It may be rendered in two separate clauses: "And thy name is near ; they (i.e. men, or our fathers, as in xlv. 1, [2] ; lxxviii. 3) have told of thy wonders" (so Ewald). But it is, perhaps, better to connect the two clauses, as our translators have done. Luther and Mendelssohn, and, more recently, Hupfeld and Bunsen, have taken the same view.

THY NAME IS NEAR, not "near in our mouth," i.e. as the great object of praise (as Hengstenberg and others explain it, referring to Jer. xii. 2, a passage which is totally different), but near in presence, near in self-manifestation, near in love and power, near in succor and blessing. So in Deut. iv. 7, "What nation is there that hath God so near unto them." Comp. xlvi. 1, lxxvi. 1, "His name is great in Israel," and see

xxxiv. 18 [19] ; cxlv. 18, and the note on xx. 2.

2. God is abruptly introduced as the speaker, as in xlv. 10 [11]. The oracle is thus given as from the mouth of God himself, to those who may be in doubt or perplexity because their lot is cast in troublous times.

WHEN THE SET TIME IS COME ; lit. "When I shall have taken (reached) the set time," i.e. the time appointed in the divine counsels. The thread of time is ever running, as it were, from the spindle, but at the critical moment God's hand arrests it. (For this strong sense of the verb *take*, see xviii. 16 [17] and comp. *καιρος δεκτός, εἰπρόσδεκτος* of 2 Cor. vi. 2.) God is ever the righteous Judge, but he executes his sentence, not according to man's impatient expectations, but at the exact instant which he has himself chosen. The words are an answer to all such misgivings as those in lxxiii. 3, as well as a rebuke to all hasty and over-zealous reformers, who would pull up the tares with the wheat rather than wait for the harvest.

SET TIME. The Hebrew word (*mo'ed*) has also the signification *assembly, congregation*, which our translators have adopted here, and which is common in the phrase "tabernacle of the *congregation*," etc. The root idea is that of something *fixed*, whether time or place (and hence persons gathered in a place). See note on lxxiv. 4. The former sense is clearly preferable here. Comp. cii. 13 [14] (where the E.V. has correctly "set time" instead of "congregation" as here) ; Hab. ii. 3, "the appointed time," i.e. for the accomplishment of the vision. And so also Dan. viii. 19 ; xi.

3 (Though) the earth and all the inhabitants thereof are melting,

I myself have set up the pillars of it. [Selah.]

4 I said unto the arrogant, Deal not arrogantly,

And to the wicked, Lift not up (the) horn,

5 Lift not up your horn on high,

Speak (not) with a stiff neck." <sup>b</sup>

6 For not from the East, and not from the West,

And not from (the) wilderness (cometh) lifting up. <sup>c</sup>

7 No, God is Judge,

He putteth down one, and lifteth up another.

27, 35. The proper rendering is given by the LXX, *ὅταν λάβω καιρόν*. Jerome and the Vulgate, *cum accipero tempus*. Symmachus, apparently, led the way with the other interpretation, *ὅταν λάβω τὴν συναγωγὴν*. The "congregation" would, of course, mean all who are assembled to behold the solemn act of judgment, as in vii. 7 [8]; i. 5.

I MYSELF. The pronoun is emphatic. The Greek version known as the Fifth renders it still more emphatically: "I am; I prepared the pillars thereof forever" (*ἐγὼ εἰμὶ, ἡτοίμασα τοὺς στύλους αὐτῆς ἀεί*). The same prominence is given to the pronoun in the second member of the next verse.

3. Such a critical moment is the present. The world itself seems "utterly broken down and clean dissolved" (Isa. xxiv. 19, 20), but he who once built it up like a stately palace, still stays its pillars with his hand. The natural framework and the moral framework are here identified. To the poet's eye, the world of nature and the world of man are not two, but one. The words of Hannah's song (1 Sam. ii. 8) furnish an exact parallel: "For the pillars of the earth are Jehovah's, and he hath set the world upon them,"—language which, as the context shows, has a moral application.

HAVE SET UP; lit. "poised, balanced." A word properly used of fixing a thing by weight or measure. Cf. Job. xxviii. 25; Isa. xl. 12, 13.

4. I SAID. Ewald and others suppose the divine utterance to end with the previous verse. This is possible; for the poet, speaking as a prophet, may thus triumph in the revelation which has just been made, and turn it into a defiance of the proud. At the same time, as there is no indication of any change of speaker, it is better to regard this and the next verse as a continuation of the divine oracle.

UNTO THE ARROGANT, etc., or, "Unto the madmen, Deal not madly,"—the same words as in lxxiii. 3, where see references.

5. WITH A STIFF NECK. Here, again, there is evidently an allusion to the words of Hannah's song (1 Sam. ii. 3).

6. FOR. The poet himself speaks, taking up and applying to himself and to others the divine sentence which he had just been commissioned to deliver. Glory and power come not from any earthly source, though a man should seek it in every quarter of the globe, but only from God, who lifteth up and casteth down, according to his own righteous sentence. Again, an allusion to 1 Sam. ii. 6.

FROM THE WILDERNESS, i.e. the south, the great wilderness lying in that direction. Thus three quarters are mentioned, the north only being omitted. This may be accounted for, supposing the Psalm to refer to Sennacherib, by the fact that the Assyrian army approached from the north; and therefore



- 8 For there is a cup in the hand of Jehovah,  
 And the wine foameth,<sup>a</sup> it is full of mixture ;  
 And he poureth out of the same :  
 Surely the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth  
 Shall drain (them) out in drinking (them).
- 9 But as for me — I will declare forever,  
 I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.
- 10 And all the horns of the wicked will I cut off,  
 (But) the horns of the righteous shall be lifted up.

it would be natural to look in all directions but that, for assistance to repel the invader.

**LIFTING UP.** The word is evidently an emphatic word in the Psalm ; it is the same which occurs in ver. 4 and 5, and again in ver. 7 and ver. 10. I have, therefore, given the same rendering of it throughout. The rendering of the E.V. "promotion," besides losing sight of the manifestly designed repetition of the same word, is peculiarly unfortunate in conveying a wrong idea. "Lifting up," in its Hebrew sense, does not mean "promotion," as we commonly understand it, but deliverance from trouble ; safety ; victory. The image, in particular, of lifting up the head or the horn (the last, borrowed from wild beasts, such as buffaloes, etc., in which the horn is the symbol of strength), denotes courage, strength, victory over enemies. See iii. 3 [4] ; xviii. 2 [3] ; xxvii. 6. For other interpretations of this verse, see Critical Note.

8. The solemn act of judgment. God puts the cup of his wrath to the lips of the wicked, and holds it there till they have drained it to the uttermost. It is the same figure which we have already had in lx. 3 [5]. In the prophets it occurs frequently : Isa. li. 17-23 (comp. xix. 14) ; Hab. ii. 15, 16 ; Ezek. xxiii. 32, etc. ; Jer. xxv. 27 ; xlviii. 26 ; xlix.

12 ; and, in the form of a symbolical action xxv. 15, etc.

**FOAMETH,** i.e. as it is poured into the cup from the wine-jar, as is expressed in the next member of the verse.

**MIXTURE,** i.e. the aromatic herbs, etc., which were put into the wine to make it more intoxicating. See the article "Wine" in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*.

**POURETH OUT,** i.e. from the wine-jar into the cup.

**OF THE SAME,** the wine ; the **DREGS THEREOF** are the dregs of the cup. (See Critical Note.)

9. **BUT AS FOR ME** — placing himself and the congregation of Israel in opposition to the proud oppressors — I will be the everlasting herald of this great and memorable act. This is the true *Non omnis moriar*.

10. Triumphantly in this last verse he claims, for himself and for the church, a share in the signal act of deliverance. That which God threatens (ver. 4, 5), he accomplishes by the hand of his servants. Every horn of worldly power must fall before him. Comp. Rev. ii. 26, 27. Ewald sees an emphasis in the word *all*, repeated ver. 8 and here. The punishment is, as yet, only begun. Some only have drunk of that deadly wine, but the cup is large, and *all* the wicked must drain it.

<sup>a</sup> See above on l. note <sup>a</sup>, lvii. note <sup>a</sup>, and General Introduction, Vol. i. pp. 72, 77.

<sup>b</sup> פָּרַף. Delitzsch and others take this, not as an adj. qualifying the

preceding noun, but as immediately dependent on the verb of speaking, which is, in fact, its usual construction. So in 1 Sam. ii. 3; Ps. xxxi. 19, xciv. 4. In this case **בְּצַוְּאָר** must be taken absolutely; "with the neck," meaning "with a proud, stiff neck," a mode of expression which it is supposed may be defended by Job xv. 26, "he runneth against him with the neck," where, however, as Hupfeld remarks, the phrase seems only equivalent to our expression "with the head."

<sup>c</sup> **הַמְּרִיבֵי הַרִים**. This reading is supported by most of the mss. and editions, and can only be translated from "the wilderness of the mountains" (Symm., ἀπὸ ἐρήμων ὄρέων; LXX, ἀπὸ ἐρήμων ὄρέων), which is usually explained to mean the Arabian desert, so called because it is walled in by the mountains of Idumea. "The desert of the mountains" is, then, a mode of describing the south, and, according to Hengst., the allusion is to Egypt, as the great southern power which was the hope of Irsael in the Assyrian invasion. According to this reading, there is an aposiopesis. Not from the east, etc., and not from the wilderness of mountains — [cometh judgment (Hengst.) or lifting up (Delitzsch)]. But it is far better to read, **הַמְּרִיבֵי** (absol. instead of constr. and to take **הַרִים** as the Hiph. Inf. used as a noun, *lifting up*, like **הַרְבִּינָה**, xxxii. 9. Kimchi testifies that in his time (end of the twelfth century) this was the reading of the best mss. (it is still found in several), and the Midrash expressly says that *harim* means *harim* (i.e. mountains) everywhere but in this passage. The whole scope of the Psalm, where so much is said of "lifting up," confirms this view. Ewald also adopts the reading **הַמְּרִיבֵי**, but applies the copula before **הַרִים**, which he takes in its usual signification "mountains," i.e. Lebanon, etc., as descriptive of the north. Thus he completes the four quarters, as the Chald. has done also, only inverting the order and understanding the north by the desert and the south by the mountains.

<sup>d</sup> **יַיִן תְּמַרְרֵנִי**. It seems doubtful whether **יַיִן** is here accus. or nom. So far as the constr. is concerned, it may be the former: "It (i.e. the cup) foameth with wine." The objection to this is that the verb is in the masc., whereas **בַּיִס** is, in almost every instance, fem., and the suffix in **תְּמַרְרֵנִי** would seem to show that it is fem. here. To this Hupfeld replies: (1) that in Jer. xxv. 15, **בַּיִס** is masc. (and therefore a noun of common gender), and (2) that the fem. suffix here refers to **הַסֵּךְ** and not to **בַּיִס**.

The LXX, (*ποτήριον*) . . . οἴνου ἀκράτου πλήρες κεράσματος. Symm. καὶ οἴνος ἀκρατος πληρῶν ἐκχυθείς.

**מְלֵא** is a verb followed by the accus. See lxx. 10.

## PSALM LXXVI.

THIS is one of several Psalms which, as has been remarked in the introduction to Psalm xlvi., were composed in celebration of the miraculous overthrow of Sennacherib's army. From the days of Israel's first occupation of the land, when God went forth with their hosts, giving the victory by signs and wonders from heaven, no deliverance so signal had been witnessed. Hence it roused in an extraordinary degree the religious fervor of the nation, and called forth loud songs of thanksgiving. Like Psalms xlvi., xlvii., xlviii., this is an ode of victory over the Assyrians. It tells of Zion's glory and Zion's safety (to which there may be an allusion in the name *Salem*), because God has chosen it for his dwelling-place. It tells of the discomfiture of that proud army, whose might was weakness itself when arrayed against the might of Jehovah. It tells how the warriors sank into their last sleep before the walls of the city, not beaten down before a human enemy, not slain by an earthly arm, but at the rebuke of the God of Jacob. And then the poet looks beyond the immediate scene. He beholds in this great deliverance, not the power only, but the righteousness of God. It is God's solemn act of judgment. It is his voice speaking from heaven and filling the earth. And the lesson which this act of judgment teaches is, the folly of man who would measure his impotent wrath against the majesty of God; and the wisdom of submission to him who is the only worthy object of fear.

The internal evidence points so clearly to the occasion for which the Psalm was written, that the LXX have inscribed it, *πρὸς τὸν Ἀσσύριον*, and this reference has with few exceptions, been recognized by commentators, ancient and modern.

The Psalm consists of four strophes, each of which is comprised in three verses.

I. The first celebrates Jerusalem and Zion as the abode of God, and the place where he has manifested his power (ver. 1-3).

II. The second describes in a forcible and animated manner the sudden destruction of the beleaguering army (ver. 4-6).

III. The third dwells on that event as a solemn, far-reaching act of judgment, conveying its lesson to the world (ver. 7-9).

IV. The last tells what that lesson is, counselling submission to him whose power and whose righteousness have so wonderfully made themselves known (ver. 10-12).

[For the Precentor, with Stringed Instruments.\* A Psalm of Asaph.  
A Song.]

1 IN Judah is God known,

His name is great in Israel.

2 In Salem also hath been his tabernacle,

And his dwelling-place in Zion.

1-3. The whole emphasis of this first strophe consists in the prominence given to the particular locality where God has manifested his power. It is on the same field where he has so often gotten to himself glory. It is in Judah, in Salem, in Zion. It is *there* (ver. 3, the word is peculiarly emphatic) that he hath dashed in pieces the might of the foe.

1. IS KNOWN, or perhaps more exactly, "maketh himself known," as xlvi. 3 [4], i.e. by the present deliverance which he has wrought. The participle expresses present action.

IN ISRAEL. According to Hupfeld, Israel is here mentioned in the parallelism merely for the sake of the poetry, although Judah only is meant. He accounts for such usage by saying that "Judah and Israel" was a common phrase to denote the whole nation. But if the date assigned to the Psalm be correct, there may be a special reason for the mention of Israel. Hezekiah was the first monarch who made any attempt to restore the ancient unity of the tribes. After the fall of Samaria, and the deportation of the inhabitants of the northern kingdom by Esar-haddon, Israel, i.e. the ten tribes, had no longer a national existence. And yet we read that Hezekiah, on his accession, after purifying the temple, and restoring the worship of God, "sent to all *Israel and Judah*, and wrote letters also to *Ephraim and Manassah*, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the Lord God of *Israel* (2 Chron. xxx. 1). A study of the whole chapter will show what importance was attached to this union of Israel with Judah, at the time, and will explain, as it seems to me, the mention of both together in the Psalm.

2. SALEM. The LXX render *ἐν εἰρήνῃ*, and the Vulg. *in pace*; but the word is evidently a proper name. "It seems to be agreed on all hands," says Mr. Grove, "that Salem is here employed for Jerusalem, but whether as a mere abbreviation, to suit some exigency of the poetry and point the allusion to the *peace* which the city enjoyed through the protection of God [this is Ewald's view], or whether, after a well-known habit of poets, it is an antique name preferred to the more modern and familiar one, is a question not yet decided. The latter is the opinion of the Jewish commentators, but it is grounded on their belief that the Salem of Melchizedek was the city which afterwards became Jerusalem. This is to beg the question." He shows that this was the general belief, up to the time of Jerome, of Christians as well as Jews. But Jerome places the Salem of Melchizedek near Seythopolis, and identifies it with the Salim of John the Baptist. The narrative in Genesis does not mark the return route of Abraham, so as to furnish any data for fixing the locality of Salem. It is probable that Abraham "would equally pass by both Seythopolis and Jerusalem." On the other hand, the distance of Sodom from the former place (80 miles), renders it unlikely that the king of Sodom should have gone so far to meet Abraham, and makes it more possible that the interview took place after his return; and this "is, so far, in favor of Salem being Jerusalem." Mr. Grove, who has discussed the whole question with his usual learning and ability, throws out the suggestion that the antithesis in ver. 1, between "Judah" and "Israel" may "imply that some sacred place in the northern kingdom is

3 There<sup>b</sup> brake he the arrows<sup>c</sup> of (the) bow,  
Shield, and sword, and battle. [Selah.]

4 Glorious<sup>d</sup> art thou, excellent  
From the mountains of prey.

contrasted with Zion, the sanctuary of the south. And if there were in the Bible any sanction to the identification of Salem with Shechem [according to a tradition of Eupolemus, which he has quoted], the passage might be taken as referring to the continued relation of God to the kingdom of Israel." But see note on ver. 1. Salem and Zion denote the lower and upper city respectively.

HIS TABERNACLE; lit. "booth," as made of *interwoven* or interlacing boughs of trees, etc. (So the feast of *tabernacles* is the feast of *booths* or huts.) The name may have been used of any temporary structure, and so of the tabernacle, and then, as here, of the temple. Comp. xxvii. 5, and Lam. ii. 6. But I am inclined to prefer another meaning here, and one more in accordance with the context. The word may signify a dense thicket, the lair of wild beasts. (It occurs in this sense in x. 9, "like a lion in his *lair*." In ver. 4 it is said, "Thou art glorious from the mountains of *prey*." May not God be here likened to a lion couching in his *lair*, and going forth from those mountains to destroy? This seems almost certain, when we find that the word in the parallel "His dwelling," is also used in civ. 22 of the *den* of lions; "the lions roaring after their *prey*, etc. . . lay them down in their *dens*." The same word occurs in the same sense in Amos iii. 4. Then we should render: "In Salem is his covert, and his lair in Zion." Dean Stanley, I find, takes the same view, *Sinai and Pal.*, p. 177, note 2. As regards the figure itself, Jehovah is said in two other passages to *roar* (as a lion), Joel iii. 16 [iv. 16]. He is here, as it were, identified with "the lion of the tribe of Judah."

3. THERE. Emphatically pointing to the spot where the great deliverance had been accomplished. Comp. for this use

xxxvi. 12 [13]; lxvi. 6, and for the general sense of the verse xlv. 9 [10]:

"Who stilleth wars to the end of the earth,

Who breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder,

And burneth the chariots in the fire."

ARROWS OF THE BOW; lit. "fiery shafts, or lightnings of the bow," the arrows being so called, from their rapid flight, and their glittering in the air; or possibly with an allusion to the burning arrows employed in ancient warfare. See on vii. note<sup>f</sup>.

4. There is no comparison, as in the E.V., "*more glorious than the mountains of prey*," though the Hebrew would admit of such a rendering (see an instance of the same ambiguity in the use of the preposition, lv. 8 [9], and note there), and it has been adopted by many commentators. They suppose that the Assyrian power is tacitly compared either to a lion going forth to ravin (comp. the fuller picture in Nah. ii. 11-13 [Heb. 12-14]), or to robbers issuing from their strongholds in the mountains. And thus the power of God is said to be "more excellent" than the power of Assyria, whether regarded as that of a lion, or as that of armed banditti. But such a comparison is flat and tame, and the rendering given in the text, which is that of all the Greek translators and of Jerome, is far preferable. See note on ver. 2. God goes forth victoriously from Zion to crush his foes. "The promise," Tholuck says, "is fulfilled: 'I will break the Assyrian in my land, And upon my mountains tread him under foot' (Isa. xiv. 25).

Yea, upon the mountains of Jerusalem they themselves must become a prey, who had hoped there to gather the prey." The plural, MOUNTAINS, either used in the wider sense, as in the passage just quoted from Isaiah, or possibly of Zion

- 5 The stout-hearted have been spoiled,<sup>o</sup>  
 They have sunk into their sleep,  
 And none of the men of valor have found their hands.
- 6 At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob,  
 Both chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.
- 7 Thou, even thou, art to be feared,  
 And who can stand before thee when once thou art angry?
- 8 From heaven thou didst cause judgment to be heard;  
 The earth feared and was still,

only, as in lxxxvii. 1; exxxiii. 3. The great prominence always given to the *mountains* of their native land, both by Psalmists and prophets, is a further confirmation of the view that the mountains of Palestine, not those of Assyria, are here meant. See Mr. Grove's admirable article, "Palestine," § 26, in *Dict. of the Bible*.

5. THEY HAVE SUNK INTO THEIR SLEEP. (Comp. 2 Kings xix. 35.) The verb (which is of a different root from the noun "sleep") expresses the languor and lassitude by which a man is overpowered, and so falls asleep. In all other passages where it occurs, the E.V. renders it by *slumber*. See, for instance, cxxi. 3, 4; Isa. v. 27, etc., and comp. Nah. iii. 18, "Thy shepherds *slumber*, O king of Assyria," where the word is used, as here, of the sleep of death. A third word is employed in the next verse.

HAVE FOUND THEIR HANDS finely expresses the helplessness and bewilderment of those proud warriors who but a short while before had raised their hands in scornful defiance against Jerusalem (see Isa. x. 32). The idiom is apparently similar to our common expression "*losing* heart." (Comp. 2 Sam. vii. 27, to "*find* heart.") Hupfeld thinks that this rendering is not supported by usage, and would render "have found nothing, i.e. achieved, affected nothing, with their hands." But this is hypercritical.

6. ARE CAST INTO A DEAD SLEEP. In the Heb. this is but one word (a participle, denoting present condition). It is used

of a profound slumber, either (1) natural, or (2) supernatural, the sleep into which God casts men. Comp. Judges iv. 21; Dan. x. 9, and the noun from the same root, Gen. ii. 21; 1 Sam. xxvi. 12.

CHARIOT AND HORSE, i.e. of course the riders in chariots and on horses (as the ancient versions paraphrase). The figure is so obvious, that it might be left to explain itself, were it not for the strange prosaic misunderstanding of Hengstenberg, who supposes that the chariot is said to sleep, because it has ceased to rattle. Byron's animated lines on the destruction of Sennacherib, which may have been partly suggested by this Psalm, will occur to every reader:

"And there lay the steed with his nostril  
 all wide,  
 But through it there rolled not the breath  
 of his pride;  
 And the foam of his gasping lay white  
 on the turf,  
 And cold as the spray of the rock-  
 beating surf.  
 And there lay the rider distorted and  
 pale,  
 With the dew on his brow, and the rust  
 on his mail."

7. WHEN ONCE THOU ART ANGRY; lit. "from the time of thine anger." See a similar form of expression, Ruth ii. 7; Jer. xlv. 18.

8. As in the last Psalm, God is spoken of as the Judge (this is a peculiar feature in the Psalms ascribed to Asaph); and, as in that, he speaks from heaven, terrifying his enemies with the thunder of his word. Comp. lxxv. 2, 3, 7, 8 [3, 4,

- 9 When God arose to judgment,  
 To save all the afflicted of the earth. [Selah.]
- 10 For the wrath of man must praise thee,  
 With the remainder of wrath thou girdest thyself.<sup>f</sup>
- 11 Vow and pay unto Jehovah your God ;  
 Let all that are round about him bring presents unto  
 Him who ought to be feared.
- 12 He cutteth off the spirit of princes :  
 He is to be feared by the kings of the earth.

8, 9]. The train of thought in that Psalm has certainly sufficient in common with the train of thought in this to justify us in assigning both to the same period.

10. WITH THE REMAINDER OF WRATH, etc. The meaning is not very clear. Whose wrath is here meant—that of man, or that of God? Some understand the latter, and explain the verse thus: All the wrath of men, every attempt that they make to defeat the will of God, does but turn to their own discomfiture, and his glory; and after all their efforts, he has a store, a residue, of wrath to pour out upon them as punishment. But the objection to this is, that in the previous clause the wrath spoken of is that of man; and it is better to retain the same subject in both clauses. Then we have: (a) Man's wrath doth but praise God. (b) With the remainder of man's wrath, his last impotent efforts to assert his own power, God girds himself, puts it on, so to speak, as an ornament—clothes himself therewith to his own glory. Thus the parallelism of the two clauses is strictly preserved. The word WRATH is in the plural, denoting either wrath of every kind, or wrath in its intensity. See note on lxviii. 35 [36], and for a like use of the plural (1 Sam. ii. 3), where "a God of knowledge" is lit. "a God of knowledges."

11. This is the end. God has wrought his terrible act of judgment—but the first of a long series of judgments to be executed on the nations, unless by timely submission they acknowledge him as their King. See the similar exhortation in ii. 11.

VOW AND PAY. See on xxii. 25 [26], BRING PRESENTS, comp. lxviii. 29 [30].

ALL THAT ARE ROUND ABOUT, i.e. the heathen nations, who are to bring presents in token of homage, as in lxviii. 30.

UNTO HIM WHO OUGHT TO BE FEARED; lit. "to the fear," i.e. the proper object of fear. See the same use of the word in Isa. viii. 12. In like manner God is called "the Fear of Isaac" in Gen. xxxi. 42, 53 (though there the word is different).

12. This verse, or at least the first clause of it, reminds us of the last verse of the preceding Psalm, which closes in a similar strain.

HE CUTTETH OFF, like a vine-dresser, who prunes away the rank boughs, or cuts off the ripe clusters of the vine. Comp. Isa. xviii. 5, where the same image is employed by the prophet at the same time, Judges viii. 2; xx. 45; Jer. vi. 9; li. 33; Joel iii. 13 [iv. 13]; Rev. xiv. 15.

<sup>a</sup> בְּקִיּוֹתָיִם. See on iv. note <sup>a</sup>, and General Introduction, Vol. i. p. 70. On Asaph, see l. note <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> שָׁמָּה here used apparently as = שָׁמָּה. Hupfeld refers to its use in the common phrase אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי לֵבָה שָׁמָּה (Ex. xxix. 42 al.), "where I

meet with you"; but surely there *motion to a place* is implied = *whither I go to meet you.*" More in point is Ezek. xlvi. 35, *Jehovah shammah*, "Jehovah is *there*." See also cxxii. 5; Isa. xxxiv. 15 (where  $\text{בָּיָם}$  occurs in the parall.); Jer. xviii. 2; 1 Chron. iv. 41. "The Semitic accus. has a wide signification, and denotes not only the *whither* (and *how long*), but also the *where* (*when* and *how*), so that, for instance,  $\text{בְּפֶתַח}$  in the accus., and  $\text{בְּפֶתַח הַבַּיִת}$ , mean *before*, or *at the door*, as  $\text{בְּפֶתַח הַבַּיִת}$ , *at the gate*. Again, the accusative ending  $\text{הָרַ$ , is only met with in a partial and fragmentary manner; and in dying out seems to have lost much of its original meaning. Finally, of this particular word neither the Arab. nor Aram. has the simple form, but only the accus. form in the same sense. The above is from Hupfeld.

<sup>c</sup>  $\text{רֶשֶׁת־אֵשׁ}$ . The word  $\text{רֶשֶׁת}$  denotes any hot, glowing substance. Hence Cant. viii. 6,  $\text{רֶשֶׁת־אֵשׁ}$  (where observe the Dagesh, which is wanting here), "*coals of fire*"; Job v. 7,  $\text{בְּנֵי רֶשֶׁת}$ , "*sons of burning*," or, *a firebrand*, interpreted by many to mean *sparks*. In Hab. iii. 6, the word is used of *a burning fever*.

<sup>d</sup>  $\text{נִאֲזַר}$ , a Niphal form from  $\text{אָזַר}$  (which, like  $\text{בָּזַח}$ , is intrans.), and therefore questionable; for  $\text{נִאֲזַר}$ , in 2 Sam. ii. 32, is not fut. Niph., but Kal, like  $\text{הִבִּיחַ}$ , as Hupfeld observes. He therefore thinks that perhaps  $\text{נִזְרָא}$  should be read; comp. ver. 8, 13, and so Theod., *φοβερός*. Symm., however, has *ἐπιφανής*; the LXX, *φωτίζεις*; Aq., *φωτισμός*; Jerome, *Lumen*. As regards the construction of  $\text{בְּקַ$  in the next hemistich all the Greek versions render it by *ἀπό*. Jerome has *a montibus captivitatis*.

<sup>e</sup>  $\text{אֶשְׁתוּזְלֵנוּ}$ ; lit. *have suffered themselves to be plundered* (an Aramaic form instead of  $\text{הִשְׁתָּרַ$ ). Comp.  $\text{אֶשְׁתוּזְלֵנוּ}$ , 2 Chron. xx. 35;  $\text{אֶשְׁתוּזְלֵנוּ}$ , Isa. lxiii. 3). This is an instance, according to Hupfeld, of the passive use of the Hithpacl. He quotes other instances given by Gesen. and Ewald, of an alleged similar use. But in every one of these examples the reflexive meaning may be retained; and in fact it is retained, in most cases, by some one of the translators or commentators. Here, for instance, Phillips says: "*They have been plundered*, or they have exposed themselves to plunder, agreeably to Abu Walid, who has taken the verb in a reciprocal, and not in a passive sense: *they have* despised themselves, i.e. they have cast away their weapons." So in Judges xx. 15, 17, Zunz has, "*stellten sich zur Musterung*," and in xxi. 9, "*liess sich mustern*." (Indeed it is quite astonishing that the Hithp., in these instances, should have been regarded as a passive.) In Mic. vi. 16, he renders "*halten sich*." On Eccl. viii. 10, Preston remarks: "The verb  $\text{הִשְׁתַּחֲוּהוּ}$ , being in the Hithp., expresses that their quiet and unostenta-



tious lives cause them to be forgotten, 'that they sink of themselves into oblivion.'” In Prov. xxxi. 30, *gets to herself praise*; and in Lam. iv. 1, *pour themselves out* (inanimate things, by a common figure, having life attributed to them); in 1 Sam. iii. 14, *shall not make atonement for itself*; lit. *shall not cover itself*, are the proper renderings of the several Hithpaels. There is no necessity, I am satisfied, in any case, to lose sight of this strict reflexive meaning of the conjugation, though it may be more convenient in another language to employ the passive. just as in rendering the German phrase, “davon *findet sich* keine Spur,” in English, we must say, “No trace of it *is found*”; yet it would be absurd to maintain that the German reflexive is here used as a passive. Ewald, indeed, limits this passive use of the Hithp. to rare cases, and to the later books chiefly, and only gives the two passages from Micah and Ecclesiastes, as illustrating it (*Lehrb. d. H. S.* § 124 c. p. 284, 6<sup>e</sup> Auf.); but even in these the proper reflexive force is retained. The rendering is merely a question of idiom.

<sup>f</sup> תְּהַלֵּלֶנּוּ. There is no reason for departing from the ordinary meaning of the root. (Jerome, *accingeris*; and so apparently the Chald. and Symm., *λείψανον θυμῶν περιζώσει.*) Comp. Isa. lix. 17, etc. Kimchi and others have taken it in the sense *to restrain* (as in a passage of the Mishna, and in accordance with the signif. of the cognate roots in Arab. and Syr.). The LXX again have *ἐσπράσει σοι*, and must therefore have read תְּהַלֵּלֶנּוּ, *shall hold festival to thee*, answering to the parall. *shall praise thee*. This Ewald adopts, observing: “Ver. 11 contains a very lofty thought. The only object with which Jehovah judges and punishes is, that even the most furious transgressors may at last attain to wisdom and to the praise of Jehovah; and though many fall under his chastisements, at least the remainder, taught by these terrible examples, will be saved. Or, to put it in a shorter and more emphatic form: “The wrath of man itself will praise thee, being suddenly changed to its opposite, and as it were against its will.”

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## PSALM LXXVII.

THIS Psalm is the record, first, of a sorrow long and painfully questioning with itself, full of doubts and fears, trying in vain to find in itself, or in the past, a light for the present; and then, of the triumph over that sorrow by the recollection of God's love and power, as manifested in the early history of Israel. By whom the Psalm was written,

or to what period of the history it is to be referred, it is now impossible to say. The manner in which, towards the close, the passage of the Red Sea is dwelt upon, has led many to conclude that it was written by one of the exiles during the Babylonish captivity. Those two memorable events, the deliverance from Babylon, and the deliverance from Egypt, were always associated in the minds of the Jews; the one being regarded, in fact, as the pledge of the other. This, however, in itself, is not decisive. At any time of great national depression, the thoughts of the true-hearted in Israel would naturally revert to God's first great act of redeeming love; and other Psalms (lxxviii., lxxx., lxxxi.), evidently not written during the Exile, look back to the Exodus, and the wonders of God's hand displayed then and in the journey through the wilderness. Besides, an inference of a positive kind, in favor of an earlier date, has been drawn from the relation of this Psalm to the prophecy of Habakkuk. Delitzsch, in his commentary on the prophet, has traced carefully the coincidences in thought and expression between Hab. iii. 10-15, and verses 16-20 [17-21] of the Psalm. Among the various arguments by which he endeavors to establish the priority of the Psalm, two seem to be of weight: first, that the prophet throughout his ode is in the habit of quoting from the Psalms; and secondly, that, with his eye on the future, he arrays all the images of terror and magnificence which are suggested by the past, in order to describe with more imposing pomp the approaching advent of Jehovah; whereas the Psalmist is not looking to the future, but dwelling on the past. Hence it is far more probable that the prophet imitates the Psalmist than that the Psalmist borrows from the prophet. Supposing this to be satisfactorily established, we might reasonably infer that this Psalm was not written later than the reign of Josiah. But on the other hand, as Hupfeld has pointed out, the mode of expression in Habakkuk, as compared with that here employed, would lead us to an exactly opposite conclusion. (1) The figure in Hab. iii. 10, "The *mountains* saw thee; they were afraid" (lit. in pangs or throes), is more natural and correct than the use of the same figure as applied in the Psalm to the *waters* (ver. 16 [17]). (2) The phrase, "the overflowing of the waters," in Hab. iii. 10, is more simple and natural than the corresponding phrase in ver. 17 [18] of the Psalm, as I have remarked in the Critical Note on that verse; the verbal form here employed occurring nowhere else. Hence it is most likely that the latter was a designed alteration in copying from the former. (3) That the lightning should be termed the "arrows" of God in Habakkuk is quite in keeping with the martial character and figures of the whole

passage. In the Psalm, on the other hand, the figure seems more out of place.

There is some force, no doubt, in this argument. There is less, I think, in that which Hupfeld urges, on the ground of the apparent want of connection between the "lyric episode" (ver. 16-19 [17-20]), and the rest of the Psalm. It is true that the rhythm of this portion is different, being in three members, instead of in two; and that here the strophe consists of four verses [or five], whereas the preceding strophes consist of three. But these are of themselves unimportant variations. Nor do I see that verse 20 [21] is naturally connected with verse 15 [16]. On the contrary, it is far more striking (see note) in its present position. As to the objection that a single instance of God's deliverance is so enlarged upon, is made to occupy so prominent a place, that is surely quite in accordance with the true genius of lyric poetry; not to mention that it was the one great act from which the whole history dated, and which has left its stamp on all the literature of the people.

But whenever, and by whomsoever, the Psalm may have been written, it clearly is individual, not national. It utterly destroys all the beauty, all the tenderness and depth of feeling in the opening portion, if we suppose that the people are introduced speaking in the first person.<sup>1</sup> The allusions to the national history may indeed show that the season was a season of national distress, and that the sweet singer was himself bowed down by the burden of the time, and oppressed by woes which he had no power to alleviate; but it is his own sorrow, not the sorrows of others, under which he sighs, and of which he has left the pathetic record.

The Psalm falls naturally into two principal parts; the first (ver. 1-9), containing the expression of the Psalmist's sorrow and disquietude; the second (ver. 10-20), telling how he rose above them.

Of these, again, the former half consists of strophes of three verses (1-3, 4-6, 7-9), the end of the first and third being marked by the

<sup>1</sup> It is much to be regretted that Mr. Thrupp should have committed himself to the theory that all the Psalms ascribed to the Levitical singers are of necessity national. He has thus been obliged to give a most strained and unnatural interpretation to many of them. Thus, for instance, he holds that this Psalm is "the lamentation of the Jewish church for the terrible political calamity . . . whereby the inhabitants of the northern kingdom were carried into captivity, and Joseph lost, the second time, to Jacob." (Art. "Psalms," in *Smith's Dict. of the Bible*, vol. ii. p. 957.) And still more strangely, of Psalm lxxiii., that "though couched in the first person singular, (it) is really a prayer of the Jewish faithful against the Assyrian invaders." (Ibid., p. 950.) This is, I must think, an entire misunderstanding of a very striking Psalm.

Selah. The latter may also be divided into three strophes, the first two only being of three verses each (10-12, 13-15, the second having the Selah), and the last consisting of five (15-20).

[For the Precentor. After the manner of Jeduthun.<sup>a</sup> A Psalm of Asaph.]

1 WITH my voice unto God let me cry,<sup>b</sup>

With my voice unto God, and may he give ear unto me.<sup>c</sup>

2 In the day of my distress I sought the Lord ;

My hand was stretched out in the night and failed not,

My soul refused to be comforted.

3 I would remember God, and must sigh,

I would commune (with myself), and my spirit is overwhelmed. [Selah.]

1. AND MAY HE GIVE EAR, or more literally, in the form of an address to God, "And do thou give ear." The constant interchange of tenses in the first six verses lends vividness to the expression of the Psalmist's feelings. Sometimes, as in ver. 2, 4, 5, we have the past tenses in narration, and then alternating with these, the paragogic future or optative, as in ver. 1, 3, 6, express purpose, resolve, and the like. And thus are marked the fluctuating emotions of the mind, ever passing from the mere statement of fact to the utterance of feelings and desires.

2, 3. These verses show both the reality and earnestness of the prayer, and the strong faith of the Psalmist. It is no occasional petition hastily put up, but a struggle, like that of Jacob, through the livelong night. It is even a sorer conflict, for he has not found the blessing as Jacob did. He cannot be comforted. He would think of God, but even that thought brings him no strength ; he looks within, and his sorrow deepens.

2. WAS STRETCHED OUT; literally "poured out" like water (2 Sam. xiv. 14); or, as the eye is said to be poured out or dissolved in tears (Lam. iii. 49); here apparently applied to the hand stretched out in prayer. "The stretched out, weak, and powerless hand," says

Hengstenberg, "conveys the picture of a relaxation of the whole body." Or, there may be a confusion of metaphor, that being said of the hand which could only properly be said of the eye (hence the Targum substitutes the latter for the former). The Rabbinical writers understood *my hand* to mean *the hand*, or blow, *laid upon me*, and hence came the singular rendering of the E V., *my sore ran*, etc.

AND FAILED NOT (or it may be rendered as an adverbial clause, *without intermission*. Symm., *ἐπέτατο διηνεκῶς*); lit. "and grew not cold," like a corpse; "became not weary," used, like the last verb, of tears. Comp. Lam. ii. 18, "Let tears run down like a river day and night; give thyself *no rest*;" and iii. 49, "Mine eye trickled down (the word rendered above *was stretched out*), and ceaseth not, without any *intermission*." The words *rest* and *intermission* are derivatives from the verb here employed, and are applied to tears, perhaps as *frozen* at their source.

REFUSED. Comp. Gen. xxxvii. 35, where the same is said of Jacob when he received the tidings of Joseph's death.

3. MUST SIGH. See Rom. viii. 26 (*στειναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις*). "St Paul teaches us that it is the Holy Ghost who in such sighs makes intercession for believers with God." — *Tholuck*.

- 4 Thou hast held mine eyes waking ;<sup>o</sup>  
 I am so troubled that I cannot speak.
- 5 I have considered the days of old,  
 The years of ages (past) ;
- 6 I would call to remembrance my song in the night,  
 I would commune with my heart,—and my spirit hath  
 made diligent search :
- 7 “ Will the Lord cast off forever ?  
 And will he be favorable no more ?
- 8 Hath his loving-kindness come to an end forever ?  
 Hath (his) promise failed to all generations ?
- 9 Hath God forgotten to be gracious ?  
 Hath he shut up in anger his tender mercies ? ” [Selah.]
- 10 Then I said : This is my sorrow,<sup>f</sup>  
 That the right hand of the highest hath changed.

4. I CANNOT SPEAK. Silence and thought succeed to the uttered prayer. But the heart still prays on in secret, though the mouth is silent.

6. MY SONG, properly, a song sung to a stringed instrument, as the harp. He would console himself with the recollection of a happier past. Such recollections, as Tholuck remarks, may hush the storm of the soul, may give a man courage to say to himself, 'Thou art his, he cannot forsake thee. But such recollections may also be made the very instruments of Satan's temptations, when the soul asks, Why is it not always thus ? and so falls into the sad and desponding thoughts which follow in the next verses.

IN THE NIGHT. This repeated mention of the night (see ver. 2) shows that he was one who loved the stillness and the solitude of night for meditation and prayer. (Comp. xvi. 7 ; xvii. 3 ; Isa. xxvi. 9.)

8. God's loving-kindness and God's promise (or, *word*, as in lxviii. 11 [12], and Hab. iii. 9) are the two props of his faith.

9. IN ANGER HIS TENDER MERCIES. The words are evidently placed with

design in juxtaposition, in order to heighten the contrast. Comp. Hab. iii. 2, "In wrath remember mercy," where there is the same juxtaposition in the Hebrew.

10. All this that I have been asking myself, and saddening myself with asking, seems impossible, and yet it is this very change which perplexes me.

MY SORROW, or perhaps "my sickness," i.e. as Calvin explains, a disease which is only for a time, and to which, therefore, I should patiently submit. Comp. Jer. x. 19. Others, "my infirmity," i.e. the weakness of my own spirit, which leads me to take this gloomy view, and which I must resist.

THAT THE RIGHT HAND, etc. ; lit. "the changing of the right hand." This fact, that it is no more with him as in days past, it is which fills him with grief. And then in the next verse he recovers himself, and passes from self-contemplation to record God's wonders for his people. But another rendering is possible. The word *changing* (*sh'nôth*) may mean *years* : "The years of the right hand," etc., and the whole verse might be understood thus :

"Then I thought: This is my sadness,—

- 11 (But) I will celebrate the deeds of Jah,  
 For I will call to remembrance thy wonders of old ;
- 12 Yea, I will meditate on all thy work,  
 And commune with myself of thy doings.
- 13 O God, thy way is holy !  
 Who is a great God as (our) God ?
- 14 Thou, even thou, art the God that doest wonders,  
 Thou hast make known thy strength among the peoples.
- 15 Thou hast with (thine) arm redeemed thy people,  
 The sons of Jacob and Joseph. [Selah.]

The years of the right hand of the Most High."

i.e. the very recollection of those years, and God's help vouchsafed in times past, does but increase my present gloom. The E.V. connects this second clause with the following verse, and repeats the verb from that verse. See more in Critical Note.

11. With this verse the change of feeling begins. Hitherto he has looked too much within, has sought too much to read the mystery of God's dealings by the light of his own experience merely. Hence the despondency, when he contrasts the gloomy present with the far brighter and happier past. He cannot believe that God has indeed forgotten to be gracious, that he has indeed changed his very nature ; but that he may be reassured and satisfied on this point, his eye must take a wider range than that of his own narrow experience. There lies before him the great history of his people. There recurs especially the one great deliverance never to be forgotten, the type and the pledge of all deliverances, whether of the nation or of the individual. On this he lays hold ; by this he sustains his sinking faith. Calvin says : " Jam animosius contra tentationes exurgit propheta quae fere ad opprimendam ejus fidem praevaluerant. Nam recordatio haec operum Dei ab ea ejus ante meminit [ver. 5] differt : quia tunc eminus intuebatur Dei beneficia, quae lenire vel minuere dolorem nondum poterant. Hic vero arripit quasi certa

testimonia perpetuae gratiae, et ideo vehementiae causa sententiam repetit."

THY WONDERS. The word is in the singular (though the ancient versions and many MSS. have the plural) here, and also in ver. 14. So also in the next verse THY WORK, because the one great wonder, the one great work in which all others were included, is before his thoughts. Comp. Hab. iii. 2, " Revive thy work."

13. IS HOLY ; lit. " is in holiness," not as others, " in the sanctuary," for the Psalmist, though speaking generally of God's redeeming love and power, is evidently thinking chiefly of the deliverance from Egypt, on which he afterwards dwells. In this and the next verse there is an allusion to Ex. xv. 11: " Who is like unto thee, O Jehovah, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"

15. THOU HAST REDEEMED, a word especially applied to the deliverance from Egyptian bondage. See note on lxxiv. 2. " The word ' redemption,' which has now a sense far holier and higher," says Dean Stanley, " first entered into the circle of religious ideas at the time when God ' redeemed his people from the house of bondage.'"—*Jewish Church*, Lect. v. p. 127.

JOSEPH, mentioned here apparently as the father of Ephraim (comp. lxxviii. 67), and so as representing the kingdom of Israel (as lxxx. 1 [2] ; lxxx. 5 [6]) ; perhaps this special mention of Joseph

16 The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee, they were troubled ;

Yea, the depths also trembled ;

17 The clouds poured out<sup>s</sup> water ; the skies thundered ;

Yea, thine arrows went abroad ;

18 The voice of thy thunders rolled along,<sup>h</sup>

The lightnings gave shine unto the world :

The earth trembled and shook.

19 Thy way was<sup>i</sup> in the sea,

And thy paths<sup>k</sup> in the mighty waters,

And thy footsteps were not known.

may indicate that the Psalmist himself belonged to the northern kingdom.

16-20. There follows now a description of the manner in which the redemption (ver. 15) was accomplished in the passage of the Red Sea. In ver. 17, 18, the rain, the thunder and lightning, and the earthquake, are features of the scene not mentioned in the history in Exodus, though Tholuck sees an allusion to a storm in Ex. xiv. 24. Both Philo (*V. M.* i. 32) and Josephus (*Ant.* ii. 16 § 3) add this circumstance in their narrative of the event. "The passage, as thus described," says Dean Stanley, "was effected, not in the calmness and clearness of daylight, but in the depth of midnight, amidst the roar of the hurricane, which caused the sea to go back—amidst a darkness lit up only by the broad glare of the lightning, as the Lord looked out of the thick darkness of the cloud." He then quotes these verses of the Psalm (*Jewish Church*, pp. 127, 128). This is one of those instances in which we obtain valuable incidental additions, by means of the Psalmists and prophets, to the earlier narratives. See Mr. Grove's Article on "Oreb," in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*.

16. SAW THEE. Comp. cxiv. 3, where both the Red Sea and the Jordan are mentioned, a passage which Hupfeld thinks is the original from which both this and Hab. iii. 10 are copied.

WERE TROUBLED ; lit. "were in pain,"

as of travail. The same expression is used of the mountains in Hab. iii. 10: "The mountains saw thee, they were in pain"; where the verb seems more aptly to describe the throes of the earthquake, by which the mountains are shaken.

17. THE WAY IS MADE BY MEANS OF TEMPEST AND HURRICANE.

POURED OUT. Comp. Hab. iii. 10 (where the noun is from the same root): "the overflowing of the waters." E. V. In the same way the lightning is spoken of as "the arrows" of God, in Hab. iii. 11.

18. ROLLED ALONG ; lit. "was in the rolling," with allusion to God's chariot ; or perhaps "in the whirlwind" or "rolling cloud." See Critical Note.

GAVE SHINE. I have adopted here the Prayer-book version of the same words in xcvi. 4 (its rendering in this place is less correct), in preference to that of the E. V., "the lightnings lightened," (1) because the verb and the noun are from entirely different roots ; (2) because the idiomatic "gave shine" is an exact equivalent of the Hebrew.

19. THY FOOTSTEPS WERE NOT KNOWN. "We know not, they knew not, by what precise means the deliverance was wrought ; we know not by what precise track through the gulf the passage was effected. We know not, and we need not know ; the obscurity, the mystery, here, as elsewhere, was part of the lesson. . . . All that we see distinctly is,

20 Thou leddest thy people like sheep  
By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

that through this dark and terrible night, with the enemy pressing close behind, and the driving sea on either side, he led his people like sheep by the hand of Moses and Aaron." — Stanley, *Jewish Church*, p. 128.

20. This verse stands in beautiful and touching contrast with the last. In that we have portrayed the majesty, the power, the unsearchable mystery of God's ways; in this, his tender and loving care for his people, as that of a shepherd for his flock. (See for a like contrast, Isa. xl. 10-12; li. 15, 16; lvii.

15.) So ends the Psalm. Nor can I see in such a close that abruptness which has led some commentators to suppose that the Psalm was never finished. The one great example is given, and that is enough. All is included in that; and the troubled, desponding spirit has found peace and rest in the view of God's redemption. "He loses himself, as it were in the joyful recollection." (De Wette.) So may every sorrowful spirit now find peace and rest in looking, not to itself, not even to God's dealings with itself, but to the cross of Christ.

<sup>a</sup> רָדַדְתָּ, see on xxxix, note <sup>a</sup>, and General Introduction, Vol. i. p. 71.

<sup>b</sup> וְיָצַדְתָּ. The use of the conjunction here may be explained by supposing in the previous clause an ellipse = "my voice (is directed) to God, and I would fain cry." Hupfeld assumes a double subject, as in iii. 5; cxlii. 2, though it is sufficient in these instances to take קוֹלִי as accus. of the instrument.

The paragogic ׀ shows that the verb is an optative. The same form recurs ver. 4, 7, 12, 13. Alternating as it does with the perfects, it well describes the strong emotions of the Psalmist's mind. This nice distinction of tenses has been too often completely overlooked.

<sup>c</sup> וְהִשְׁמַעְתָּ, not the infin., but the imperat. *And do thou give ear to me*, by a somewhat abrupt transition. Ewald and others would soften this harshness by taking it as the preterite, with change of vowels, for וְהִשְׁמַעְתָּ. And in this they are supported by the LXX, καὶ ἡ φωνή μου πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν, καὶ προσέσχε μοι, and Symm., καὶ βοήσαντός μου πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν. παρέσχε τὰς ἀκοὰς αὐτοῦ.

<sup>d</sup> The double paragogic form may be taken here as marking protasis and apodosis. "When I remember, then I sigh," etc. (so Ewald); or as in the text. See on xlii. 5, note <sup>c</sup>, and lv. 3, 18.

<sup>e</sup> לַיְלֵי, only here. It may be either for, (1) לַיְלֵי הַלַּיְלָה, *the night-watches*. Comp. for the sense lxiii. 7; and then, "Thou hast held the night-watches of mine eyes." = "Thou hast held mine eyes in the night-watches." Or (2) *the eyelids*, so called as *guards, keepers* of the eye. So the Chald., Gesen., De Wette, etc., the meaning being. Thou hast held them so that I could not close them in sleep. Or (3) it may be the part. pass., as a predicate to the noun *eyes* = *watchful, waking*.



‘הַלְלוֹתִי, with the accent drawn back, because of the tone on the following monosyllable. This is either (1), as Kimchi takes it, an infin. (like הַלְלוֹתִי, ver. 10) from הַלַּל, meaning lit. *my wounding*, and so *my suffering*. Comp. for this use of the verb, cix. 22 (so Ewald). Or (2) infin. Piel. of חָלָה, *my sickness*, lit. “that which makes me sick.” See the same verb in the Piel, Deut. xxix. 21, “the diseases wherewith Jehovah hath made it sick.” Hiph., Isa. liii. 10. This seems to be supported by the parallel passage, Jer. x. 19, “And I said, surely this is my sickness (חָלָה), and I will bear it,” i.e. God has laid his hand upon me, and I will resign myself to his chastisement. Here, too, there is a similar expression of resignation. Or (3), the verb has been supposed to occur here in the same sense as in the phrase ‘הַלְלוֹתִי פָנָי פֶּנִּי, *to entreat the favor of any one*. Hence it has been rendered *my supplication*. But the objection to that is, that here the phrase is incomplete, the noun being wanting, whereas the verb by itself never means *to supplicate*.

There is another word in this verse which presents a difficulty.

שָׁנָה. This is capable of two meanings. Either it is (1), infin. constr. of the verb שָׁנָה, *to change*, in a neuter sense = *to be changed* (the verb in Kal. is never used transitively); or (2), the plur. constr. of the noun שָׁנָה, *a year*. According to these different renderings of these two words, the passage has been very differently interpreted. Even the Chald. gives two explanations:

(a) “This is my *infirmity* (שָׁנָה); the strength of the right hand of the Highest is *changed* (שָׁנָה).” (b) Another Targum: “This is my *supplication* (שָׁנָה), (that) *the year* of the end (should come) from the right hand.”

The LXX,  $\nu\nu$  ἡρξάμην (a meaning which חָלָה has only in the Hiph.), αὐτῆ ἡ ἀλλοίωσις τῆς δεξιᾶς τοῦ ὑψίστου.

Of more modern interpretations the following may be mentioned: Mendelssohn, “*Flehen steht bei mir; ändern in des Höchstens Macht*,” which is ingenious; but even admitting that חָלָה can mean *flehen*, שָׁנָה cannot be transitive. The same objection applies to Luther’s translation: “*Ich muss das leiden; die rechte Hand des Höchsten kann alles ändern*.” Zunz has, “*Das ist mein Flehen — die Jahre der R. d. Höchsten!*” which certainly gives a very good sense: “This is what I long and pray for — those years of God’s right hand in which he exhibited his grace and power.” *The right hand of God* cannot mean, as some would take it, “His chastening hand,” but his supporting hand.” It would be possible, however, to render, “This it is which saddens me, — the years of the right hand,” etc., i.e. the remembrance of

God's power and grace in past times, as compared with my present lot. And this falls in with the previous complaint: "Hath God forgotten," etc. On the whole, however, the rendering of J. H. Michaelis is to be preferred: "*meine Krankheit* (i.e. the misery of my spirit) *ist das: dass die R. des H. sich geändert habe.*" So also Hupfeld. And Maurer well explains: "*quod aegrum me facit hoc est, haec est mea calamitas: quod se mutavit, non amplius ut olim parata est ad juvandum dextera Altissimi.*" He then supports interpretation (2) of מְחַוֵּה, and observes of שֵׁנָה "*mutari* in deterius, ut Thren iv. 1, in fide: Prov. xxiv. 21; Mal. iii. 6, quo posteriore loco in contrarium haec leguntur haud nihil lucis accidentia huic quem tractamus loco: *ego, Jova, non mutor, ideoque vos, filii Jacobi, non periistis.*" Not unlike this is the rendering of Aq., ἀρρώστια μου, αὐτῆ ἀλλοίωσις δ. ὕ. (except that he must have understood מְחַוֵּה of bodily infirmity, not of mental suffering). Theod. and the quinta, ὠδῖνές (μου) εἰσιν, ἀλλοίωσις δ. ὕ.

In this instance the E. V. and the Prayer-book version coincide; the latter not following here either the Vulg. or the German. Our translators have copied Aben-Ezra and Kimchi, in supplying the verb *I will remember*, from the next verse. In so doing, they have followed the K'ri, whereas the K'thibh, אֶזְכָּר, *I will celebrate*, is preferable, as it avoids the tautology with אֶזְכָּר in the next verse.

אֶזְכָּר, only here, sometimes regarded as a Poel, but better as a Pual, the construction being that of the accus. מְחַוֵּה, with the pass., "the clouds were poured forth (in, or with) water." (Phillips, indeed, would make מְחַוֵּה the subject, and suggests an ellipse of the prep. מִן from the clouds, but such an ellipse is quite out of the question). Comp. מְחַוֵּה, Hab. iii. 11, which certainly looks like the original expression. In מְחַוֵּה we have the expanded poet. form, instead of מְחַוֵּה (comp. מְחַוֵּה, מְחַוֵּה, etc.), perhaps chosen to express the zig-zag flash of the lightning. The verb in the Hithp. fut. is also expressive: "kept going hither and thither."

מְחַוֵּה, properly, *a wheel*. (1) Some, following Kimchi, understand it of *the globe* or *sphere* of heaven. So Luther and the E. V., and with this has been compared the difficult and doubtful expression τροχὸς τῆς γενέσεως, in Jas. iii. 6. (2) J. D. Michaelis and others render it *whirlwind*. So Ewald, *im Wirbel*. In lxxxiii. 14, it means "a whirling mass," or perhaps "a dust-storm." It is better, therefore, to take the word here in the sense of *rolling*, a sense to which it might easily pass from that of *wheel*, and which its etymology confirms. The *rolling* will be that of the chariots of God. Comp. Hab. iii. 8; Joel ii. 5. Or possibly *the wheel* may stand by metonymy for the *chariot*.

<sup>1</sup> The omission of the copula, here and in the previous verse, where the reference is clearly to the past, is rare. See a similar instance in Jer. vii. 12: לְכוּ-נָא אֶל מְקוֹמִי אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁילוֹ, "Go to my place which *was* in Shiloh."

<sup>k</sup> שְׁבִי-לִיָּהּ. So the K'thibh in the plur., as in Jer. xviii. 15, the only other place where it occurs. The K'ri is an unnecessary correction.

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PSALM LXXVIII.<sup>1</sup>

IN this, the longest of the historical Psalms, the history of Israel is briefly recapitulated, from the time of the Exodus to the final union of the tribes under David, and the establishment of the kingdom in his family. This appeal to the past is made evidently with a purpose. The Psalmist comes forward as a prophet to rebuke the sin, the ingratitude, the rebellion of his people. This he does by showing them the present in the light of the past. God had wrought wonders in behalf of their fathers of old; God had redeemed them from Egypt, led them through the wilderness, brought them to his holy mountain. But the history of their nation had been at once a history of wonders and a history of rebellions. Miracle had followed on miracle to win them; chastisement had succeeded to chastisement to deter them; but the miracle was forgotten, the chastisement produced but a temporary reformation. They had ever been "a faithless and stubborn generation." It is evident, from his opening words, that the Psalmist was anxious to bring out sharply and clearly the lessons with which the past teemed. He saw that his people were in danger of forgetting those lessons. He saw in that history, instruction, warning, reproof, for the age in which he lived.

It is, however, remarkable that another and more special purpose appears in the Psalm. If the whole nation is rebuked, the rebuke falls heaviest upon Ephraim. Ephraim is singled out as the leader in the earlier apostasy of the people, as the very type of a faithless and recreant spirit (ver. 12). The rejection of Ephraim and the choice of Judah are dwelt upon at the close in a tone of satisfaction and triumph, as the fulfilment of the purpose of God. It is scarcely possible, therefore, to resist the conclusion that the Psalm was written after the defection of the Ten Tribes, and that it was designed either to curb the

<sup>1</sup> On this Psalm see Isaac Taylor, *Spirit of the Hebrew Poetry*, p. 154.

pride of the northern kingdom, or to address a warning to Judah, based on the example of Ephraim.

Various conjectures have been hazarded as to the time when the Psalm was written. Hengstenberg, who is determined, at the risk of any absurdity, to maintain the authority of the inscription, which gives this Psalm to Asaph, is obliged to place it in the reign of David. He says that the object of the Psalmist is "to warn the people against a possible revolt from David, and from the sanctuary in Zion; he cannot therefore have composed the Psalm after this event had taken place." But if the Psalmist had any such object in view, he seems most effectually to have disguised it. Indeed, Hengstenberg is obliged to admit that he does "not once name the disruption which he is anxious to prevent, and makes no express mention whatever of any inclination to this, which might exist at the time"; and tries to account for this singular reticence by supposing that "it was of importance not to irritate, for fear of increasing the dissatisfaction." But could any more effectual mode of irritation have been devised than first to exhibit Ephraim as chief in transgression (ver. 12), and then to commemorate in tones of triumph the degradation of that tribe from its ancient supremacy, and the exaltation of the rival tribe of Judah in its place? Was this a method likely to heal those heart-burnings and animosities which even David had failed altogether to allay? When Hengstenberg, therefore, adds, that "to deny that the Psalm belongs to the time of David manifests utter ignorance of its contents," we can only say that the facts point to an exactly opposite conclusion.

Ewald, with equal dogmatism, and equal improbability, places the Psalm as late as the fifth century B.C., in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. According to him, it was composed in a spirit of strong antagonism to the Samaritans, "the new Ephraim," in whom the poet sees the old Ephraim revived. In this spirit he reviews the ancient history of his nation: "what would happen if Ephraim were the centre, he infers from the misfortunes of the period between Joshua and Saul, when the ark of the covenant was yet in Shiloh, which belonged to that tribe, whereas the true worship of Jehovah was only firmly established in Zion under David. . . . The history itself was a witness that rest and faith could not be found in Ephraim." But so arbitrary a treatment of the Psalm as this may at once be dismissed. Where is the proof that the Samaritans were ever regarded as the successors and legitimate representatives of Ephraim? Or what trace is there in the Psalm of any such feeling as that which Ewald supposes to have influenced the writer?

The Psalm itself furnishes us with the following data for a conclusion.

(1) It is clear from the concluding verses that it was written after David was established on the throne; from verse 69 it might even be inferred after the temple had been built. (2) The manner in which these events are spoken of leads naturally to the inference that they were of no very recent occurrence; men do not so speak of events within their own memory. (3) The sharp contrast between Ephraim and Judah, the rejection of Shiloh and the choice of Zion, are an indication, not of a smouldering animosity, but of an open and long-existing separation.

But at this point two hypotheses become possible.

(a) On the one hand, the Psalmist's object may have been, by holding up the example of Ephraim, to warn Judah against a like falling away, not from the house of David, but from the God of their fathers. In this case we must suppose that a particular prominence is given to the conduct of Ephraim, in the past history, though the whole nation was guilty, in order to prepare the way for what is said of Ephraim's subsequent rejection (see note on ver. 9). Such a warning might be compared to that of Jeremiah at the time of the Chaldean invasion (chap. vii.).

(b) On the other hand, the Psalmist's design may have been not so much to warn Judah, as to rebuke Ephraim. Hence it is that whilst speaking of the past history of *all* Israel he mentions only Ephraim by name. Though all the burden of guilt in that mournful past did not rest exclusively upon them, yet it is with them only that he is concerned. Hence it is, too, that he dwells with so much pride and satisfaction on the transference of the sanctuary from Shiloh to Zion. That haughty tribe, strong in numbers and in power, might boast that it had recovered its ancient ascendancy. Ten out of the twelve tribes might be lost to David's house. But God's presence and favor were not with the ten, but with the two. His sanctuary was not in Shiloh, but in Zion. He had chosen to be the ruler of his people, no scion of the thousands of Ephraim, but the shepherd stripling of the tribe of Judah.

On the whole, I confess that the tone of triumph with which the Psalm concludes seems to me to favor the last hypothesis, though I fear I must also add that I am unsupported in this view by other commentators.

The Psalm has no regular strophical division. Groups of four verses frequently occur, and the general structure may be said to rest on the common principle of pairs of verses. Here and there certain

expressions recur, such as, "They tempted and provoked the Most High"; "When God heard this, he was wroth," etc., which, as Hupfeld says, gives a kind of epic character to the Psalm. In the review of the past history, the narrative is not given in bare chronological order, but is rather combined in two principal masses. In the first of these the Psalmist but mentions the "wonders in Egypt," and passes on to detail the events in the wilderness. Then, having set forth all God's marvellous works there, and all the rebellion of Israel, he begins the history again. He will paint more fully those "signs in Egypt," which were of themselves so wonderful a proof of God's redeeming love, he will show still more convincingly Israel's ingratitude, and having done this, he pursues the narrative, passing lightly now over the march through the wilderness, touching on the history in the time of the judges, and bringing it down to the days of David, in whose election God had again magnified his grace.

[A Maschil of Asaph.<sup>a</sup>]

- 1 GIVE ear, O my people, to my law,  
 Incline your ear to the words of my mouth.  
 2 I would open my mouth in a parable,  
 I would utter dark sayings of old.  
 3 (The things) which<sup>b</sup> we have heard and known,  
 And our fathers have told us,

1-4. The introduction, announcing the Psalmist's purpose. He will recall the past, that it may act as a warning for the present, and that the wholesome lessons which it teaches may be perpetuated in the future. In the following four verses he declares that such commemoration of God's wonders is the very destiny of Israel. For this end did he give them his law, and the lively oracles of his mouth.

1. MY PEOPLE. This does not imply that God or the Messiah is the speaker. The prophet, speaking in the name and by the authority of God, as his inspired messenger, thus addresses the nation. The opening of the Psalm is similar to that of Ps. xlix. See also Deut. xxxii. 1; Isa. i. 2.

MY LAW, here evidently used in its wider sense of *instruction* generally, as

often in the Book of Proverbs. It is the teaching of a prophet (Matt. xiii. 35), and in that sense a law—a law of life to those who hear it.

2. I WOULD OPEN. The form of the tense expresses the wish, resolve, etc. The sentence is very similar to that in xlix. 4 [5]. The two words PARABLE and DARK SAYINGS are the same which occur in that passage, where see note. The former (*mashal*) etymologically signifies a *comparison*, the placing of two objects in their due relation, whether of likeness or unlikeness; hence it is used of gnomic sentences, proverbs, parables, and indeed of poetical discourse generally (see Num. xxi. 27, *hammosh'lim*, "the ballad-singers"), as being based on the principle of parallelism, or of antithesis. The latter means, properly, either (1) a *sharp* or *pointed saying*; or

- 4 We will not hide (them) from their children ;  
 Telling to the generation to come the praises of Jehovah,  
 And his strength and his wonderful works that he hath  
 done.
- 5 For he established a testimony in Jacob,  
 And appointed a law in Israel,  
 Which he commanded our fathers  
 To make known unto their children ;
- 6 To the intent that the generation to come might know (them),  
 (Even) the children which should be born,  
 Who should rise up, and tell (them) to their children ;
- 7 That they might put their confidence in God,  
 And not forget the doings of God,  
 But keep his commandments ;

(2) *a perplexed saying, a riddle.* (For a discussion of these words, see Delitzsch on Hab. ii. 6, and in *Gesch. der Jüd. Poesie*, S. 196, 199). Having said so much on the meaning of these words, we have two further questions to consider. (a) In what sense is the early history of Israel, which forms the subject of the poem, called here a "parable" and "dark sayings"? Does the Psalmist merely announce his purpose of treating that history in *language of poetry* (we have seen that the word "parable" may be almost equivalent to "poetry"), or does he mean more? Does he mean that he has a *moral end* in setting forth that history? that under its truths are veiled which have a significance and an application to present circumstances for those who can read them aright? Probably, though we can hardly say certainly, the last. (b) How are we to understand the quotation made by St. Matthew of this passage, who sees a fulfilment of it in the parables spoken by our Lord (Matt. xiii. 34, 35)? It cannot be supposed for a moment that these words were a prediction of our Lord's mode of teaching, or that he himself is here the speaker. But here, as elsewhere, that which the Old Testament prophet says of himself finds its fittest expression, its

highest realization, in the Great Prophet of the kingdom of heaven. "Citur hic locus a Matthæo, et *accommodatur ad Christi personam*. . . In hac igitur parte quum similis prophetae fuerit, quia de sublimibus mysteriis concionatus est in altiore dicendi forma, apposite transfertur ad ejus personam quod propheta de se affirmat."—*Calvin*. St. Matthew's quotation runs, ὅπως πληρωθῆ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λόγοντος, Ἐνοιξάτω ἐν παραβολαῖς τὸ στόμα μου, ἐρεῖξομαι κεκρυμμένα ἀπὸ καταβολῆς (κόσμου). The LXX have in the latter clause: φθέγγομαι προβλήματα ἀπ' ἀρχῆς.

4. WE WILL NOT HIDE. Comp. Job xv. 18, where it is used in like manner of the faithful transmission of truths received. All truth known is a sacred trust, given to us, not for ourselves alone, but that we may hand on the torch to others.

5. The very object with which God gave HIS LAW and HIS TESTIMONY (see on these words, note on xix. 7) was, that they might be preserved, not in writing only, but by oral communication and transmission, that they might be a living power in the people. See the commands in Ex. x. 2; xii. 26, 27; xiii. 8-10, 14, 15; Deut. iv. 9; vi. 20, etc.

- 8 And might not be as their fathers,  
 A stubborn and rebellious generation,  
 A generation that was not steadfast in heart,  
 And whose spirit was not faithful towards God.
- 9 The children of Ephraim, being equipped <sup>e</sup> as archers,  
 Turned back in the day of battle.

8. THAT WAS NOT STEADFAST IN HEART; lit. "that did not establish its heart," was ever wavering in its allegiance. This sense is most in accordance with the parallelism; though perhaps the rendering of the E.V., "that set not their heart aright," i.e. towards God, might be defended; comp. 1 Sam. vii. 3; Job xi. 13.

9. THE CHILDREN OF EPHRAIM. An example of that "stubborn and perverse generation" mentioned ver. 8. But why are "the children of Ephraim" mentioned, and what particular sin of theirs is here alluded to? (1) We must not be led astray by the expression "equipped as archers," etc., to look for some defeats of the tribe in battle (as the Chald., the Rabb., Schnurrer, and others do), for it is not a *chastisement*, but a *sin*, which is spoken of. Hence the description of their carrying bows and turning back must be a figure, employed in the same sense as that of "the deceitful bow" (ver. 57). (2) The allusion cannot be to the separation of Ephraim and the other tribes from Judah (as Venema, De Wette, etc., explain), because it is the earlier history of the nation in the wilderness which is here before the poet's eyes. (3) Nothing is gained by introducing the particle of comparison (so Luther, Rosenm., etc.), as in the Prayer-book version, "*like as* the children of Ephraim," etc., for such a comparison rests upon nothing. (4) Nor can "the children of Ephraim" here stand merely for the whole nation, as has sometimes been maintained by referring to lxxx. 2 [3], and lxxxi. 5 [6]; for in ver. 67 the distinction between Ephraim and Judah is marked. (5) It would seem, then, that *their* treacherous conduct is here specially stigmatized, in order, as it were, to sound the note of that rejection

on which the Psalmist afterwards dwells (ver. 67). Ephraim had been, after the settlement in Canaan, the most numerous and the most powerful of the tribes. Shiloh, the religious capital of the nation, and Shechem, the gathering-place of the tribes (Josh. xxiv. 1; Judges ix. 2; 1 Kings xii. 1), were both within its borders. During the time of the judges it seems to have asserted a kind of supremacy over the rest. Possibly the Psalmist is thinking of this. Having their rejection in view, he remembers their ancient position, and regards them as leaders of the people, and, morally, leaders in their sin. It is true this could only apply to their history in the land of Canaan. During the wanderings in the wilderness, with which a large part of the Psalm is occupied, the tribe of Ephraim, so far from holding a leading position, was the smallest of all, except Simeon. It may be, however, that the Psalmist forgets or neglects this circumstance, and only thinks of the tribe as the rival of Judah in later times, and the leader in the revolt. But see the remarks in the introduction to the Psalm. A different interpretation is given in the article "Ephraim" in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*. Hupfeld would expunge the words "the children of Ephraim" as a gloss; but it is difficult to see how such a gloss could have crept in.

EQUIPPED AS ARCHERS. This and the next clause are designed apparently to express, in a figure, the faithlessness of the Ephraimites. They are like archers who, fully equipped for war, at the critical moment when they should use their weapons, afraid to meet the shock of battle, wheel round and fly in disorder.

TURNED BACK. Comp. Judges xx. 39, 41. Panic-struck, when they were



- 10 They kept not the covenant of God,  
 And refused to walk in his law ;
- 11 And they forgot his doings,  
 And his wonderful works which he had showed them.
- 12 In the sight of their fathers he did wonders,  
 In the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.
- 13 He clave (the) sea, and caused them to pass through,  
 And made (the) waters to stand as an heap.
- 14 And he led them with the cloud in the day-time,  
 And all the night through with a light of fire.
- 15 He clave<sup>a</sup> rocks in the wilderness,  
 And gave them drink as it had been the great deeps.<sup>e</sup>

expected to be of service; hardly (as Maurer suggests) pretending flight, like the Thracian archers, in order to take the enemy at greater advantage. In any case, the image is one of faithlessness. The next verse is an explanation of the figure. The following paraphrase is given in the *Catena Aurea* (from Aug. Cassiod. and the Glossa Ord.): "The children of Ephraim taking aim and shooting with the bow, that is, promising to keep the law, and openly saying, All that the Lord hath said unto us we will do and hear, turned back in the day of battle, when they said unto Aaron, Make us gods to worship. They failed in the day of battle, that is, in the day of temptation; for the prophet Hosea saith: Ephraim is as a silly dove that hath no heart. For it is not hearing, but temptation, that puts to the proof the promise of obedience."

12. ZOAN. Its Greek name was Tanis. It "lay near the eastern border of Lower Egypt, . . . on the east bank of the canal which was formerly the Tanitic branch" (of the Nile). "Zoan is mentioned in connection with the plagues in such a manner as to leave no doubt that it is the city spoken of in the narrative in Exodus, as that where Pharaoh dwelt. The wonders were wrought 'in the field of Zoan,' which may either denote the territory immediately round the city, or its nome, or even a kingdom. This

would accord best with the shepherd-period." (See the article "Zoan," in the *Dict. of the Bible*, by Mr. R. S. Poole.) May not "the field of Zoan" be the rich plain which, as he tells us, "anciently extended due east as far as Pelusium, about thirty miles distant," and the whole of which, "about as far south and west as Tunis, was anciently known as 'the fields' or 'plains,' 'the marshes' or 'pasture-lands,' and which is now almost covered by the great Lake Menzelch"? The name only occurs once in the Pentateuch, in Num. xiii. 22. (See the passage discussed in the article just quoted.) It is remarkable that, after beginning in this verse to speak of the wonders *in Egypt*, the Psalmist drops all mention of them till ver. 43 (which is a resumption of this verse), and turns aside to dwell on the wonders *in the wilderness* (see the introduction).

13. Now follows the exemplification, in certain detailed instances, of the faithlessness and disobedience and forgetfulness of their fathers in the wilderness. First (in ver. 13-16), some of God's wonders wrought on their behalf are mentioned, and then (ver. 17-20) the thankless and perverse spirit in which these wonders were regarded.

AS AN HEAP; borrowed from Ex. xv. 8. See note on xxxiii. 7.

15. ROCKS. The word *tsur* shows that the Psalmist is thinking in this verse of

- 16 He brought forth streams also out of (the) cliff,  
 And caused waters to run down like the rivers.
- 17 Yet they went on still to sin more against him,  
 To rebel against<sup>f</sup> the Most High in the desert.
- 18 And they tempted God in their heart,  
 To ask food for their lust,
- 19 Yea, they spake against God ;  
 They said, " Can God prepare a table in the wilderness ?
- 20 Lo, he smote (the) rock, that waters gushed out,  
 And torrents rushed along :  
 Can he give bread also ?  
 Will he provide flesh for his people ? "

the miracle at Horeb, recorded in Ex. xvii. (See note on ver. 16.) The plural does not necessarily imply that the two great instances in which this miracle was performed, the one in the first and the other in the last year of the wandering, are here brought together (Ex. xvii. and Num. xx.); for both that and the verb, which (being here without the *Vau* consecutive) is apparently the aorist of repeated action, may only be used in the way of poetic amplification. The miracle seems as if ever repeated.

AS IT HAD BEEN THE GREAT DEEPS ; lit. " and gave them, as it were, the great deep to drink " (or, " as from the depths in abundance "). DeWette calls this a " gigantic " comparison. But " the deep " here may mean, perhaps, not the sea, but the great subterranean reservoir of waters from which all fountains and streams were supposed to be supplied, as Deut. viii. 7. Comp. xlii. 7 [8], and note there.

16. The word here used (*Selâ*) " is especially applied to the cliff at Kadesh, from which Moses brought water, as *Tsur* is for that struck in Ex. xvii. " — Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, App. § 29 ; see also chap. i. part ii. p. 95.

17. YET THEY WENT ON TO SIN. In the verses immediately preceding no special instance of transgression is recorded, though such is implied in the mention of the miracle of the water,

when they murmured against God. Hence the murmuring for flesh is described as a *further and fresh* instance of sin. Hupfeld thinks it may be only a phrase borrowed from the Book of Judges, where it is commonly prefixed to each fresh act of disobedience (as in iii. 12, etc.); but there the formula is quite in place, as it follows the narration of previous transgression.

18. THEY TEMPTED GOD, i.e. demanded, in their unbelief, signs and wonders, to put his power to the proof, instead of waiting in faith and prayer for its exercise (repeated ver. 41, 56, as a kind of refrain ; see also evi. 14). The original is Ex. xvii. 3, 7, where also the name *Massah*, " tempting," is given to the spot.

19, 20. The words here put into the mouth of the people are only a poetical representation of what they said, not differing materially from the historical narrative (Ex. xvi. 3, etc.; xvii. 2, 3, 7 ; Num. xi. 4, etc.; xx. 3, etc.).

19. PREPARE A TABLE ; lit. " set out in order," the same phrase as in xxiii. 5.

20. WATERS GUSHED OUT occurs also cv. 41 ; Isa. xlviii. 21.

PROVIDE, or " prepare," as in lxx. 9 [10] ; lxxviii. 10 [11].

FLESH ; the word is a poetical one. " Bread and flesh " are used in the same way of the manna and the quails, in Ex. xvi.

- 21 Therefore, (when) Jehovah heard (that), he was wroth,  
 And a fire was kindled in Jacob,  
 And anger also went up against Israel ;
- 22 Because they believed not in God,  
 And put not their trust in his salvation.
- 23 He commanded also the clouds above,  
 And opened the doors of heaven ;
- 24 And he rained manna upon them to eat,  
 And gave them the corn of heaven ;
- 25 Bread of the mighty did they eat every one,  
 He sent them meat to the full.
- 26 He led forth the east wind in the heaven,  
 And by his power he guided the south wind,

21-29. The awful punishment of their sin. He gives the bread which they ask (ver. 21-25), and then the flesh (ver. 26-29), but his granting of their desire is in itself the most terrible of chastisements. The representation is freely borrowed from the two accounts in Ex. xvi. and Num. xi., more particularly the last.

21. A FIRE, with allusion to the "fire of Jehovah" in Num. xi. 1 (whence the name of the place was called Tab'erah, "burning") where also occurs the similar expression, "And when Jehovah heard (it), his anger was kindled."

ALSO. This does not mark that the fire of God's wrath was added to the natural fire; for the last was but the expression of the first. But the particle belongs, logically, to the verb WENT UP, and denotes the retributive character of this fiery scourge. See the same use of the particle, for instance, Isa. lxvi. 4.

22. HIS SALVATION, as already shown in the deliverance from Egypt.

24. RAINED. Hence the expression in the preceding verse, "opened the doors," etc. as in Gen. vii. 11; 2 Kings vii. 2; Mal. iii. 10. In the same way the manna is said to be "rained" from heaven in Ex. xvi. 4. (Every expression used shows plainly that it was a miraculous gift, and not a product of nature.)

Hence, too, it is called CORN OF HEAVEN, for which we have "bread of heaven" in cv. 40; Ex. xvi. 4; John vi. 31. So again

25. BREAD OF THE MIGHTY (see the marginal rendering of the E.V.) probably means "angels' bread," LXX ἄγγελων, not as if angels were nourished by it, or as if it were food worthy of angels, but as coming from heaven, where angels dwell. The word MIGHTY is nowhere else used of the angels, though they are said in ciii. 20, to be "mighty in strength." Hence many would render here "bread of nobles or princes" (such is the use of this word in Job xxiv. 22; xxxiv. 20), i.e. the finest, the most delicate bread.

26. LED FORTH; lit. "madeto journey, or go forth." The verb is again the aorist of repeated action, as in ver. 15.

GUIDED (like a flock). The two verbs occur below (ver. 52), where they are used of God's conduct of his people. The usage here is borrowed from the Pentateuch, where both verbs are said of the wind, the first in Num. xi. 31, the second in Ex. x. 13. The winds are thus conceived of as God's flock, which he leads forth and directs at his pleasure.

EAST WIND . . . SOUTH WIND. These may be mentioned poetically, without being intended to describe exactly the

- 27 And he rained flesh upon them as the dust,  
 And winged fowls like as the sand of the seas ;  
 28 And he let it fall in the midst of their camp,  
 Round about their habitations.  
 29 So they did eat and were well filled,  
 Seeing that he gave them their own desire.  
 30 They were not estranged from their desire ;—  
 Whilst their food was yet in their mouths,  
 31 The anger of God went up against them,  
 And slew the fattest of them,  
 And smote down the young men of Israel.

quarter from which the quails came. In Num. xi. 31, it is merely said that, "there went forth a wind from Jehovah, and brought quails from *the sea*," which Hupfeld too hastily asserts must be the Red Sea (i.e. as he evidently means, the gulf of Suez) ; and that consequently the quails must have been brought by a west wind. But Kibroth-hattaavah was probably not far from the western edge of the gulf of Akabah. And the quails at the time of this event were, as Mr. Houghton has remarked (see "Quails," in *Dict. of the Bible*), on their spring journey of migration *northwards*. "The flight which fed the multitude at Kibroth-hattaavah might have started from Southern Egypt, and crossed the Red Sea near Ras Mohammed, and so up the gulf of Akabah into Arabia Petraea." In this case, the wind blowing from the south first, and then from the east, would bring the quails.

27. RAINED FLESH ; as before, "rained manna," from Ex. xvi. 4, 8, 13.

28. LET IT FALL. The word aptly describes the settling of these birds, unfitted for a long flight, and wearied by their passage across the gulf. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* x. 33, says that quails settle on the sails of ships by night, so as to sink, sometimes, the ships in the neighboring sea. And Diod. Sic., i. p. 38, τὰς θηρὰς τῶν ὀρνύγων ἐπιούοντο, ἐφέροντό τε οὗτοι κατ' ἀγέλας μείζους ἐκ τοῦ πελάγους. The verse follows Ex. xvi. 13 ; Numb. xi. 31.

29. WERE WELL FILLED, i.e. even to loathing, as follows, ver. 30 (see Num. xi. 18–20. So in ver. 25, "to the full," from Ex. xvi. 3, 12.

THEIR DESIRE, the satisfaction of their fleshly appetite. The word (*taavah*) no doubt alludes to Kibroth-hattaavah "the graves of desire, or fleshly appetite" (Num. xi. 4, 34).

30. THEY WERE NOT ESTRANGED, OR, as it might be rendered, "(Whilst) they were not (yet) estranged," i.e. whilst they still found satisfaction and enjoyment in this kind of food, whilst it was yet in their mouths, the anger of God went up, etc. Thus the two verses (30, 31) stand in the relation of protasis and apodosis. The passage is manifestly borrowed from Num. xi. 33, "And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of Jehovah was kindled against the people, and Jehovah smote the people with a very great plague"; and so closely borrowed as to be evidence that this portion of the Pentateuch already existed in writing. But, unfortunately, we cannot draw hence any argument for the age of the whole Pentateuch in its present form.

31. WENT UP. See above, ver. 21, and xviii. 8 [9].

THE FATTEST ; it may mean either the strongest, or the noblest. Comp. xxii. 29 [30]. On these and the young men, the flower of the people, the judgment especially falls.

- 32 For all this, they sinned yet more,  
 And believed not his wondrous works,  
 33 Therefore did he make their days vanish in a breath,  
 And their years in terror.  
 34 When he slew them, then they inquired after him,  
 Yea, they turned again and sought God ;  
 35 And they remembered that God was their Rock,  
 And the Most High God their Redeemer.  
 36 But they flattered him with their mouth,  
 And they lied unto him with their tongue ;  
 37 For their heart was not steadfast with him,  
 Neither were they faithful in his covenant.  
 38 But he, in his tender mercy, covereth iniquity, and destroy-  
 eth not ;  
 Yea, many a time turneth he his anger away,  
 And stirreth not up all his fury.  
 39 And he remembered that they were (but) flesh,  
 A wind that goeth, and cometh not again.

32. The allusion seems to be to Num. xiv. 11, "How long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them"; the words of God to Moses after the return of the spies. And this is the more likely, because the next verse alludes to that cutting short of the life of the people, which was the consequence of their rebellion at that time (Num. xiv. 28-34).

33. IN A BREATH. See xxxix. 5, 6, and the complaint of Moses, xc. 9, though the word there used is different.

34. The passage which follows, to the end of ver. 39, is a most striking and affecting picture of man's heart, and God's gracious forbearance, in all ages:—man's sin calling for chastisement, the chastisement producing only temporary amendment, God's goodness forgotten, and yet God's great love never wearied, and God's infinite compassion ever moved afresh by man's weakness and misery.

36. FLATTERED. Comp. Isa. xxix.

13; lvii. 11; lix. 13. "This returning to God, at least so far as the majority were concerned, was not from any love of righteousness, but only from the fear of punishment."—*Lyra*.

37. THEIR HEART WAS NOT STEADFAST, etc. This is the ever-repeated complaint, see ver. 8, 22. There is no permanence, no stability in the reformation which has been produced. Cf. Hos. vi. 4.

38. The verbs in the first clause are present, and should be so rendered. It destroys the whole beauty of the passage to render, "But he *was* so merciful," etc., as if the reference were only to a particular occasion. God's mercy is like himself, everlasting, and ever the same.

BUT HE. The words are emphatic, and the allusion is to Ex. xxxiv. 6; Num. xiv. 18, 20.

39. Compare Gen. vi. 3; viii. 21; Job vii. 7, 9; x. 21; Ps. ciii. 14-16; and for the word "goeth" or "passeth away" of the wind, Hos. vi. 4; xiii. 3.

- 40 How often did they provoke him in the wilderness,  
 Did they grieve him in the desert :
- 41 Yea, again and again they tempted God,  
 And dishonored<sup>s</sup> the Holy One of Israel.
- 42 They remembered not his hand,  
 Nor the day when he redeemed them from the adversary.
- 43 How he had set his signs in Egypt,  
 And his wonders in the field of Zoan,
- 44 And turned their rivers into blood,  
 So that they could not drink of their streams.
- 45 He sent among them flies which devoured them,  
 And frogs which destroyed them.
- 46 He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar,  
 (And) their labor unto the locust.

40. After thus celebrating God's tender compassion in striking contrast with the perpetual rebellion and ingratitude of the people, the Psalmist resumes the sad tale afresh. But instead of mentioning other instances of rebellion in the wilderness (ver. 40), he passes from that topic to dwell on the wonders wrought in Egypt, the lively recollection of which ought to have kept the people from these repeated provocations. Thus he takes up again the thread dropped at ver. 12. The second principal portion of the Psalm begins with this verse. It is occupied, first, with the narrative of the plagues in Egypt, the exodus, and Israel's entrance into the promised land (ver. 40-55). It then touches briefly on the history under the judges, the Philistine invasion in the time of Eli, which was God's chastisement for transgression, the disaster at Shiloh, whereby Ephraim was robbed of his ancient honors, and which led to the choice of Zion, the ascendancy of the tribe of Judah, and the union of the kingdom under David (ver. 56-72).

41. DISHONORED, or perhaps "provoked." Others, "limited," i.e. set bounds to his power. See Critical Note.

43 In the enumeration of the plagues, the Psalmist does not follow the order

of the history, except as regards the first and the last, and omits all mention of the third (the lice), the fifth (murrain of cattle), the sixth (boils and blains on man and beast), and the ninth (darkness).

44. The first plague. Comp. Ex. vii. 17, etc.

45. The fourth plague (Ex. viii. 20, etc.), and the second plague (Ex. viii. 1, etc.).

FLIES. The LXX and Sym. *κονόμυιαν*. The rendering of the E.V., "*divers sorts of flies*," (Aq. *πάμμικτον*), comes from a wrong derivation of the word from a root signifying *to mix*.

46. CATERPILLAR, or possibly the word means some particular species of locust, or the locust in its larva state. See *Diet. of the Bible*, iii. App. xxxix. This word is not used in the Pentateuch, but in Joel i. 4 it is joined with the locust, as here.

47, 48. The seventh plague, that of the hail mingled with fire (Ex. ix. 13), with its effects, both on the produce of the land and on the cattle. As belonging to the former, vines and sycamores are here mentioned, as in ev. 33, vines and fig-trees. DeWette and Hupfeld assert that the writer, as a native of Canaan, ascribes too much prominence to the vine, the cultivation of which was but little attended to in Egypt, and

- 47 He killed their vines with hail,  
 And their sycamore trees with frost :  
 48 He gave up their cattle also to the hail,  
 And their flocks to hot thunderbolts.  
 49 He let loose upon them the burning of his anger,  
 Wrath and indignation and distress,  
 A letting loose of evil angels <sup>h</sup> (among them).  
 50 He made a free path for his anger ;  
 He spared not their soul from death,  
 But gave their life over to the pestilence ;  
 51 And smote all the first-born in Egypt,  
 The firstlings of (their) strength in the tents of Ham.

which is not said in the Pentateuch to have suffered. But this is an unfounded assertion. Mr. R. S. Poole, in his learned article on Egypt, in the *Diet. of the Bible*, says : " Vines were extensively cultivated, and there were several different kinds of wine, one of which, the Marcotic, was famous among the Romans " (vol. i. p. 497). Pharaoh's chief butler dreams of the vine (Gen. xl. 9-11), and the vines of Egypt, as well as the figs and pomegranates, are thought of with regret by the Israelites in the wilderness (Num. xx. 5). The mural paintings at Thebes, at Beni-Hassan, and in the Pyramids, contain representations of vineyards. Boys are seen frightening away the birds from the ripe clusters, men gather them and deposit them in baskets, and carry them to the winepress, etc.

47. FROST, or, as this is unknown in Egypt, perhaps, rather, " huge hailstones " ; but the word occurs nowhere else, and its meaning is uncertain.

48. HOT THUNDERBOLTS, or " lightnings " ; the same word as in lxxvi. 3 [4], " *lightnings* of the bow," where see note, the allusion being to the fire which ran along the ground (Ex. ix. 23). Cf. ev. 32.

49. This verse expresses generally the whole work of devastation wrought by the divine ministers of evil in the land of Egypt, and so strikingly introduces the final act of judgment, the destruction

of the first-born, which follows in ver. 50, 51. I see no reason for supposing, as Hupfeld and Delitzsch do, that there is any allusion to the fifth plague, that of the murrain among cattle.

A LETTING LOOSE, or, " a mission," " embassy " ; this is a noun, in apposition with the preceding nouns, and further describing the action of the verb, " he let loose." The poet lifts the veil and shows us the wrath of God as the source, and angels as the ministers in the destruction.

EVIL ANGELS. Others render, " angels or messengers (the word may mean either, as *ἄγγελος*, in Greek) of evil," i.e. who work evil. So Hengst. and Delitzsch, who adopt the view of Ode, in his work *De Angelis*, that God makes use of good angels to punish bad men, and of evil angels to buffet and chasten good men. But this cannot be maintained : see 1 Sam. xvi. 14 ; 1 Kings xxii. 21, etc. However, whichever rendering is preferred, it comes to the same thing, for " evil angels " would not mean here what was commonly understood by evil spirits, but angels sent upon an evil mission — a mission of destruction. There can be no doubt of this, because the expression must have been suggested by " the destroyer " in Ex. xii. 13, 23.

50. MADE A FREE PATH ; lit. " levelled a path," as Prov. iv. 26 ; v. 6.

51. FIRSTLINGS OF THEIR STRENGTH ;

- 52 But he made his own people to go forth like sheep.  
 And guided them in the wilderness like a flock.
- 53 And he led them safely so that they did not fear ;  
 And as for their enemies, the sea covered (them).
- 54 And he brought them to his holy border,  
 To yon mountain which his right hand had purchased.
- 55 He drove out also the nations before them,  
 And allotted them as an inheritance by line,  
 And made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.
- 56 But they tempted and provoked the Most High God,  
 And kept not his testimonies ;
- 57 But turned back and dealt faithlessly, like their fathers :  
 They were turned aside like a deceitful bow ;
- 58 And they angered him with their high places,  
 And moved him to jealousy with their graven images.
- 59 When God heard (this), he was wroth,  
 And greatly abhorred Israel ;
- 60 So that he rejected the tabernacle in Shiloh,  
 The tent which he pitched among men.

lit. "beginning of strengths," the plural being used poetically for the singular, which is found in the same phrase (Gen. xlix. 3 ; Deut. xxi. 17).

TENTS OF HAM. So "land of Ham," in cv. 23, 27 ; cvi. 22. Comp. Gen. x. 6.

52. YON MOUNTAIN, i.e. Zion, the building of the temple there being represented, as in lxviii. 16 [17], as the great crowning act to which all else pointed ; unless the noun is used here collectively = "these mountains," i.e. this mountain-land of Palestine, as in Ex. xv. 17, "the mountain of thine inheritance." Comp. Isa. xi. 9. This last, it may be said, is favored by the parallelism.

55. AND ALLOTTED THEM ; lit. "made them fall," in allusion to the *throwing* of the lot. The pronoun "them" is used somewhat incorrectly (the nations having been just spoken of as driven out), instead of "their land." Comp. Josh. xxiii. 4, "See, I have allotted

(made to fall) unto you these nations," etc. Num. xxxiv. 2, "the land which *falleth* to you as an inheritance."

BY LINE. See note on xvi. 6.

56-58. The renewed disobedience of the nation, after their settlement in the land, during the time of the judges.

56. TEMPTED AND PROVOKED, repeated from ver. 17, 18, and 41 ; here the special act of provocation being the worship of idols in the high places. Comp. Judges ii. 11, etc.

57. A DECEITFUL BOW, i.e. one which disappoints the archer, by not sending the arrow straight to the mark ; not "a *slack* bow," as some would explain, referring to Prov. x. 4, "a *slack* hand."

60. The tabernacle was at Shiloh during the whole period of the judges (Josh. xviii. 10 ; Judges xviii. 31 ; 1 Sam. iv. 3). God rejected and forsook it when the ark was given into the hand of the Philistines (1 Sam. iv.). The ark was never brought back thither, and the



- 61 And he gave his strength into captivity,  
And his beauty into the adversary's hand.
- 62 Yea, he gave over his people to the sword,  
And was wroth with his inheritance.
- 63 Their young men the fire devoured,  
And their maidens were not praised<sup>1</sup> in the marriage-song.
- 64 Their priests fell by the sword,  
And the widows made no lamentation.
- 65 Then the Lord awaked, as one out of sleep,  
Like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine ;
- 66 And he smote his adversaries backward,  
He put them to a perpetual reproach.
- 67 And he abhorred the tent of Joseph,  
And chose not the tribe of Ephraim ;
- 68 But chose the tribe of Judah,  
The mount Zion which he loved.

tabernacle itself was removed first to Nob (1 Sam. xxi.), and subsequently to Gibeon (1 Kings iii. 4). Jeremiah, when warning the nation against the superstitious notion that the temple would be a defence, reminds them how God had forsaken and rejected the place of the first tabernacle: "For go now to my place which was in Shiloh, where I made my name to dwell at the first, and see what I have done to it, because of the wickedness of my people Israel." (Jer. vii. 12; see also ver. 14, and chap. xxvi. 6.) These passages do not, perhaps, necessarily imply a destruction of Shiloh by enemies, — certainly nothing of the kind meets us in the history, — but a desolation which followed on the removal of the sanctuary. Calvin observes: "The mode of expression is very emphatic; that God was so offended with the sins of his people, that he was forced to forsake the one place in the whole world which he had chosen."

PITCHED; lit. "caused to dwell." Comp. Josh. xviii. 1; xxii. 19.

61. HIS STRENGTH . . . HIS BEAUTY. The ark is so called as being the place

where God manifested his power and glory. Comp. 1 Sam. iv. 3, 21 and Ps. cxxxii. 8.

63, 64. The utter desolation of the land strikingly pictured by its *silence*. Neither the joyous strains of the marriage-song nor the sad wail of the funeral chant fall upon the ear. It was a land of silence, a land of the dead. Comp. Jer. xxii. 18; Ezek. xxiv. 23; Job xxvii. 15. There is, perhaps, an allusion in ver. 64 to the death of Hophni and Phinehas.

65, 66. God punishes and then delivers. The reference is to the long series of victories over the Philistines under Samuel, Saul, and David.

65. AS ONE OUT OF SLEEP; lit. "as a sleeper." Comp. vi. 6 [7]; xlv. 23.

LIKE A MIGHTY MAN; comp. Isa. xlii. 13.

68. THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, though the sanctuary was planted, not "in Judah only, or in Benjamin only, but on the confines of both (comp. Josh. xv. 63 with Judges i. 21); so that whilst the altars and the holy place were to stand within the borders of the one tribe,

- 69 And he built his sanctuary like high places,  
Like the earth which he hath founded forever.
- 70 He chose David also, his servant,  
And took him from the sheepfolds ;
- 71 As he was following the ewes giving suck, he brought him.  
To feed Jacob his people,  
And Israel his inheritance.
- 72 So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart,  
And led them with the skilfulness of his hands.

the courts of the temple were to extend into the borders of the other tribe, and thus the two were to be riveted together, as it were, by a cramp, bound by a sacred and everlasting bond." Blunt, *Undesigned Coincidences*, etc., p. 181.

69. LIKE HIGH PLACES, etc., or as we might say, "high as heaven, and sure as the solid earth."

70-72. The faithful shepherd of the flock became the faithful shepherd of the nation; just as the obedient fishermen in the gospel history became the successful fishers of men. On the figure here employed, see lxxvii. 20 [21], and the remarks in Introduction to Vol. i. p. 78.

<sup>a</sup> See above, on xxxix. note <sup>a</sup>, and l. note <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> אֲשֶׁר. The relative may refer to what precedes. Or it may form with the suffix ׀ following, a neuter = *quae*; the relative clause, contrary to rule, being placed before the antecedent. "(The things) which we know . . . (those things) we will not hide." For a similar indefinite use of the suffix see xxxix. 7.

<sup>c</sup> נוֹשֵׂאֵי רֹחֵי ק'. (LXX, ἐντείοντες καὶ βάλλοντες τόξον.) This is a compound phrase, which has perplexed the commentators. For the two words in the stat. constr. are not, as is usual in such cases, in construction, the first with the second, and the second with the noun following, but are each in construction with the noun נוֹשֵׂאֵי; for we have 'נוֹשֵׂאֵי ק', 1 Chron. xii. 2; 2 Chron. xvii. 17, meaning "armed with bows," and 'רוֹחֵי ק', Jer. iv. 29, "shooting with bows." Hence Hupfeld calls it "a hybrid phrase," and would strike out one of the words as a gloss; but we have an exact parallel in Jer. xlvi. 9, 'הַקִּיֵּי הַרְחֵי ק', as he admits. The phrase בְּתוּלַת צִיּוֹן צִיּוֹן, lit. "the virgin of Zion, the daughter of Zion," is another instance of the same construction. Maurer, in a note on Jer. xlvi. 9, has drawn attention to this construction, which, as he observes, has escaped the notice of the grammarians. נֹשֵׂא means properly *adjungere, applicare, conserere* (as in נֹשֵׂא, armor, as that which fits together), and then *prehendere* (manu), *tenere, tractare*.

<sup>d</sup> רִבְּקֵי. Hupfeld speaks of this merely as “a pret. without † consec., as frequently in this Psalm, alternating with imperf. cons., ver. 26, 45, 47, 49, 50;” but I prefer regarding it as an aor. of repeated action, not “continuance of an action,” as Phillips — who, however, well explains the use of the tense, “as often as water was wanted by the Israelites in the wilderness, the rock was cleft.”

<sup>e</sup> פְּתַח־יְמִינָה רִבְּקָה. The plur. noun is apparently used for the sing. (comp. Gen. vii. 11; Ps. xxxvi. 7), like הַתְּמִזָּה, הַתְּמִזּוֹת, etc. Hence the adj. is in the sing. The Chald. changes the adj. into the plur., in order to make it agree with the noun. The LXX, ἐν ἀβύσσῳ πολλῆ. So the older versions, generally, take the two words as in concord. Others consider רִבְּקָה to be an adverb, as lxii. 3; lxxxix. 8. “The imperf. consec. [at the beginning of the verse] marks the consequence, which is here contrary to expectation.” — *De Wette*.

<sup>f</sup> לְמַרְוֵה, as Isa. iii. 8. Inf. Hiph., for לְמַרְוֵה, from מרה (as cvi. 7; comp. for other instances lxxiii. 20; Isa. xxiii. 11), construed sometimes with acc., as here and ver. 40, 56, sometimes with ׀ or with ׀ם.

<sup>g</sup> הִתְּיָו. The Hiph. occurs again in Ezek. ix. 4, in the sense of “putting a mark” (on the forehead). So it was taken by the Chald. here, and this has been explained in two ways: (1) “they put boundaries (marks), limits” to the power of God; or (2), as Hengst., Delitzsch, and others, “they branded with reproach” (Delitzsch, *brandmarkten*). But we may perhaps connect it with the Syr., ܐܘܠܐ, *poenituit eum, doluit*. So the LXX, παρώξυναν; Vulg., *exacerbaverunt*; Jerome, *concitaverunt*.

<sup>h</sup> מַלְאַכֵי הַרְּעִים. This is commonly rendered “angels (or messengers) of evil,” i.e. causing evil, generally of the object, as in Prov. xvi. 4, “messengers of death,” and הַרְּעִים is supposed to be a neuter = רְעִיָה, “evil things.” This may perhaps be defended by נְבִירִים, *nobilia*, Prov. viii. 6, though Hupfeld contends that אַמְרִים must be supplied there, as with the adjectives in ver. 9 of the same chapter; to which it may be replied that the noun has immediately preceded, and would therefore easily be understood, which is not the case in ver. 9. However, it is better to explain ר' מ' as “angels (belonging to the class) of evil ones,” i.e. *evil angels*. (So the LXX, *πονηρῶν*; Symm., *κακούντων*.) Comp. the same use of the adj. after the constr. in Num. v. 18, “waters (belonging to the class) of bitter (waters).” Jer. xxiv. 2, “figs of the early ones.” See also Isa. xvii. 6; 1 Kings x. 15.

<sup>i</sup> הוֹלְלֵי. This is not (as Schnurr.) pret. Hoph. of ילל = *ejulare factae sunt*, i.e. *ejularunt*; for that must mean “they were lamented.” It is merely by incorrect orthography for הִלְלֵי (Aq. ἐμνήθησαν; Symm.,

Th., ἐπαινεθήσαν), "were sung with praises," i.e. at the marriage feast. (Comp. הַלְלִים, of the harvest feast," Judges ix. 21 with xvi. 24; Lev. xix. 24 and the Rabb. בֵּית הַלֵּל, "marriage tent").

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PSALM LXXIX.

THIS Psalm is a lamentation over the same great national calamity which, as we have already seen, is bewailed in terms so pathetic in the seventy-fourth. The two Psalms have, indeed, some points of difference, as well as of resemblance. The great features in the scene of misery are presented in the two with a different degree of prominence. In the one, the destruction of the temple occupies the foreground; in the other, the terrible carnage which had made the streets of Jerusalem run with blood is the chief subject of lamentation. In the former, the hope of deliverance and triumph breaks out strongly in the very midst of the sorrow and the wailing (lxxiv. 12, etc.); in the latter, the tone of sadness prevails throughout, with the exception of the short verse with which the Psalm concludes. There is also a marked difference in style. The seventy-fourth Psalm is abrupt, and sometimes obscure; the seventy-ninth, on the contrary, flows smoothly and easily throughout.

But these differences are balanced by resemblances not less observable. Thus, for instance, we may compare lxxix. 5, "how long forever," with lxxiv. 1, 10; lxxix. 1, the desecration of the temple, with lxxiv. 3, 7; lxxix. 2, the giving up to the wild beast, with lxxiv. 19; lxxix. 12, the reproach of the God of Israel, with lxxiv. 10, 18, 22; lxxix. 13, the comparison of Israel to a flock, with lxxiv. 1. There is the same deep pathos in both Psalms; in both, the same picturesque force of description; both the one and the other may be called, without exaggeration, the funeral anthem of a nation.

There can, therefore, be little doubt that both Psalms, even if not written by the same poet, yet bewail the same calamity. It is equally certain that there are but two periods of the national history to which the language of either could properly apply. But in attempting to draw our inference from this Psalm, the same difficulties meet us which have already met us in our attempts to determine the date of Psalm lxxiv. Does the Psalm deplore the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, or is it a dirge over the sack of the city by Antiochus Epiphanes?

That the history of the canon does not exclude the later of these

periods I must still maintain, notwithstanding the positive and contemptuous manner in which Dr. Pusey has recently expressed himself on this subject (*Lectures on Daniel*, pp. 56, 292, etc.). There is not a shadow of proof (as I have pointed out in the Introduction to Vol. i. pp. 18, 19) that the canon was closed before the Maccabean era. We are therefore at liberty to form our opinion as to the probable date of the Psalm purely on internal evidence. And, indeed, it is on this ground that Hengstenberg undertakes to show that the Psalm refers to the Chaldean invasion. Let us examine his arguments.

(1) He contends that there are no traces of any special reference to the Maccabean times. To this it may be replied that it is almost impossible to find in any Psalm language so precise as to fix at once the date and the occasion for which it was written. But in this instance the fact that the desecration, and not the destruction, of the temple is lamented, is certainly more easily explained on the Maccabean hypothesis than on the Chaldean. Antiochus Epiphanes defiled the temple; Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it.

(2) He asserts that the language used in verse 1, "They have made Jerusalem an heap of stones," and so general a slaughter as that described in verses 2, 3, are not applicable to the history of the Maccabean age. It is sufficient answer to say that the first chapter of the first Book of the Maccabees altogether refutes such an assertion. The desolation of Jerusalem and the slaughter there spoken of might adequately, and without exaggeration, be described in the language of the Psalm; the difference is only the difference between poetry and prose.

(3) He objects that in the Psalm (ver. 6) "kingdoms and nations" are spoken of, whereas in the Syrian period the Jews had to do with only one kingdom. But it is obvious that in the one struggle was involved the whole principle of the antagonism to the heathen world at large. And nothing is more common than for the prophets and poets to extend their range of vision beyond the single enemy, or the immediate conflict, so as to embrace a larger issue.

There is one expression in the Psalm, and one only, which may seem to favor the Babylonish exile: "Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee" (ver. 11). But even this might be used equally well of the captives who were carried away by the army of Antiochus (1 Macc. i. 32). So far, then, there is no positive evidence — and this Delitzsch cordially admits — in favor of one period rather than of the other.

We now come to difficulties of a more formidable kind. Two passages in the Psalm are found elsewhere; the one in Jeremiah and the other in the first Book of Maccabees.

Verses 6 and 7 stand almost word for word in Jer. x. 25. Does the prophet quote from the Psalmist, or the Psalmist from the prophet?

In favor of the former supposition it may be said: (1) That it is Jeremiah's habit to quote largely from other writers, especially from Job and the Psalms; (2) That in his prophecy the verse immediately preceding—the twenty-fourth verse of the chapter—is a quotation from the sixth Psalm; (3) That the words occupy a more natural position in the Psalm than they do in the prophecy, inasmuch as the *prayer* that God would punish the heathen follows immediately on the *complaint* that his wrath burns like fire against Israel; and also, inasmuch as the word "pour out" seems to have been employed designedly with reference to the use of the same verb in verse 3, "they have poured out" (E.V. "they have shed"); (4) That the difficult singular, verse 7 (see note), is changed in Jeremiah into the plural, and the passage further altered and expanded by the addition, "and they have devoured him and consumed him," which is quite in the style of Jeremiah, who rarely quotes without some alteration of the kind.

The first and the last of these reasons are certainly not without force.

On the other hand, Hupfeld argues with regard to (3), that the passage, as it stands in Jeremiah, is anything but out of place; that the language there, on the contrary, is more definite; the contrast being this—that God would correct his own people with judgment, i.e. in measure, but that he would pour out all his fury, without measure, upon their enemies. He contends that this (expressing the same contrast which occurs elsewhere in xxx. 11; xlvi. 28) must be the original passage. However, this question of coherence does not go for much. Considering the abruptness of transition natural to lyric poetry, even a want of close connection would be no proof that the passage was borrowed by the Psalmist. And, on the other hand, the connection for which Hupfeld contends does not seem to be closer or more obvious than that in the Psalm.

There is, however, another and a very serious difficulty. This Psalm, supposing it to refer to Nebuchadnezzar, must have been written during the exile—probably some time after the destruction of the temple. Psalm lxxiv., in like manner, which speaks of "the everlasting desolations," must have been composed at a comparatively late period of the captivity. But when were the passages in Jeremiah's prophecy written, which connect them with these Psalms? Jeremiah, in x. 17, 18, predicts the captivity, and hence that part of his prophecy seems to be in time prior to the Psalm; and Hengstenberg can only evade this difficulty by the supposition that this chapter was not *written* in its

present form till after the destruction of Jerusalem. This, however, is a mere assumption, without a shadow of proof.

Another difficulty still remains. Verse 3 is quoted in 1 Macc. vii. 16. The quotation is introduced by the formula, *κατὰ τὸν λόγον ὃν ἔγραψε* (in the Syriac, "according to the word which the prophet has written"). This, Hengstenberg says, is the usual mode of citing from the canonical Scriptures, and hence he contends that the quotation could not be from a Psalm written at the time of the persecution of Antiochus. But this does not follow, even if the use of *ἔγραψε* be as limited as he would make it. As I have remarked, it cannot be shown that the canon was completed before the age of the Maccabees, and *the writer* of the book lived long after the events which he narrates. Hence it would be quite natural for him to refer to a poem which had sprung out of the very circumstances of his history. Delitzsch even (i. 557) thinks that the aorist *ἔγραψε* sounds as if the quotation were from some work which was produced under the pressure of the calamities which the author is describing.

It has not, I believe, been noticed, and yet it appears to me almost certain, that the prayer of Daniel (ix. 16) contains allusions to the language of this Psalm: "For our sins and for the iniquities of our fathers (comp. ver. 8 of the Psalm, where, though the word 'forefathers' is different, the thought is the same), Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us" (comp. ver. 4 of the Psalm).

Still, the question must remain an open one, whether the passage in Jeremiah or in the Psalm is the original. Unless this question can be positively settled, we have no clew to guide us as to the age of the Psalm. Its language would apply almost equally well either to the time of Nebuchadnezzar or to that of Antiochus Epiphanes. This seems to have been felt by some of the early commentators, who, without venturing to bring it down in point of actual composition so low as the latter period, have supposed it to be a prophecy of that calamitous time. So Cassiodorus: "Deplorat vero Antiochi persecutionem tempore Maccabeorum factam, tunc futuram, scilicet in spiritu prophetico quasi praeteritam propter certitudinem eventus."

The Psalm can hardly be said to have any regular strophical divisions.

It consists, first, of a complaint (ver. 1-4); and then of a prayer that God would visit his people again in mercy, and pour out his vengeance upon their enemies (ver. 5-12); whilst a closing verse announces the gratitude with which God's mercy will be acknowledged (ver. 13).

## [A Psalm of Asaph.]

- 1 O GOD, the nations have come into thine inheritance ;  
 They have defiled thy holy temple ;  
 They have made Jerusalem a heap of stones.
- 2 They have given the dead bodies of thy servants  
 To be meat unto the fowls of the heaven,  
 The flesh of thy beloved unto the beasts <sup>a</sup> of the earth.

1-4. Lament over the terrible calamities which have befallen the nation.

NATIONS. In former editions I retained in this passage the rendering of the E.V. "heathen," because the enemies of Jerusalem are here so designated not merely as consisting of different nations (though the Chaldean army was thus composed), but as *profane* intruders upon the sacred soil. A religious idea is evidently associated with the use of the word. But I now think it better to keep "nations" uniformly as the rendering of the Hebrew word, *Goyim*.

THINE INHERITANCE, the holy land and the holy people (comp. lxxiv. 2; lxxviii. 62, 71), holy as the abode of God (as Ex. xv. 17), itself a sanctuary. The same idea of profanation, as connected with foreign conquests, occurs frequently in the prophets (see Joel iii. [iv.] 17; Nahum ii. 1; Isa. xxxv. 8; lii. 1, and especially, as parallel with this passage, Lam. i. 10).

DEFILED. Although to a pious Jew this defilement would be a thing of not less horror than the destruction of the holy house, still it is remarkable that if the Chaldean invasion be meant, the profanation only, and not the destruction, of the temple (as in lxxiv.) should be lamented.

A HEAP OF STONES, or rather, plural "heaps of stones," "ruins." Thus was the prophecy of Micah fulfilled, which he uttered in the time of Hezekiah (iii. 12); see also Jer. xxvi. 18, where the prophecy is quoted. In both passages the same word is used, and in the E.V. rendered "heaps." It occurs also in the sing., Mic. i. 6, "I will make Samaria a heap of the field." The LXX have

*ὄπωροφυλάκιον*, "a garden-lodge," which is explained by a scholion of the *Cod. Vatic.* 754 (quoted by Delitzsch) as *λιθολόγιος τόπος, ὅπου τὴν σκητὴν ἔχει ὁ τὰς ὄπώρας φυλάσσων*. The Vulg. in *pomorum custodian*, in the same sense, probably, as Cassiodorus explains, with reference to Isa. i. 8, "as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers." Lyra says: "Id est in acervum lapidum, custodes enim pomorum faciunt magnum acervum lapidum, ut desuper ascendentes videant per totum pomœrium." But the word employed in this sense is a different word (see Hos. xii. 12).

2. That which the Psalmist here laments was threatened by Jeremiah (vii. 33), "And the carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth," etc. See also viii. 2; ix. 22; xv. 3; xvi. 4; xix. 7; the original passage being Deut. xxviii. 26.

THY BELOVED, or, "thy godly ones." See on xvi. 10. Vaihinger argues that such a designation of the people is a proof that the Psalm cannot belong to the Chaldean invasion; for then the nation was utterly evil and corrupt. But in l. 5, the same title is given to the whole nation as in covenant with God, at the very time when they are charged with breaking that covenant. So Habakkuk, after complaining of the corruption of his people, and seeing that their sins will bring God's judgment upon them, still speaks of them as "righteous," in contrast with the Chaldeans, who are "wicked" (Hab. i. 13). So it may be here; unless, indeed, the Psalmist is thinking rather of "the faithful few," the "holy seed," than of the



- 3 They have shed their blood like water round about Jerusalem ;  
And there was none to bury<sup>b</sup> (them).
- 4 We are become a reproach to our neighbors,  
A scorn and derision to them that are round about us.
- 5 How long, O Jehovah, wilt thou be angry forever ?  
Shall thy jealousy burn like fire ?
- 6 Pour out thy fury on the heathen which know thee not,  
And upon (the) kingdoms which have not called upon thy  
name.
- 7 For they have devoured<sup>c</sup> Jacob,  
And laid waste his pasture.

many whose sins had called for chastisement. Some have seen in the word *Chasidim* an allusion to the Ἀσιδαῖοι who were slain by Alcimus (1 Macc. vii.).

3. This verse is quoted, but not exactly (probably therefore from memory), from the version of the LXX, in 1 Macc. vii. 16, 17, the Greek translator of the first Book of the Maccabees being familiar with the Greek Psalter, as Ewald has shown (*Jahrb.* vi. 25). For the bearing of this quotation on the age of the Psalm, see the introduction.

THEY HAVE SHED. It might be better, though less idiomatic, to render "they have poured out," and so again in ver. 10, "which is poured out." For it is the same word which occurs also in ver. 6, "Pour out thy fury," etc.; and there may perhaps be, as Hengst. thinks, a designed antithesis in the repetition of the word: "As they have poured out our blood, so do thou pour out upon them thy fury."

NONE TO BURY, this being, according to the deep-rooted feeling of all ancient nations, a great aggravation of the calamity. Comp. Jer. xiv. 16; xxii. 18, 19.

4. With the exception of the first word, this is an exact repetition of xlv. 14, where see note. (That Psalm, as we have seen, may perhaps be of the Maccabean age.) Comp. also lxxx. 6 [7].

NEIGHBORS. Such as the Edomites, for instance (see cxxxvii. 7; Lam. iv. 21, 22), if the earlier date be preferred.

5-7. God may make use of the heathen

as "the rod of his anger," wherewith to chasten his people, but nevertheless, when his purpose is accomplished, then his wrath is turned against the oppressor. It is in this conviction that the Psalmist prays (ver. 6), "Pour out," etc. The ground of his prayer is not only that they have not called upon God's name, but that they have *devoured Jacob*. Hence he asks for a righteous retribution. Precisely in the same spirit Habakkuk long before had said of the Chaldeans: "O Jehovah, for judgment thou hast ordained them, and, O thou Rock, for correction thou hast appointed them" (i. 12); and then, after portraying the work of judgment wrought by that "bitter and hasty nation," he tells of "the parable" and "taunting proverb" which shall greet their utter overthrow (ii. 6, etc.). The same law of righteous retribution is frequently recognized by the prophets; see, for instance, Isa. x. 12, 24-26, and elsewhere.

5. FOREVER. On this, as joined with the question, see on xiii. 2.

LIKE FIRE. Comp. lxxviii. 21, and the original passage, Deut. xxxii. 22.

6. This verse and the next are repeated with slight variation in Jer. x. 25. As to the question whether the Psalmist borrowed from the prophet, or the prophet from the Psalmist, see introduction.

7. PASTURE; or, "habitation of shepherds." Such is the proper meaning of the word (not *sanctuary*, as the Chald.; but see 2 Sam. xv. 25). Comp. lxxxiii.

8 Oh remember not against us the iniquities of (our) forefathers ;<sup>d</sup>

Let thy tender mercies speedily come to meet us,  
For we are brought very low.

9 Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name,  
Yea, deliver us, and cover our sins for thy name's sake.

10 Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God ?

Let there be made known<sup>e</sup> among the nations in our sight  
The revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed.

12 [13]; Ex. xv. 13 (where "his holy pasture" may = "his holy border," lxxviii. 54); Jer. xxv. 30. The figure is thus *suggested*, which is afterwards more fully expressed in ver. 13, where however the word rendered "pasture" is a different one in the Hebrew. It is a favorite image in all this group of Psalms. See Introduction to Vol. i. p. 97.

8. AGAINST US; lit. "with respect to us," i.e. so that we should thereby suffer. Daniel ix. 16 combines in some measure the language of this verse and verse 4. The prophet confesses that Jerusalem and his people have become "a reproach unto all that are round about," not only because of their own sins, but for "*the iniquities of their fathers.*" This heritage of sin and its curse is indeed fully recognized in holy Scripture. God himself publishes it in the law (Ex. xx. 5, comp. xxxiv. 7). See also Lam. v. 7, and 2 Kings xxiii. 26. Hengst., Delitzsch, and Hupfeld are all at pains to argue that the iniquities of the fathers are not visited upon the children, except when the children themselves are guilty. In proof, they appeal to Deut. xxiv. 16, 2 Kings xiv. 6; Ezek. xviii. 20. But only the last of these passages is in point; the other two, the latter of which is merely a quotation from the former, only lay down the rule by which human tribunals are to be bound. Fully to discuss this question in a note would be quite impossible; it would require a volume. I will only remark, (1) That, as a simple matter of fact, the innocent do suffer for the guilty. Children receive from their parents their moral and

physical constitution, and both the taint and the chastisement of sin are transmitted. To this Scripture and experience alike bear witness. (2) That there is a mysterious oneness of being, a kind of perpetual existence, which manifests itself in every family and every nation. Each generation is what all previous generations have been tending to make it. The stream of evil gathers and bears along an ever-increasing mass of corruption; so that upon the last generation comes the accumulated load of all that went before (Matt. xxiii. 35). But (3) Scripture nowhere teaches that a man is guilty in the sight of God for any sins but his own. Sinning himself, he allows the deeds of his fathers; he is a partaker in their iniquities; he helps to swell the fearful catalogue of guilt which at last brings down God's judgment; but his condemnation, if he be condemned, is for his own transgression, not for those of his fathers.

COME TO MEET. E.V. "prevent." God's mercy must anticipate, come to meet, man's necessity.

9. Twice the appeal is made "for thy name's sake"; that revelation of God which he had made of himself to Moses, when he passed by and proclaimed the name of Jehovah (Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7). Cf. Ps. xx. 1; xxiii. 3; xxix. 2.

COVER, or, "make atonement for," and so "forgive," as the word is commonly rendered. See xxxii. 1. The sins have provoked God's wrath, and from that wrath he only can hide them.

10. The first clause of the verse is borrowed nearly word for word from

- 11 Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee,  
According to the greatness of thy power spare thou those  
that are appointed unto death,
- 12 And render unto our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom  
Their reproach wherewith they have reproached thee,  
O Lord.
- 13 So we thy people and the sheep of thy pasture will give  
thanks unto thee forever,  
To all generations we will tell forth thy praise.

Joel ii. 17, and this Hengst. thinks rests on Ex. xxxii. 12; Num. xiv. 15, 16; Deut. ix. 28. It is repeated in exv. 2.

IN OUR SIGHT; lit. "before our eyes." There can hardly be an allusion to Deut. vi. 22, as has been supposed. The expression suggests a feeling of joy and satisfaction in beholding the righteous judgment of God. Comp. lii. 6, and note there.

THE REVENGING OF THE BLOOD, etc.; comp. Deut. xxxii. 43.

11. THE SIGHING OF THE PRISONER AND THOSE THAT ARE APPOINTED UNTO DEATH (Heb. "the sons of death"), are expressions found again in cii. 20 [21], a Psalm written, there can be no doubt,

during the exile. By "the prisoner" must be meant, if this Psalm refers to the same time, the whole nation, whose captivity in Babylon, as well as their bondage in Egypt, is regarded as an imprisonment. If, on the other hand, the Psalm is Maccabean, the allusion will be to those who were carried captive by Antiochus Epiphanes.

THY POWER. Heb. "Thine arm." Comp. Num. xiv. 17; Deut. iii. 24.

12. UNTO OUR NEIGHBORS. Because their scorn was more intolerable, and also more inexcusable, than the oppression of distant enemies. Comp. ver. 4. SEVENFOLD, as in Gen. iv. 15, 24. INTO THEIR BOSOM. Comp. Isa. lxxv. 7; Jer. xxxii. 18.

<sup>a</sup> תַּחֲתָיו. On this form see l. note <sup>c</sup>, cxiii. note <sup>a</sup>, cxiv. note <sup>b</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> קִיָּבֵר. In Jer. xvi. 16 the same expression occurs, but there the verb is in the Piel, and is followed by  $\frac{1}{2}$ . Gesen. (*Thesaur. in v.*) says that the Kal is used of the burial of *one* (except Ezek. xxxix. 12), and the Piel of *many*. But here the Kal is used of many.

<sup>c</sup> אָבַל. It seems unnecessary to suppose, with Ewald, Hupfeld, and others, that the sing. is here written by mistake for the plur., although sixteen of Kennicott's mss., and nine of De Rossi's, have the latter, and it is also found in the parallel passage, Jer. x. 25. The use of the sing. has been explained by supposing (1) that the Psalmist had some particular enemy before his eyes; but the objection to this is, that he immediately returns to the plur. Or (2), as Delitzsch, that the great world-monarchy is here regarded as one mass, subject to one despotic will. But it may be merely the impersonal use of the verb, lit. "one hath devoured," with which the plur. might readily alternate. See the same interchange of sing. and plur., Isa. xvii. 13; xxii. 7, 8.

<sup>d</sup> ראשונים. This might be an adj. qualifying עֲוֹנוֹת, "former sins," the masc. instead of the fem., as in Isa. lix. 2, עֲוֹנוֹת מִקִּדְמוֹת, and it is so taken by the ancient versions. But it is better to regard 'ע as in construction with 'ר, just as we have in Lev. xxvi. 45, בְּרִית ר', "covenant with the fathers." So here, "sins of the fathers," lit. "of those who were at the first, or, were before us." We have the full expression in Jer. xi. 10, 'ע אֲבוֹתָם רָר', "the iniquities of their fathers who were at the first." Comp. Ex. xx. 5; Lev. xxvi. 39.

<sup>e</sup> יָנִיחֵנוּ. Masc. verb with fem. noun following, as often. (See Gesen. § 144.) From overlooking this came the wrong rendering of the A. V. The Prayer-book version is correct.

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### PSALM LXXX.

As in the case of most of the historical Psalms, so in the case of this, it is impossible to say with certainty at what period it was written. The allusions are never sufficiently definite to lead to any positive conclusion. It is not a little remarkable that even the mention of the tribes in verse 2, so far from being a help, has rather been a hinderance, to interpretation. The prayer which recurs so often (ver. 3, 7, 14, 19) would seem to imply that the people were in exile; but it may be a prayer not for restoration to their land, but only for a restoration to prosperity; the verb "turn us again" being capable of either explanation. All that is certain is, that the time was a time of great disaster, that the nation was trampled down under the foot of foreign invaders. The poet turns to God with the earnest and repeated prayer for deliverance, and bases his appeal on the past. God had brought a vine out of Egypt, and planted it in Canaan. How could he give up that vine to be devastated by the wild beasts? Will he not appear at the head of the armies of Israel, as once he went before her sons in the desert with a pillar of fire? Will he not, as of old, lift up the light of his countenance upon them?

The mention of the three tribes, "Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh," may perhaps denote that this is a Psalm for the northern kingdom. Some have supposed it to have been a prayer of the ten tribes in their captivity in Assyria, and it has been conjectured that the inscription of the LXX, ἵπὲρ τοῦ Ἀσσυρίου, is to be taken in this sense. Calvin, on the other hand, thinks that it is a prayer *for* the ten tribes by a poet of the southern kingdom. He reminds us that even after the disruption

prophets were sent from Judah to Israel, and that Amos (vi. 6) rebukes those in Judah who do not "grieve for the wound of Joseph." That Benjamin cannot be mentioned as the representative of the southern kingdom, and Ephraim and Manasseh of the northern, is perfectly clear. Had the object been to describe the nation by its two principal divisions, Judah would have been mentioned, and not Benjamin. It is quite true that Benjamin remained steadfast in its allegiance to the house of Solomon when Jeroboam revolted (see 1 Kings xii. 21), and also that Jerusalem, the capital of the southern kingdom, stood partly in the borders of Benjamin; but neither the one circumstance nor the other would account for the mention of Benjamin, instead of Judah; still less can the insertion of Benjamin between Ephraim and Manasseh be explained on this hypothesis. Hengstenberg attempts to argue that Benjamin really belonged to the ten tribes, because Ahijah only promises to Rehoboam *one* tribe (1 Kings xi. 18, 32, 36); but as the prophet at the same time divides his mantle into twelve parts, and gives Jeroboam ten, he thus leaves *two* for Rehoboam; one of these Rehoboam is supposed to have already, and hence Ahijah only offers to give him one more. Still, in the course of time a portion of Benjamin may have become incorporated into the northern kingdom. The children of Rachel, Joseph (= Ephraim and Manasseh) and Benjamin, would naturally be drawn together. Benjamin, the tribe of Saul and Ishbosheth, and at one time the leading tribe, would not readily submit to the supremacy of Judah; a jealousy existed which was not extinguished in David's reign (2 Sam. xix., xx., xxi.), and which may have been revived later. It is, moreover, in favor of this view that in the previous verse *Joseph* is mentioned, and not Judah; and hence the whole Psalm refers, apparently, only to the kingdom of Israel.

Hupfeld, however, argues that the designations here made use of are intended to describe the whole nation, and not a particular portion of it. He observes (*a*) that the use of the first person plural in verses 2, 3 [3, 4] shows that the whole nation is meant (an argument which is of no force, if the Psalm was written by a native of the northern kingdom); (*b*) that as regards the mention of Joseph, this is only what we find in lxxxi. 4, 5 [5, 6], where Israel and Joseph denote the whole nation, and in lxxvii. 15 [16], where Jacob and Joseph are employed in the same way, and in both passages with reference to the Mosaic times. So, again, in Obad. 18, "the house of Joseph" is mentioned with "the house of Jacob," in opposition to "the house of Esau," Jacob's brother. This remarkable usage of later writers has received different explanations. Rashi accounts for it by Joseph's position in

Egypt as a second father and protector of the nation; Kimchi, by the blessing pronounced on Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen. xlviii. 16), and by the statement in 1 Chron. v. 1 that "the birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel." Others, again, suppose that Joseph is mentioned, because, as being pre-eminent above all his brethren, he might be regarded as a fourth patriarch, and Benjamin, because he was a son of the same mother. Hupfeld admits that the phenomenon may be partially explained on these grounds, but sees in this prominence given to the northern tribes by a poet of Judah (for such he holds the writer of the Psalm to be) a hope implied of a re-union and restoration of all the tribes. After the dispersion of the ten tribes, and when calamities fell heavy upon the two, the old animosities were forgotten, and the one desire of prophets and Psalmists was to see the breach healed and the ancient unity restored. Hence the use of the catholic names "Israel" and "Jacob," and hence, also, the mention of "Joseph," the best-beloved son of Jacob, even when Judah only was left.<sup>1</sup>

But it is strange that Hupfeld entirely passes over, without remark, that particular association of the three tribes which most favors his view. In the journey through the wilderness these three tribes were ranged side by side, and in the order of march followed immediately behind the ark (Num. ii. 17-24). This explains their mention in the Psalm. The prayer of the Psalmist is, that God would again lead his people, again go forth at the head of their armies, as he did of old. All the allusions in the Psalm favor this interpretation. God is addressed as the Shepherd of Israel, who led Joseph "like a flock," with manifest reference to the journeys through the wilderness (see lxxvii. 20). The petition is, that he who "is throned above the cherubim would shine forth." Here the allusion is to the ark, and the manifestation of the divine glory. Then, naturally, comes the mention of those tribes whose position was directly behind the ark. Hence the whole prayer may be regarded as a prayer for national restoration, and for the same divine succor which had been so signally vouchsafed to their fathers in the wilderness.

Still, whilst on this ground I am disposed to believe that the whole nation is the object of the Psalmist's hopes and prayer, I am also inclined to think that the prominence given to Joseph and Benjamin may best be accounted for by supposing that the Psalmist was either

<sup>1</sup> Hupfeld appeals, in support of his view, to such passages as Hos. ii. 1, 2; iii. 5; Amos ix. 8-11; Isa. xi. 11-13; Jer. xxx., xxxi. (where there is a transition from "Jacob," chap. xxx. to "Israel and Ephraim," chap. xxxii.); Ezek. xxxvii. 15-28; Zech. x. 6; comp. Ps. lx. 7 [8]; lxxviii. 26, 27 [27, 28].

a native of the northern kingdom, or that he had some strong sympathy with his brethren in Israel. In the seventy-seventh, seventy-eighth, and eighty-first Psalms, we meet with a similar peculiarity in the form of the national designation, and in all it may indicate some special relation on the part of the writer to the kingdom of Israel.

The strophical division of the Psalm is marked by the refrain (ver. 3, 7, 19), with a variation of it in verse 14. The strophes are thus of very unequal length. The first has three verses; the second, four; the third, twelve; though this last, again, is partially broken by the imperfect refrain in verse 14. The first two of these strophes are, in fact, introductory, containing the cry for help and the lamentation over disaster. The third constitutes the principal part of the Psalm, where, under the figure of a vine, the history of Israel is portrayed. In the refrain, we have even more emphatically repeated the burden of the Psalmist's prayer; the emphasis being each time deepened by the name given to God: first, "God"; then, "God of hosts"; lastly, "Jehovah, God of hosts."

[For the Precentor. According to "The Lilies — A Testimony,"  
A Psalm of Asaph.]

- 1 O THOU Shepherd of Israel, give ear,  
Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock;  
Thou that sittest (throned above) the cherubim, shine  
forth.
- 2 Before Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh,  
Stir up thy might and come to save us.

1. SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL. On the figure as common to this group of Psalms, bearing the name of Asaph, see on lxxviii. 52. There is an allusion to Gen. xlviii. 15, "the God who was my Shepherd" [E.V. "who fed me"], and xlix. 24. In both passages Jacob blesses *Joseph* and his sons. So here it follows: "Thou that leadest *Joseph* like a flock."

(THRONED ABOVE) THE CHERUBIM: as in xcix. 1. Cf. xxii. 3 [4], "throned above the praises of Israel," where see note. The expression denotes the dwelling of God in his temple, and the manifestation of his presence there, as is evident from the verb following.

SHINE FORTH, appear in all thy glory and majesty for our help. See l. 2, where the same word is used of God's coming forth from his sanctuary in Zion to execute judgment.

2. TO SAVE US. Heb. "for our salvation."

BEFORE EPHRAIM, etc. The three tribes are mentioned together with reference to the position which they occupied in the march through the wilderness, where they followed in the order of procession immediately behind the ark. See Num. ii. 17-24. [The prep. "before" is used thus of the order in processions. See 2 Sam. iii. 31; Job

3 O God, turn us again,

And show the light of thy countenance, that we may be saved.

4 O Jehovah, God (of) hosts,

How long wilt thou be angry with thy people that prayeth?

5 Thou hast fed them with tears (as) bread,<sup>b</sup>

And hast made them to drink of tears in large measure.<sup>c</sup>

xxi. 33.] This falls in with the language of the previous verse, "Thou that sittest throned *above the cherubim*, shine forth. So Lyra: "Hoc dicitur quia istae tres tribus figebant tentoria ad occidentalem plagam tabernaculi. In parte vero occidentali tabernaculi erat sanctum sanctorum, ubi erat propitiatorium, in quo dabantur divina responsa." It is strange how completely this fact, which is the obvious explanation of the mention of these three tribes together, has been overlooked by nearly all the recent German interpreters. Bear this in mind, and it becomes evident that, whatever the national disaster here deplored, the prayer is, that these tribes may be restored to their ancient position, united as of old, and as of old led by God himself, with the visible symbols of his presence.

3. TURN US AGAIN, or "restore us," either from the exile (as the Chald.), supposing the Psalm to have been written after the captivity of the ten tribes; or in the more general sense of recovery from disaster, as in lx. 1 [3].

SHOW THE LIGHT OF THY COUNTENANCE. Again an allusion to the history of the people in the wilderness (Num. vi. 25). See on lxvii. 1; iv. 6 [7].

4. GOD (OF) HOSTS; see on lix. 5 [6]. On this repetition of the divine names Hengst. remarks: "In prayer all depends upon God, in the full glory of his being, walking before the soul. It is only into the bosom of such a God that it is worth while to pour out lamentations and prayer. 'Jehovah,' corresponding to the 'Shepherd of Israel,' (ver. 1), points to the fulness of the love

of God toward his people; and 'God, (God of) hosts,' corresponding to 'throned above the cherubim,' to his infinite power to help them."

HOW LONG WILT THOU BE ANGRY, etc.; lit. "How long *hast* thou *smoked*." The preterite after the interrogative in this sense is unusual. But the full form of expression would be, "how long hast thou been . . . and wilt continue to be . . . angry." Comp. Ex. x. 3; xvi. 28. This use of the verb "to smoke," said of a person is also without parallel. The usual phrase would be, "will thine anger smoke." Comp. lxxiv. 1; xviii. 8 [9] (where see note); Deut. xxix. 20 [Heb. 19]. But the figure is bolder here than in the other passages, as it is applied immediately to God *himself*. Such figures, remarks Delitzsch, would be impossible, were not the power of the divine wrath to be regarded as belonging essentially to the very nature of the Divine Being. God, who is light and love, is also "a consuming fire."

WITH THY PEOPLE THAT PRAYETH; lit. "*in* (i.e. during) the prayer of thy people"; (Jerome, *ad orationem*), not as the E. V., Hengst. and others, "*against* the prayer of thy people"; for that is not the object of God's displeasure. That which seems so mysterious, that which calls for the expostulation and the entreaty is, that even whilst they pray, *in spite of* that prayer, God's wrath is hot against them. Some have seen here an implied opposition between the smoking of God's wrath, and the prayer which ascends like the smoke of incense (see cxli. 2; Rev. v. 8; viii. 3). But this seems fanciful.



- 6 Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbors,  
 And our enemies mock (us) at their pleasure.
- 7 O God (of) hosts, turn us again,  
 And show the light of thy countenance, that we may be  
 saved.
- 8 Thou broughtest<sup>d</sup> a vine out of Egypt,  
 Thou didst drive out the nations and plant it ;
- 9 Thou madest room before it,  
 And when it had taken root, it filled the land :
- 10 (The) mountains were covered with the shadow of it,  
 And the boughs thereof were (like) the cedars of God.
- 11 She sent out her branches unto the sea,  
 And her young shoots unto the river.

6. A STRIFE, i.e. not an object of contention amongst themselves, but rather an object which they vied with one another in assailing.

UNTO OUR NEIGHBORS, not the great powers, such as the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Egyptians, but the petty states which bordered on Judea, who were always ready to exult over every misfortune that befel the Israelites. Comp. lxxix.12.

AT THEIR PLEASURE; lit. "for themselves," i.e. for their own satisfaction, the pronoun being used to mark the reflex nature of the action, as for instance in Isa. xxxi. 9. It cannot mean "among themselves," as E.V., nor is this the indirect use of the pronoun for the direct, as in lxiv. 5 [6].

8. THOU BROUGHTEST OUT, or, "transplantedst." The word is used of rooting up a tree out of its soil (Job xix. 10). And so here. (In lxxviii. 52 it is applied to the people in the literal sense of "making to depart") Delitzsch quotes from Shemoth Rabba, c. 44. When cultivators wish to improve a vine, what do they do? They root it up out of its place, and transplant it to another." See also Vayikra Rabba, c. 36.

A VINE. The same comparison is found in other passages: Isa. v. 1-7; xxvii. 2-6; Jer. ii. 21; xii. 10; Ezek. xvii. 5-10. In some of these passages the figure of a vineyard is mixed with

that of the vine, and such is partly the case here (see ver. 12). That there is a reference to the blessing of Joseph (see above on ver. 1) can hardly be doubted. Observe especially the word "son," ver. 15, (E.V. "bough"), compared with Gen. xlix. 22, "Joseph is a fruitful son" (E.V. "a fruitful bough"). Cassiodorus, remarking on the aptness of the figure, says: "Vinea ecclesiae aptissime comparatur. Quoniam sicut illa inter folia caduca necessarios infert fructus, sic et ista inter umbras turbatiles peccantium ornatur fruge sanctorum; qui seculi hujus afflictione tanquam torcularibus pressi saporem norunt emanare dulcissimum."

THOU DIDST DRIVE OUT, etc. Comp. xliv. 2.

9. MADEST ROOM, by destroying the Canaanites, as the soil is prepared for planting, by "gathering out the stones," etc. Comp. Isa. v. 2.

10. CEDARS OF GOD. See on xxxvi. 7. Hengst. and others, who find the comparison exaggerated, supply the verb from the first clause, and render: "And the cedars of God (were covered) with the boughs thereof." But thus the expression "cedars of God" is meaningless; and after all, the hyperbole in the figure is at least not greater than in Ezek. xxxi. 3, etc. Comp. Joel iii. 18 [iv. 18]; Amos ix. 13.

11. SEA . . . RIVER, i.e. from Gaza on

- 12 Why hast thou broken down her hedges,  
 So that all they which pass by the way do pluck her ?
- 13 The boar out of the wood ° doth root it up,  
 And the wild beasts of the field devour it.
- 14 O God (of) hosts, turn again, we beseech thee,  
 Look down from heaven, and see,  
 And visit this vine ;
- 15 And protect <sup>f</sup> that which thy right hand hath planted,  
 And the son whom thou madest strong for thyself.
- 16 It is burnt with fire, it is cut down ;  
 They perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.

the Mediterranean to Euphrates. Comp. lxxii. 8. The allusion is to the time of Solomon, of whom it is said, that "he had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphshah (i.e. Thapsacus, on the western bank of the Euphrates) even to Azzah (or Gaza)," (1 Kings iv. 24). Comp. Deut. xi. 24, "Every place which the soles of your feet shall tread upon shall be yours; from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the west sea shall be your boundaries." See also Gen. xxviii. 14; Josh. i. 4

12. Portions of this verse are repeated in lxxxix. 41, 42. Comp. also Isa. v. 5. The verb **PLUCK** occurs again only in Song of Sol. v. 1.

13. **THE BOAR OUT OF THE WOOD**, as in Jer. v. 6, "the lion out of the wood." It has been supposed that some particular enemy is meant, such as the Assyrian monarch or Nebuchadnezzar, but this is negated by the indefinite expression in the parallel clause, "the wild beasts of the field," or more literally, "that which moveth in the field," as in l. 11, the only other place where the phrase occurs. Lyra finds a particular reason why Nebuchadnezzar should be meant, "who is so called because he had for a long time his dwelling among the wild beasts!"

14. This verse is a reminiscence, so to speak, of the refrain with which the two first strophes close in ver. 3 and 7. It stands, moreover, where it might nat-

urally have formed the conclusion of a third strophe, which, as consisting of seven verses, would have been of the same length as the other two together. But the verse is too closely connected with what follows to be regarded properly as the end of a strophe.

15. **PROTECT**. The A.V. takes the word, which occurs only here, as a noun, "the vineyard"; and so the Prayer-book version "the place of the vineyard." Others, "stock" or "stem." But it may be a verb, as the LXX have rendered it. See more in the Critical Note.

**THE SON**. Ewald and others render, "the branch," or "shoot," referring to Gen. xlix. 22, where the word no doubt occurs in this sense (see above on ver. 8), a sense which would be very suitable here with reference to the figure of the vine. But the expressions in ver. 17, "son of man," "son of thy right hand," seem rather to indicate that here, too, the figure is dropped. The ambiguous word may, however, have been chosen designedly, the more readily to connect the figure with what follows. **THE SON** evidently means the nation of Israel, as in Ex. xiv. 21; Hos. xi. 1.

**THOU MADEST STRONG**, i.e. whom thou didst carefully rear till he reached maturity. Comp. Isa. lxiv. 14, where the same word is used of a tree. See also lxxxix. 21 [22], and similar expressions in Isa. i. 2; xiii. 4.

16. **IT IS CUT DOWN**. The word occurs again only in Isa. xxxiii. 12, of

- 17 Let thy hand be over the man of thy right hand,  
 Over the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself :  
 18 So will we not go back <sup>a</sup> from thee : —  
 Do thou quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.  
 19 O Jehovah, God (of) hosts, turn us again,  
 Show the light of thy countenance, that we may be saved.

thorns cut down that they may be burned. In this verse the lamentation over the present condition of the nation is resumed. In the first clause the figure of the vine reappears; in the second there is an abrupt transition to the nation of whom the vine is the figure. Hence Schröder conjectured that this verse ought to follow ver. 13, and this is approved by Hupfeld, for then, he says: (1) the second member, which now refers awkwardly to the Israelites, might refer to the "boar" and "the wild beasts," and be rendered as the expression of a wish. "Let them perish," etc.; and (2) the latter portion of the Psalm, from ver. 8, would thus consist of three equal strophes of four verses each. He takes ver. 14 as a variation of the refrain in ver. 3, 7, and as the conclusion of a strophe.

17. MAN OF THY RIGHT HAND. This has been explained (1) "one whom thy right hand protects," one who is the object of thy special care and love; or (2) "one whom thou hast won for thyself by thy right hand" (in allusion to God's putting forth his power on behalf of Israel); or (3) with reference to ver. 15, one whom God's right hand planted. This last is perhaps best, as thus the two clauses of ver. 17 answer to the two of ver. 15. Israel has been both *planted* and *made strong* by God, and on both

grounds asks God's protecting care. Some see in this title, together with that of "son of man" in the next clause, a designation of the Messiah, who in the same sense is said, in ex. 1, 5, to sit on the right hand of God. [Hupfeld, in mentioning this view, quotes xvi. 8; cxxi. 5, as parallels, but in those places God is said to be on the right hand of David and of Israel, i.e. to protect them, whereas the Messiah is said to be on the right hand of God, as himself invested with kingly dignity.] But the obvious relation of this verse to ver. 17 rather leads to the conclusion that the nation of Israel, the vine spoken of before, is meant. And so Calvin understands it.

18. Grammatically, the first clause of this verse ought perhaps to be connected with the previous verse, and be rendered, "and who (i.e. the son of man) hath not gone back from thee." See Critical Note.

SO WILL WE NOT, etc. Cassiodorus says; "Quae enim semel mente concepimus cordis oculis jugiter intuemur. Quae autem sit utilitas ab ipso non discedere consequenter exponitur; cum dicitur, vivificabis nos." And on these last words Augustine, "ut tecum non terrena amemus in quibus prius mortui eramus."

QUICKEN US, i.e. restore us to a *new* life. Comp. lxxi. 20; lxxxv. 6 [7].

<sup>a</sup> See notes on the inscriptions of xlv., lx., lxix.

<sup>b</sup> On the construction of this clause, see note on lx., note <sup>c</sup>. Vol. i., p. 437. In the next clause, the construction is apparently changed. Properly speaking, the verb הִשְׁקֵה takes a double accus. (of the person and the thing), whereas here we have the prep. אֵי instead of the second accus., "Thou makest them to drink *of* (אֵי, lit. *with*) tears." As there is no other instance of such a construction, Hengst. takes שִׁלֵּיִשׁ as the

second accus., and renders, "Thou makest them to drink a measure *consisting of tears*"; the measure, he says, is the thing given them to drink; "of tears," denotes the contents of the measure. But the former construction is the most simple and obvious, in spite of the absence of an exact parallel, and so apparently the LXX, *ποτιεῖς ἡμᾶς ἐν δάκρυσιν ἐν μέτρῳ*; Symm., *ἐπότισας ἡμᾶς μετὰ δακρῶν μέτρῳ*.

<sup>c</sup> *שֶׁ־לֶחֶם*. The word (which only occurs again Isa. xl. 12) means, evidently, a vessel of a particular size for measuring liquids; lit., "a third," i.e. of course of some larger measure, as we say, a quart. Comp. the Latin *triental*. Jerome renders *tripliciter*, "in threefold degree," a definite for an indefinite number. Similarly the Chald. But Hupfeld argues that the word denotes not a measure of large size, but one of the *usual* size, such as would commonly be used for the purpose of drinking. He explains it thus: "Thou hast made them drink of tears as in (or from) a cup (the accus. describing the manner of an action), as wine is commonly drunk from a cup." Hence the phrase would signify that tears were their *daily* portion (see xlii. 4). Bunsen, accepting this, says, the idea of abundance can only be derived from the contrast between the tears falling drop by drop, and the cup full of tears.

<sup>d</sup> *הִשִּׁיב*. It seems impossible to render this except as a past, though Ewald and Olsh. adopt the present. Hupfeld merely remarks, that in the passage beginning here, "the earlier acts of God are described partly in perfects, partly in imperfects, with or without Vau conv., as in lxxviii." But he overlooks the peculiarity here, which is, that the tense is used as an imperf. without any perfect tense having preceded. In lxxviii. 9, on the other hand, where the Psalmist begins his narrative of the past, he uses first the preterite, then the fut. with Vau consec., and then the simple fut. as the aor. or imperf., describing past action. And this is undoubtedly the rule. See xviii. 4 (pret.), 6 (fut.), and then a frequent interchange throughout the Psalm. In fact, so regular is this usage, that Delitzsch makes the use of *הִשִּׁיב*, in Hab. iii. 3, a reason for concluding that the prophet cannot be speaking of the past; otherwise, he argues, a pret. must have preceded. The fact that the vision *opens* with the fut. tense compels us to regard the theophany as relating, not to the past (though its images are borrowed from the past), but to the future, or rather the vision itself is *present* to the prophet's eye — "*God cometh*," etc. — whilst it portrays the future. The occurrence, however, of the fut. (imperf.) in this Psalm at the *beginning* of a past narrative seems to show that such an argument as that of Delitzsch is not of itself convincing; though he is, I believe, right in thinking that Habakkuk's vision regards the future, not the past.

° **יָצַר**. The suspended **ע** has had all kinds of fanciful meanings attached to it by the rabbinical writers — the seventy years of the Babylonish captivity, the hanging of the Messiah on a tree; or, according to the Talmud, the middle letter of the Psalms, as similarly a large letter denotes the middle letter of the Pentateuch, etc.

<sup>f</sup> **פָּנָה**. This has been taken (1) as a noun in the sense of “plant” (Chald., Syr., Aben-Ezra, Kimchi, Jerome, *radicem*) or “vineyard” (E.V.), in which the whole of ver. 16 depends on the verb **פָּקַד**, which is thus construed first with the accus., and then with the prep. **עַל**. But it is better perhaps to take the word as a verb in the imperat. So the LXX, *κατάρτισαι*, as if it were = **בִּינְנָה**, from **בִּינָן**. There can be little doubt, however, that J. D. Michaelis is right in deriving it from a root **בִּנְנָן**, allied to **גָּנַן**, *to hedge about, to protect*, and the Arab. **كَنَّ** construed with **عَل**, as verbs of “covering” commonly are. There is still a difficulty about the vocalization. The proper form of the imperat. Kal with **ה** paragogic would be **פָּנֶה**. But we have *órah* for *orrah*, Num. xxii. 6, and we find *ā* instead of *ō* in verbs **עָע**, as **גָּל**, cxix. 22. **פָּנָה**, therefore, is of the same form as **גָּל**, with **ה** paragogic.

<sup>g</sup> **פָּנֶה**. This is usually taken as fut. Kal 1st plur. with the vowel *ō* instead of *ū*. Hupfeld objects to this (though so slight a variation of the vowel need not trouble us), and alleges, further, that the verb never occurs in the Kal, except in the part., liii. 4; Prov. xiv. 14. He contends, therefore, that it is perf. Niph. 3d sing., and that the first clause of this verse must be joined closely with what precedes, as a kind of further relative clause, “the son of man (whom) thou madest so strong for thyself, and (who) hath not gone back from thee.”

## PSALM LXXXI.

THIS Psalm was apparently intended to be sung at one or more of the great national festivals. There has, however, been much difference of opinion as to the particular festival or festivals for which it was originally composed.

1. The Jewish interpretation is, for the most part, in favor of the Feast of Trumpets. According to the Targum, the Talmud (see especially *Rosh ha-Shana*), the Midrash, and the Book Zohar, this is a New Year's Psalm. It was to be sung, as it still is, in the synagogue, on the first day of the month Tisri, the new moon which, beyond all others, was celebrated by the blowing of cornets. But this view can

only be maintained by giving to the word *keseh*, in verse 3 [4], the meaning not of "the full moon," but either of "the new moon," or, more generally, of "an appointed time."

2. Others are of opinion that there is no allusion to the new moon, and that the festival intended must be one celebrated at the full moon, and therefore either the Feast of Tabernacles or the Passover.

3. According to DeWette, Hengstenberg, and others, this Psalm was intended to be sung at the Passover. Hengstenberg's main argument rests upon the language of verse 5, where the feast is described as one which was instituted at the time of the exodus, and, as appears in verses 6-10, instituted with special reference to that event. He contends, accordingly, that the word *chodesh* must be rendered not "new moon," but "month" — "Blow the cornet in *the month*," that month which is emphatically the first and chief in the year, the month in which the Passover occurred. Comp. Ex. xii. 1, 2, "And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, This month shall be to you the *chief* of months, it shall be the *first* month of the year to you." "In the full moon," of the second clause, defines exactly the time in the sacred month in which the festival fell. Just as it is said in Lev. xxiii. 5, "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, is the passover to the Lord," so here the note of time is the same: "in the month . . . on the full moon." "Month," says Hengstenberg, and not "new moon," is the meaning of the word throughout the Pentateuch.

4. A fourth view, and that which is now maintained by some of the most eminent critics (Ewald, Delitzsch, and Hupfeld), combines the first and second interpretations; for it supposes that the exhortation of the Psalm refers both to the Feast of Trumpets on the first of the month, and to the Feast of Tabernacles, which lasted from the fifteenth to the twenty-first or twenty-second. This would explain the mention both of "the new moon" and of "the full moon"; both marking important festivals, and festivals occurring in the same month. Both would be kept with loud expressions of joy. The blowing of cornets, and the apparatus of musical instruments by which the first is to be announced were certainly not usual at the Passover, whereas they would be perfectly in keeping with so joyous an occasion as the Feast of Tabernacles. The music in Hezekiah's celebration of the Passover (2 Chron. xxx. 21, etc.), to which Hengstenberg refers, was probably exceptional. The peculiar circumstances under which the feast was then kept, and the great joy which it called forth, would sufficiently account for this mode of celebration; but there is no hint given that musical instruments were ever employed as the Passover was originally

observed; and the general character of the feast is against such a supposition.<sup>1</sup> It is a further evidence that the Feast of Tabernacles is meant, that it is styled so emphatically "our feast." See note on verse 4.

On the relation of the *two* festivals which, on this supposition, are combined, more will be found in the note on that verse.

Ewald observes that there is so much resemblance between this Psalm and Psalms lxxvii. and xc. that, but for certain peculiarities by which this is marked, all might be assigned to the same author. And Delitzsch thinks that Psalm lxxxi. "unites the lyric element of Psalm lxxvii. with the didactic element of Psalm lxxviii." All these three Psalms," he observes, "have the same character; all end in the same abrupt manner. The author rises to the height of his subject, and then suddenly drops it. Again, in lxxvii., the nation is spoken of as 'the sons of Jacob and Joseph'; in lxxviii., as 'the sons of Ephraim,' and here simply as 'Joseph.' Like lxxix., this Psalm rests upon the history of the Pentateuch — upon Exodus and Deuteronomy."

Properly speaking, there are no strophical divisions. The Psalm consists of two parts:

I. In the first, the Psalmist summons his nation to the festival, bidding them keep it with loud music and song and every utterance of joy, because it was ordained of God, and instituted under circumstances worthy of everlasting remembrance (ver. 1-5).

II. In the next he abruptly drops his own words. What those circumstances were, what the meaning of God's revelation then given, the people had forgotten; and it is for him, in his character of prophet, as well as poet, to declare. It is for him to show how that voice from the past had its lesson also for the present; how every festival was God's witness to himself; how it repeated afresh, as it were, in clear and audible accents, the great facts of that history, the moral of which was ever old, and yet ever new. But the Psalmist conveys this instruction with the more imposing solemnity, when, suddenly breaking off his exhortation, he leaves God himself to speak.

It is no more the ambassador; it is the Sovereign, who appears in the midst of his people, to remind them of past benefits, to claim their obedience on the ground of those benefits, and to promise the utmost bounties of grace, on the condition of obedience, for the future (ver. 6-16).

There could be no grander conception of the true significance of the religious feasts of the nation than this. They are so many memorials

<sup>1</sup> Hence Tholuck conjectures that this Psalm was composed for Hezekiah's celebration.

of God's love and power — so many monuments set up to testify at once of his goodness, and of Israel's ingratitude and perverseness, so many solemn occasions on which he comes as King and Father to visit them, to rekindle anew their loyalty and their affection, and to scatter amongst them the treasures of his bounty. To give this interpretation to the festivals, to put in its true light the national joy at their celebration, appears to have been the object of the Psalmist. If so, it is a matter of secondary importance what particular festival or festivals were chiefly before his eye.

[For the Precentor. Upon the Gittith,<sup>a</sup> (A Psalm) of Asaph.]

- 1 SING joyfully unto God our strength,  
Shout aloud unto the God of Jacob.
- 2 Raise a song, and bring hither<sup>b</sup> the timbrel,  
The pleasant harp with the lute.
- 3 Blow the cornet in the new moon,  
At the full moon,<sup>c</sup> on our (solemn) feast.<sup>d</sup>

1-5. The festivals are to be kept with the loudest expressions of joy and thanksgiving, as Israel's special privilege, as instituted by God himself, and as a great memorial of his redemption.

1. SHOUT ALOUD. There may be (as Delitzsch suggests) an allusion in this verb to the expression in Num. xxix. 1, where the noun employed is from the same root (rendered in the E.V. "it is a day of *blowing the trumpets*.") On the first day of the seventh month (Tisri) two silver trumpets (at a later period 120, see 2 Chron. v. 12) were to be blown.

2. RAISE A SONG, etc., or, "*take music*" (the noun is used both of the human voice and of instrumental music) "and *strike* the timbrel." See Critical Note.

3. THE CORNET. "The *shophar* is especially remarkable as being the only Hebrew instrument which has been preserved to the present day in the religious services of the Jews. It is still blown, as in time of old, at the Jewish new year's festival, according to the command of Moses (Num. xxix. 1)." (Engel, *Hist. of Music*, p. 292.) These instru-

ments are commonly made of cows' or rams' horns; they differ somewhat in shape, some being much more curved than others, and the tube of some not being round but flattened. Engel mentions one in the great synagogue in London, which has this verse of the Psalm inscribed on it. He also quotes David Levi (*Rites and Ceremonies of the Jews*), as saying that the trumpet is made of a ram's horn, in remembrance of Abraham's sacrifice (Gen. xxii. 12, 13), which, according to the Jewish tradition, was on the new year's day, "and therefore we make use of a ram's horn, beseeching the Almighty to be propitious to us, in remembrance and through the merits of that great event."

IN THE NEW MOON. Strictly speaking, this might be any new moon; for in the beginnings of their months they were to blow with trumpets over their burnt offerings, etc. (Num. x. 10); but perhaps the new moon of the seventh month, the new year's day, is especially meant; see Num. xxix. 1. And so the Chald. paraphrases, "in the month of Tisri."



- 4 For it is a statute for Israel,  
 An ordinance of the God of Jacob ;  
 5 He appointed it as a testimony in Joseph,  
 When he went forth against the land of Egypt,  
 Where I heard a language ° that I knew not :

AT THE FULL MOON. Such is apparently the meaning of the word here, and of the similar Aramaic form in Prov. vii. 20 (though the E.V. has in both passages "the appointed time"). If, then, the new moon is that of the seventh month, "the full moon" must denote the Feast of Tabernacles, which began on the fifteenth of the same month. Accordingly there follows:

ON OUR (SOLENN) FEAST, i.e. the Feast of Tabernacles, which was also called pre-eminently "the feast," (1 Kings viii. 2, 65) (where the E.V. has "a feast," wrongly), xii. 32 ; Ezek. xlv. 25 ; Neh. viii. 14 ; 2 Chron. v. 3 ; vii. 8. Josephus calls it ἡ ἑορτὴ ἡ ἀγιωτάτη καὶ μεγίστη (Antt. viii. 4), and Plutarch, ἑορτὴ μεγίστη καὶ τελειοτάτη τῶν Ἰουδαίων (Sympos. iv. 6, 2). But are we to understand that both festivals — that at the new moon and that at the full — were to be ushered in with the blowing of cornets? Such seems to be the meaning. Ewald, Rosenm., Hitzig, and Delitzsch, all think that the music was a part of the celebration of both the feasts. Delitzsch thus explains, I think rightly, the reference to the two. Between the Feast of Trumpets on the first of Tisri, and the Feast of Tabernacles, which lasted from the fifteenth to the twenty-first or twenty-second, lay the Great Day of Atonement, on the tenth of the month. This circumstance gave a peculiar significance to the Feast of Tabernacles — made it, in fact, the chief of all the feasts, inasmuch as it was the expression of the joy of forgiveness and reconciliation declared by the high-priest to the nation on that solemn day. Hence it was kept with more than ordinary rejoicing. And hence the Psalmist would have the gladness of the new moon repeated "at the full moon, on the day of our solemn feast." The first was but a prelude to

the last; the one looked forward to the other; and therefore the loud music of the one was to usher in the other also. Hupfeld suggests that the very change of preposition in the last clause, "for (rather than *on*) our feast-day," may have been designed to mark that that feast, the Feast of Tabernacles, was chiefly in the Psalmist's mind, so that the blowing of the cornets at the new moon was merely *preliminary to*, and intended as a *preparation for*, this feast. Then the words "at the full moon," denote, not the time of the blowing of the cornets, etc., but the time when the feast was held, so that the two clauses of the last member of the verse might be transposed, "for our feast-day at the full moon." But this is unnecessary when we remember what a feast of gladness the Feast of Tabernacles was, and long continued to be. Plutarch, in his time, terms it a bacchanalian festival. And the later Rabbis were wont to say, that one who had not witnessed the celebration of this feast did not know what joy was.

4. FOR. The festivals are thus joyfully to be kept because they are of *divine* appointment, and a special and distinguishing privilege of the nation. The same preposition before "Israel" marks them as the recipients, before "God" denotes that he is the author and giver of the law. Hengst's explanation is unnecessarily artificial here.

IT IS. The pronoun is used generally, in a neuter tense, referring either to the *mode of celebration* described in ver. 1-3, or to the *feast* itself; but the latter was more particularly enjoined in the law.

ORDINANCE, or "custom" (the word usually elsewhere translated "judgment"); for the word in this sense, see xviii. 22 [23]; Gen. xl. 13, etc.; and

5. TESTIMONY, used of a single law,

6 "I removed his shoulder from the burden,  
His hands were quit of the basket.

not, as usually, of the whole body of laws. See note on xix. 7. It was a great *witness* and *memorial* set up of God's power and love.

JOSEPH (or as it is here written, "Jehoseph," as elsewhere we find Jehonadab for Jonadab, Jehochanan for Jochanan, etc.). Hupfeld remarks that it is used after "Israel" and "Jacob" in the preceding verse, merely as another designation of the whole nation, as in lxxx. 1 [2]. Hengst says, "Joseph occupies the place of Israel here, because during the whole period of their residence in the land of Egypt the nation owed everything to Joseph, 'the crowned one among his brethren' (Gen. xlix. 26). Their oppression began with the king who knew not Joseph, and this name could only belong to them with reference to that time." And similarly Calvin. But it is far more natural, surely, to see in the use of this name here, as in Psalm lxxx., an indication that the writer belonged to the northern kingdom.

AGAINST THE LAND OF EGYPT, wrongly rendered by the ancient versions "*from the land of Egypt*," (a meaning which it need scarcely be said the prep. cannot bear), because they supposed that "the going forth" could only be that of Israel out of Egypt. Hengst., retaining the same subject, renders: "When he (Joseph) went forth *before* the land of Egypt." He refers for this use of the preposition to Job xxix. 7, "when I went out to the gate before (along) the city." Thus is denoted, he thinks, Israel's triumphant march *before the very eyes* of the Egyptians, who were unable to prevent their departure. See Num. xxxiii. 3, where they are said to have gone out "with a high hand *in the sight of* all the Egyptians." Similarly Calvin: "Populum, praeunte Deo, libere pervagatum fuisse per terram Egypti, quia fractis ac pavefactis incolis datus est transitus." But it is simpler to retain the usual meaning of the preposition, and to refer the pronominal suffix, not to Israel, but to God: "When he (God) went forth

*against* the land of Egypt," as in the slaying of the first-born (Ex. xi. 4, "I will *go forth* through the midst of Egypt"), and in all that he did for the deliverance of his people. As this verse connects the institution of the feast with a particular event, namely, the departure from Egypt, it does unquestionably furnish a strong argument to those who, like Hengst., believe that the allusion is to the Passover. For no other feast was then instituted. This difficulty is usually got rid of by saying that the note of time is not to be pressed, and that the Feast of Tabernacles did belong to the earlier legislation (Ex. xxiii. 16; xxxiv. 22). But I confess this is, to my mind, not quite satisfactory. On the other hand, both the Jewish tradition and the manner of celebration as here described are against the Passover. I incline, therefore, to think that the "new moon" and "full moon" are put for *any* feasts that were held at those times respectively, all of which, *beginning with the Passover*, might thus be spoken of as dating from the exodus.

I HEARD. The verb is properly an imperfect. The LXX and Vulgate have the 3d person, "he heard," etc., whence it has passed into our Prayer-book version, not incorrectly as regards the sense. But the first person is used because the Psalmist speaks in the name of his people, identifying himself with them.

A LANGUAGE THAT I KNEW NOT. What was this unknown tongue? Two interpretations have been given. It has been explained (1) *Of the language of the Egyptians*, which was a foreign tongue to the Hebrews, who were "strangers in the land of Egypt." Comp. cxiv. 1, "the people of strange language," with Deut. xxviii. 49; Isa. xxxiii. 19; Jer. v. 15. Accordingly, this fact is mentioned as one of the aggravations of their condition in Egypt, like the toiling with "the burden" and "the basket." Calvin, who takes this view, remarks that the redemption of Israel from a

7 Thou calledst in distress, and I delivered thee,

I answered thee in the secret place of the thunder,

I proved thee by the waters of Meribah: [Selah.]

people of foreign language was a special mark of God's favor, inasmuch as the want of that common language, which is the bond of society, made foreigner and enemy synonymous terms: "Quia enim lingua est veluti character mentis ac speculum, non secus ac sylvestres ferae, invicem alieni sunt qui carent linguae usu." It is no objection to this view that the words of God follow abruptly; see lxxv. 2. (2) *Of the voice of God*, a voice which the people had heard as uttered in his judgments upon the Egyptians, and in his covenant made with themselves, but had not understood (comp. Acts vii. 25). This language is then given in substance in a poetical form by the Psalmist, who seems suddenly to hear it, and to become the interpreter to his people of the divine voice. He here places in a fresh light, gives a new application to, the earlier revelation, the meaning and purpose of which were not then understood. Hupfeld supposes it to be called an "unknown" language, merely because it is divine, unlike the every-day *known* language of men. Aben-Ezra sees a reference to the words of God uttered on Sinai. So also Delitzsch, who would explain the expression by reference to Ex. vi. 2, etc. "It was the language of a known, and yet unknown, God, which Israel heard from Sinai. God, in fact, now revealed himself to Israel in a new character, not only as the Redeemer and Saviour of his people from their Egyptian bondage, but also as their King, giving them a law which bound them together as a people, and was the basis of their national existence." The latter interpretation, which regards the language here spoken of as the voice of God, and as virtually given in the following verses, is now that most commonly adopted. It is that of Mendelssohn, Ewald, Delitzsch, and Hupfeld.

6. The words of God follow without any indication of a change of speakers.

The prophet identifies himself with, and becomes the organ of, the divine voice. He reminds Israel of that fact in connection with which the festival was instituted. It is as though, amidst all the gladness of the feast, and all the music and the pomp of its celebration, other thoughts arose, not to check, but to guide the current of a holy exultation. The sound of trumpet and timbrel and sacred song must be hushed, while Jehovah speaks to tell his forgetful people the lesson of their past history associated with that festival, the warning and the expostulation suggested by their own perverseness. If they would praise him aright, it must be with hearts mindful of his goodness, and sensible of their own unworthiness and ingratitude. For the spirit in which all festivals should be kept, see on the offering of the first-fruits (Deut. xxvi. 1-11).

BURDEN, in allusion to Ex. i. 11; v. 3, 4; vi. 6; where the same word occurs in the plural.

THE BASKET. This word is not found in Exodus, and its meaning is doubtful. It may either mean (1) a *basket*, in which heavy burdens were carried, such as are now seen portrayed on the monuments at Thebes; so it is interpreted by the LXX, and Jerome has *cophino*; or (2), an *earthen pot*, with reference to the work in clay which the Israelites were compelled to perform. Hence the E.V. renders, "his hands were delivered from making *the pots*."

WERE QUIT OF, or, "left toiling with." (E.V. "were delivered"); lit. "passed." The LXX, with a very slight change in a single letter, "served" (*ἔδολευσαν*), but this involved also a change of the preposition: "in" or "with" instead of "from."

7. THE SECRET-PLACE OF THE THUNDER, is the dark mass of the thundercloud in which God shrouds his majesty. (Comp. xviii. 11 [12]; Hab. iii. 4.) Here is probably a special reference to the

- 8 'Hear, O my people, and let me testify unto thee ;  
 O Israel, if thou wouldest hearken unto me,  
 9 That there should be in thee no strange god,  
 And that thou shouldest not bow down unto the god of  
 the stranger!—  
 10 I am Jehovah thy God,  
 Who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt,  
 Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.'  
 11 But my people hearkened not unto my voice,  
 And Israel was not willing to obey me.  
 12 So I gave them up unto the stubbornness of their heart,  
 That they should walk after their own counsels.  
 13 Oh that my people would hearken unto me,  
 That Israel would walk in my way!  
 14 I would soon put down their enemies,  
 And turn my hand against their adversaries.  
 15 The haters of Jehovah should crouch before him,  
 And *their* time should be forever.

cloud from which Jehovah looked forth in the passage through the Red Sea (Ex. xiv. 19; comp. the note on lxxvii. 16), as there follows the mention of the second great miracle, the giving the water from the rock.

I PROVED THEE. Deut. xxxiii. 8, The mention of Israel's sin here, which did not of itself belong to an account of the institution of the feasts, prepares the way, as Hengst. points out, for the exhortation which follows.

8-10. This is a discourse within a discourse. It is the language which God held with his people when he proved them.

8. Comp. Deut. vi. 4, and see the note, Ps. l. 7.

IF THOU Wouldest, or "oh that thou wouldest." The particle is used in the expression of a wish, the apodosis being omitted.

9. STRANGE . . . STRANGER. The two words are different in Hebrew. For the former, comp. xlv. 21; Isa. xliii. 12; for the latter, Deut. xxxii. 12, where the appeal is the same.

10. Comp. Deut. v. 1, 6, etc.

11. Luther remarks: "It is something dreadful and terrible that he says, *my* people. If it had been a stranger, to whom I had shown no particular kindness," etc.

12. SO I GAVE THEM UP. The word is used of the letting go of captives, slaves, etc.; of giving over to sin (Job viii. 4). This is the greatest and most fearful of all God's punishments. Comp. lxxviii. 29.

STUBBORNNESS. The word occurs once in the Pentateuch (Deut. xxix. 18), and several times in Jeremiah. The E. V. renders it here "lusts," and in all the other passages "imagination," but wrongly.

13. A transition is here made from the Israel of the past to the Israel of the present, because the history of the former is repeated in the history of the latter.

14. AND TURN MY HAND. There is no need to supply any ellipse or explain the phrase as meaning "*again* turn." It is used as in Isa. i. 25; Amos. i. 8.

15. CROUCH BEFORE, or, "feign submission"; see on xviii. 44; lxvi. 3.

16 He would feed thee <sup>f</sup> also with the fat of wheat,  
And with honey out of the rock should I satisfy thee."

HIM, i.e. Israel (for "the haters of Jehovah" are the enemies of Israel); and hence with the usual change from the collective sing. to the plural, "their time" in the next clause is "the time of Israel."

TIME, in the general sense of duration merely, and not implying prosperity. Indeed the word may be used of times of adversity as well as prosperity (see xxxi. 16). Hence Aben-Ezra and Rashi suppose the time of the *enemy* to be meant (and so Theodoret), but the predicate "forever" is against this.

16. The form of the promise is borrowed from Deut. xxxii. 13, etc. Comp. Ezek. xvi. 19.

HE WOULD FEED THEE. The 3d

person instead of the 1st, which recurs again in the next clause. These abrupt interchanges of persons are by no means uncommon in Heb. poetry. Comp. xxii. 26 [27]. The 3d person follows, as Hupfeld observes, from the mention of Jehovah just before, instead of the pronominal suffix of the 1st person.

FAT OF WHEAT, as cxlvii. 14; Deut. xxxii. 14; comp. Gen. xlix. 20. So "fat of the land," Gen. xlv. 18; of fruits, Num. xv. 12, 29, as denoting the best of the kind.

HONEY OUT OF THE ROCK; another image of the abundance and fertility which would have been the reward of obedience.

<sup>a</sup> See the note on the inscription of Psalm viii.

<sup>b</sup> תִּנְהִי־הַקּוֹל. Gesen. explains this, *give forth* a sound by striking the *timbrel*, i.e. "strike the timbrel," after the analogy of נָהַן קוֹל, "to give forth, utter a sound, the voice," etc. But the analogy is anything but perfect, and there is no instance of a really parallel usage. I have therefore followed Mendelssohn and Zunz in preferring the other rendering.

<sup>c</sup> כְּפֶסַח. The Jewish tradition as to the meaning of this word, Delitzsch observes, is uncertain. According to the Talmud (*Rosh ha-Shana*, 8<sup>b</sup>, Bêza, 16<sup>a</sup>) it is the day on which the new moon hides itself, i.e. is scarcely visible in the morning in the far west, and in the evening in the far east. Rashi, Kimchi, and others again derive it from כִּסַּס = כִּסַּס, *computare*, in the sense of "a computed," and so "fixed time." And similarly the LXX, ἐν ἐσθίμῳ ἡμέρα, and the Vulg., *in insigni die*. Hence the E. V. "in the appointed time." But it is perhaps more probably explained by the Syr. *Keso*, which means "the full moon" (lit., "the covering" (Heb., כִּסַּס) or filling up of the orb of the moon"), or more generally, "the middle of the month," or rather the whole period from the full moon to the end of the month; for in the Peshito version of 1 Kings xii. 32 it is used of the fifteenth day of the month, and in 2 Chron. vii. 10 of the twenty-third, but not, as Delitzsch asserts, in both instances of the Feast of Tabernacles; for in Kings the reference is to Jeroboam's spurious festival on the fifteenth of the *eighth* month; and in Chronicles the people *are sent away* on the twenty-third,

the Feast of Dedication which lasted for seven days, having followed the Feast of Tabernacles. The Syr. here renders: "sound with horns at the new moons (beginning of the month), and at the full moons (wrongly rendered in Walton's Polyglot *noviluniis*) on the feast days." An analogous Aramaic form occurs Prov. vii. 20, where Aquila has ἡμέρα πανσελήνου. Jerome renders there *in die plenae lunae*, and here *in medio mense*.

<sup>d</sup> תִּתְּנֶנּוּ. There can be little doubt that this is the better reading. It has the support of the LXX, and is found in the best texts, but the Syr, Chald., and several of Kennicott's and De Rossi's mss. have the plural תִּתְּנֶנּוּ.

<sup>e</sup> שִׁפְטָה. The stat. constr. with the verb following, as in vii. 16 (comp. xvi. 3, where the noun stands in construction with a sentence), the verb being here, what the second noun usually is, equivalent to an adjective. There is no need to explain the phrase elliptically, "the language of one whom I knew not," though grammatically this would be allowable, as lxv. 5; Job xviii. 21; xxix. 16.

Hengstenberg thinks that שִׁפְטָה could not be used to denote the voice or speech of God, but can only be employed of a language; but why may not 'ש' לֵאמֹר mean "unintelligible words," as שִׁפְטָה 'ש', Prov. xii. 19, means "true words"?

<sup>f</sup> תִּתְּנֶנּוּ לָהֶם. The change to the 3d pers. presents no difficulty, but the use of the ו consec. does. It is out of the question to take this as the LXX and Syr. do, as an historic tense. A condition is clearly implied. What is meant is, that if the Israel of to-day would be obedient, then the miracles of God's love manifested of old should be repeated. Strictly speaking, if the ו consec. is retained, we ought to render "He would *have fed*," as if to intimate that not now only, but even from the first, God would have done this, had his people been obedient.

## PSALM LXXXII.

THIS Psalm is a solemn rebuke, addressed in prophetic strain, to those who, pledged by their office to uphold the law, had trampled upon it for their own selfish ends. It is a "Vision of Judgment," in which no common offenders are arraigned, as it is no earthly tribunal before which they are summoned.

God himself appears, so it seems to the prophet, taking his stand in the midst of that nation whom he had ordained to be the witness of

his righteousness, amongst the rulers and judges of the nation who were destined to reflect, and as it were to embody in visible form, the majesty of that righteousness. He appears now not, as in the fiftieth Psalm, to judge his *people*, but to judge *the judges* of that people; not to reprove the congregation at large for their formality and hypocrisy, but to reprove the rulers and magistrates for their open and shameful perversion of justice.

As in the presence of God, the Psalmist takes up his parable against these unjust judges: "How long will ye judge a judgment which is iniquity (such is the exact force of the original), and accept the persons of the ungodly?" These men have scandalously desecrated their office. They had been placed in the loftiest position to which any man could aspire. They were sons of the Highest, called by his name, bearing his image, exercising his authority, charged to execute his will, and they ought to have been, in their measure, his living representatives, the very pattern and likeness of his righteousness and wisdom. But instead of righteousness they had loved unrighteousness. They had shown favor to the wicked who were powerful and wealthy. They had crushed the poor, the defenceless, the fatherless, whose only protection lay in the unsullied uprightness and incorruptibility of the judge, and whom God himself had made their charge.

A witness of these wrongs, the Psalmist appeals to them to discharge their duty faithfully and uprightly: "Do justice to the miserable and fatherless," etc. (ver. 3, 4). But the appeal is in vain. They have neither feeling nor conscience. Morally and intellectually, intellectually because morally, they are corrupt. The light that is in them is darkness. And thus, venal, unscrupulous, base, hard-hearted, the judges and magistrates have loosened the bonds of law, and the consequence is that the foundations of social order are shaken, and the whole fabric threatened with dissolution. Such is the terrible picture of a disorganized society, the very fountains of justice defiled and poisoned, suggested to us by the words in which the Psalmist here addresses the judges of Israel. He himself had thought, he tells us, that their high dignity and the representative character of their office, placed them so far above other men that they were like beings of a different race; but he warns them that the tyrannous exercise of their power will not last forever, that, as in the case of other rulers of the world, it may only accelerate their fall. And then, finally, he turns to God, and appeals to him who is the Judge, not of Israel only, but of the world, to arise and execute judgment in the earth, which they who bore his name had perverted.

Ewald, De Wette, Hitzig, and others, suppose the expostulations of the Psalms to be addressed, not to Israelitish but to heathen rulers, satraps, etc., by a poet who lived towards the end of the exile, in Babylon, and who, witnessing the corruption which was fast undermining the Babylonish empire, lifted up his voice against it. This view rests mainly upon the appeal to God (in ver. 7) as the Ruler and Judge of *all nations*, not of Israel exclusively. But the Psalmists so frequently take a wider range than their own nation, so constantly, in a true prophetic spirit, recognize the special rule and revelation of God in Israel, as only a part of his universal dominion (compare, for instance, vii. 6-8 [7-9]), that there is no need to depart from the more common view that Israelitish judges are meant; especially as this is confirmed by the general tenor of the Psalm. Besides, as Stier and Hupfeld have pointed out, the names "gods," and "sons of the Highest," are never given to heathen monarchs in Scripture. The former says: "We look in vain for a passage where a heathen king, or even an Israelitish, except David and Solomon, as types of the Messiah, is thought worthy of this name (Son of God)."

Hupfeld and Bleek (who have been followed by Bunsen) maintain (and I believe that they are the only modern expositors who do so) that the "gods" of the Psalm are not human judges, but angels, that the Psalmist sees a vision of judgment going on in heaven (which is conceivable, inasmuch as the angels are not pure in God's sight), and that he poetically applies the circumstances of this judgment to its parallel upon earth. Hence the rebuke addressed to the angels is intended for human judges, and this explains how it is that the angels are charged with human delinquencies, with accepting persons, and crushing the poor. So also when angels are threatened with death (a threat which Hupfeld argues has no meaning when uttered to human beings), this is a mode merely of threatening them with degradation; the language being figurative, and borrowed from the sentence of degradation pronounced on the first man (Gen. ii. 17; iii. 19, 20). Bleek carries this notion so far as to suppose that the angels are the guardian angels to whom is entrusted the government of the several nations of the world (see Dan. x. 13, 20, 21; xii. 1; and Deut. xxxii. 8, in LXX), a trust which they have betrayed.

Of such an interpretation it is enough to say with Calvin, *Ad angelos trahere frigidum est commentum*; not to mention that it seems difficult to reconcile such a view with our Lord's use of the Psalm in John x. 34, which Hupfeld passes over without any notice whatever. His objections to the common view that men are not called "gods," and



“sons of the Highest,” in Scripture, and that there is no meaning in saying to *human* judges, “Ye shall die like men,” etc., will be found substantially answered in the notes.

The language of the Psalm is so general that it might belong to any period of the history; and the history itself and the utterance of the prophets show us that the evil here denounced was not the evil of any one age, but of all. It was the accusation brought against the sons of Samuel, the last who bore the venerable title of judges before the establishment of the monarchy, that they “turned aside after lucre and took bribes, and perverted judgment” (1 Sam. viii. 3). And a long line of prophets repeats the same complaint. See Amos v. 12, 15; Micah vii. 3; Isa. i. 17; iii. 13–15; Jer. xxi. 12; Zech. vii. 9, 10. The passages which approach most nearly to the Psalm in their general character are (1) one of those already quoted from Isaiah (iii. 13–15): “Jehovah standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people. Jehovah will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people and the provinces thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard, the spoil of the poor is in your houses. ‘What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor?’ saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts”; and (2) Jehoshaphat’s charge to his judges which “he set in the land, throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city” (2 Chron. xix. 5–7): “Take heed what ye do; for ye judge not for men but for Jehovah *who is with you in the judgment*. Wherefore now let the fear of Jehovah be upon you; take heed and do it; for there is no iniquity with Jehovah our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.”

The Psalm has no regular strophical division, but the arrangement is natural, and presents no difficulty. It has been already sufficiently indicated. The general strain is like that of Psalm lviii.

For certain peculiarities, which mark it in common with other Psalms, ascribed to Asaph, see General Introduction, Vol. i. pp. 77–78, where, however, the view is taken that God is himself the speaker in this Psalm.

[A Psalm of Asaph.<sup>a</sup>]

1 GOD standeth in the congregation of God:

In the midst of (the) gods doth he judge.

1. Earthly rulers and judges are not, as they are too ready to think, supreme, independent, irresponsible. There is one higher than the highest. As Jehoshaphat reminds the judges of Israel, God is with them in the judgment. Calvin quotes, to the like effect, the words of Horace:

## 2 How long will ye give wrong judgment, And accept the persons of the wicked? [Selah.]

“Regum timendorum in proprios greges, Reges in ipsos imperium est Jovis,” etc. Men cannot see God with their bodily eyes, but he is present with the king on his throne (hence Solomon’s throne is called the throne of Jehovah, 1 Chron. xxix. 23), with the judge on the judgment-seat, with all who hold an authority delegated to them by him.

STANDETH, more literally, “taketh his stand.” The word *nitsabh* denotes a deliberate and formal act, connected with a definite purpose (1 Sam. xix. 20). The Midrash explains it by *ἐπιποιος* as distinct from the more usual word *’oméd*, which is merely *standing* as opposed to *sitting*. But see the use of both words in reference to the act of judgment (Isa. iii. 13).

IN THE CONGREGATION OF GOD, i.e. in the midst of Israel itself (called in Num. xxvii. 17; xxxi. 16; Josh. xxii. 16, 17, “the congregation of Jehovah”), and not only in the midst of the people who are the witnesses of his righteousness, but amidst the judges of the people who are the representatives of his righteousness. They are called.

GODS, not merely as having their authority from God (or as Calvin, *quibus specialem gloriae notam insculpsit Deus*), but as his vicegerents, as embodying in themselves the majesty of the law, as those in whom men look to find the most perfect earthly pattern of divine attributes, of truth and justice, and mercy and impartiality. This name “gods” is applied to the judges of Israel in the Pentateuch; see Ex. xxi. 6; xxii. 8, 28, [27]. There, I agree with Delitzsch in thinking, *Elohim* does not mean God, in whose name judgment is pronounced (as Knobel and Hupfeld understand), but the judges themselves acting in his name and by his authority. If in Ex. xxii. 28 [27], we must render, “thou shalt not revile God, nor curse the ruler of thy people,” rather than “thou shalt not revile the judges,” etc.; still it is implied that the ruler bears the image of

God, and that every insult offered to such a representative of God in his kingdom is an insult against God (as Hengst. remarks). The use of the name “gods” may have been intended to remind the world how near man, created in God’s image, is to God himself. So in the eighth Psalm it is said, “Thou hast made him a little lower than God” (see note there on ver. 5). This would hold especially of those high in office. Thus God says to Moses in reference to Aaron, “Thou shalt be to him instead of God” (Ex. iv. 16). And again, “See I have made thee a god to Pharaoh” (vii. 1). In 1 Sam. xxviii. 13, the witch of Endor says of Samuel, “I saw a god ascending out of the earth” (in allusion either to his majestic appearance or, possibly, to his office as judge). In Ps. xlv. 6 the king is called God (see note there). But it was in connection with the office of judge that the stamp of divinity was most conspicuous. “The judgment is God’s” (Deut. i. 17); whoever comes before it comes before God. So, again, Moses uses the phrase, “When ye come to me, to inquire of God” (Ex. xviii. 15). The same idea is found in heathen writers. Seneca (*de Clementia*, i. 1) makes Nero say: “Electus sum qui in terris Deorum vice fungerer: ego vitæ necisque gentibus arbiter, qualem quisque sortem statumque habeat in manu mea positum est.”

2. It is usual to consider what follows, to the end of ver. 6, as the words of God as he appears, in vision, pleading with the judges of his people. To me it seems preferable to regard the passage as a rebuke addressed, in the true prophetic strain, by the poet himself, to those whose iniquity called for the protest (somewhat in the same strain as in lviii. 1, 2); ver. 6, in particular, is thus more forcible, and the address to God in ver. 7 less abrupt.

How LONG, like Cicero’s “*Quousque tandem*”; the abuse having become intolerable, because of its long standing.

- 3 Judge the miserable and fatherless,  
Do justice to the afflicted and needy.
- 4 Rescue the miserable and poor,  
Deliver them from the hand of (the) wicked.
- 5 They know not, and they understand not,  
In darkness they walk to and fro :  
All the foundations of the earth are out of course.
- 6 I myself have said, Ye are gods,  
And ye are all sons of the Most High.  
Yet surely like (other) men shall ye die,  
And fall like one<sup>b</sup> of the princes.

GIVE WRONG JUDGMENT; lit. "judge iniquity"; "give a judgment which is iniquity itself"; (the opposite being "judging uprightness," lviii. 1). Comp. Lev. xix. 15.

ACCEPT THE PERSONS. Such there can be no doubt is the meaning of the phrase here, and so it is understood by the LXX. Comp. Prov. xviii. 5; Lev. xix. 15. Sometimes a different verb is employed, as in Lev. xix. 15; Deut. i. 17; xvi. 19; Prov. xxiv. 23; xxviii. 21; where such partiality is straitly forbidden. Jehoshaphat in his address to the judges (2 Chron. xix. 7) reminds them that "with the Lord our God is no respect of persons, nor taking of gifts."

3. MISERABLE. See note on xli. 1. NEEDED, or "destitute"; the word (*râsh*), Delitzsch observes, does not occur in Hebrew literature earlier than the time of David. It is persons such as these who most of all need the protection of the judge. Their very existence depends on his integrity. The orphan who has lost his natural protectors, the humble who have no powerful friends, the poor who can purchase no countenance, to whom shall they look but to God's vicegerent? And if he violates his trust, God who is the "God of the widow and the fatherless" (lxviii. 6), and who in the law declares, "Cursed be he who perverteth the cause of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow" (Deut. xxvii. 19), will not leave him unpunished.

DO JUSTICE TO; lit. "justify," i.e. give them their due.

5. Those expositors who consider ver. 2-6 to contain the words of God, suppose that here, either the Psalmist introduces his own reflections, or that a pause takes place after ver. 4, during which God waits to see whether those whom he rebukes will listen to his rebuke. But the transition from the 2d person to the 3d is so common, as to render either exposition unnecessary. It is one strain continued, only that now the infatuation, as before the moral perversion, of the judges is described. The expostulation falls dead without an echo. The men are infatuated by their position, and blinded by their own pride.

THEY KNOW NOT, absolutely, as in liii. 5 [6]; lxxiii. 21 [22]. Comp. Isa. i. 3. Moral blindness is the cause of all sin.

IN DARKNESS, Prov. ii. 13.

THEY WALK TO AND FRO, such is the force of the Hithp., denoting generally the conversation, manner of life, etc.; here, according to Delitzsch, their carnal security and self-seeking.

ALL THE FOUNDATIONS, etc. See note on xi. 3, and comp. lxxv. 3 [4]. The dissolution of society is the inevitable result of corruption in high places.

6. I HAVE SAID. The pronoun is emphatic. If these are the words of God, as most interpreters suppose, then in pronouncing judgment upon the

7 Arise, O God, judge thou the earth,  
For thou hast all the nations for thine inheritance.<sup>c</sup>

judges, he declares that it was he himself who called them to their office, and gave them the name, together with the dignity which they enjoy. (This interpretation falls in readily with our Lord's words in John x. 34.) If, on the other hand, the Psalmist speaks, he expresses his own feelings and convictions. "There was a time when I myself thought that your office and dignity clothed you with something of a superhuman character, but you have degraded it, and degraded yourselves; you are but mortal men, your tenure of office is but for a little while." He does not add what naturally suggests itself to us, and what Calvin inserts here, that they must shortly give an account before the bar of God. If this is implied in ver. 7, it is not after death. Our Lord appeals to this verse in his argument with the Jews when they charged him with blasphemy, "because he being a man, made himself God" (John x. 34-38). His words are: "Is it not written in your law, 'I said ye are gods'? If it called them gods to 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?" The argument is one *a minori ad majus*. How could they charge him with blasphemy in claiming to be *the Son of God* when their own judges had been styled *gods*. They moreover were *unrighteous* judges (the

worthy ancestors it is implied of the unrighteous Pharisees and members of the Sanhedrim, who were our Lord's bitterest opponents), whereas he was one whom the Father had *sanctified*, and sent into the world, and whose life and works were a witness to his righteousness. By nature they had no right to the name of Elohím, "gods," nor had they proved themselves worthy of it by their character. He was in character as in nature divine. To them *the word of God had come* (*πρὸς οὓς ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγένετο*), by which they had been appointed to their office. He was *himself the Word* of the Father. Their office was but for a time, they were mortal men, yet wearing, by divine permission, a divine name. He had been with the Father before he came into the world, was by him sealed and set apart (*ἡγιασεν*), and sent to be not a judge, but the Christ; not one of many sons, but emphatically the Son of God, the King of an everlasting kingdom. Both in his office and in his person he has far more right to the title "Son of God," than they have to that of "gods." There is moreover further implied in this argument that the Old Testament does contain hints, more or less obscure, preludes and foreshadowings, which might have arrested the thoughtful reader, as mysteriously prefiguring that close and real union between God and man which was afterwards fully exhibited in the incarnation.

<sup>a</sup> See General Introduction, pp. 77, 78.

<sup>b</sup> וְיָרֵדוּ: for this Ewald reads וְיָרֵדוּ, and translates: "And fall, O ye princes, *together*" (lit. like one man), referring to Isa. lxxv. 25; Ezra iii. 9; vii. 20, in support of his emendation. He makes this change on the ground that the opposition here is not between princes and gods, but between mortal men and gods. At the same time he admits that the other expression "as one of the princes," i.e. like a common prince, is a genuine Hebrew phrase. Comp. 2 Sam. ix. 11; Judges xvi. 7, 11; 1 Kings xix. 2.

° The verb נחל is construed here with ך instead of the accus., after the analogy of verbs of *ruling*, etc., like משל, בעל, the word itself being employed to denote that, whilst Israel is God's peculiar *inheritance*, נַחֲלָה, he has the same right, makes the same claim, to all the nations.

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PSALM LXXXIII.

WE know of no period in the history of Israel when all the various tribes here enumerated were united together for the extermination of their enemy. The annals have preserved no record of a confederacy so extensive. Hence it has been assumed that the enumeration in the Psalm is merely designed to subserve the purposes of poetry, to heighten the coloring, to represent the danger as even greater and more formidable than it really was. It may have been so. Divine inspiration does not change the laws of the imagination, though it may control them for certain ends. Or it may have been that the confederacy as originally formed, and as threatening Israel, was larger than that which actually advanced to the struggle. The wider the alliance, and the more heterogeneous its elements, the more probable it is that some would drop off, through dissensions, or jealousies, or the working of timid counsels. But as this Psalm helps us to complete the narrative in Judges of the defeat of the Midianites (see note on ver. 11), so it may itself supplement the narrative of the particular event which called it forth. It may describe some event which we read in the history, but which there assumes less formidable proportions, and in so doing it may help us to complete the picture. If so, there can be very little doubt with what portion of the history it best synchronizes. The confederacy must be that which threatened Judah in the reign of Jehoshaphat, the account of which is given in 2 Chron. xx. There, as in the Psalm, Moab and Ammon, "the children of Lot," are the leading powers; and though there is some doubt about the reading "other beside the Ammonites" in verse 1, the Edomites are mentioned as forming a part of the invading army. These might naturally include bordering Arabian tribes, mentioned more in detail in the Psalm. The great hiatus in the narrative (supposing this to be the occasion to which the Psalm refers) is that it omits all mention of the western nations as joining the confederacy. But on the hypothesis of any other historical reference at all, some hiatus will be found to exist. It

is so if, with Hitzig, Olshausen, Grimm, and others, we refer the Psalm to the events mentioned in 1 Macc. v. 1-8, where only Edomites, Ammonites, and Bajanites (a name as yet unexplained) are mentioned; nor is the difficulty got over even if, with Hitzig, we add to this the subsequent campaign of Judas Maccabeus, recorded in the same chapter, verses 3-54. Those who, like Ewald, place the Psalm in Persian times, and suppose it to be aimed at the attempts of Sanballat, Tobias, and others, to prevent the rebuilding of Jerusalem, are not more successful. The former of these views compels us to take Assyria (Asshur) as a name of Syria; the latter as a synonym for Persia. In neither case do "the children of Lot" occupy the prominent place; nor can we account for the mention of Amalekites, either in the time of Nehemiah, or in the time of the Maccabees. (See 1 Chron. iv. 43.) The more common opinion which connects the Psalm with Jehoshaphat's struggle is certainly preferable to either of the views just mentioned.

One expression in Jehoshaphat's prayer bears a close resemblance to the language of the Psalm in verse 11, when he prays, "Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession which thou hast given us to inherit" (2 Chron. xx. 11). The remark with which the narrative ends: "And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel," is almost like a recorded answer to the prayer with which the Psalm closes.

It has been conjectured, as the Psalm is said to be a "Psalm of Asaph," that it may have been composed by Jahaziel, the "Levite of the sons of Asaph," who encouraged Jehoshaphat's army before it went out to battle; and that the Psalm itself may have been chanted by the band of singers whom the king appointed to precede the army on its march (2 Chron. xx. 21). But no argument can be built upon the title. See General Introduction, Vol. i. pp. 77, 78. One thing, however, is clear, the confederacy of which the Psalm speaks was formed before Assyria became a leading power. Moab and Ammon hold the foremost place, while Asshur joins them only as an ally: "they are an arm to the children of Lot." The poet is fully alive to the danger which threatens his nation. Look where he may the horizon is black with gathering clouds. Judah is alone, and his enemies are compassing him about. The hosts of invaders are settling like swarms of locusts on the skirts of the land. East, south, and west, they are mustering to the battle. The kindred, but ever hostile, tribe of Edom on the border, issuing from their mountain fastnesses; the Arab tribes of the desert; the old hereditary foes of Israel, Moab and Ammon; the

Philistines, long since humbled and driven back to their narrow strip of territory by the sea, yet still apparently formidable, even Tyre forgetting her ancient friendship, — all are on the march, all, like hunters, are hemming in the lion who holds them at bay.

It is against this formidable confederacy that the Psalmist prays. He prays that it may be with them as with the other enemies of Israel, with Jabin and Sisera, in days of old. But he prays for more than deliverance or victory. He prays that the name of Jehovah may be magnified, and that all may seek that name. Two expressions, in fact, give the key to the Psalm — show us the attitude of the poet in presence of the danger: ver. 5, “They are confederate against *thee* ;” ver. 18, “Let them know that *thou* art most high over all the earth.”

The Psalm consists of two principal divisions:

I. The first describes the magnitude of the danger, and enumerates the foes who are gathering on all sides, hemming in Judah, and intending by mere force of numbers utterly to crush and destroy it (ver. 1–8).

II. The next contains the prayer for their complete overthrow, with an appeal to God’s former mighty acts on behalf of his people when threatened by their enemies (ver. 9–18).

[A Song. A Psalm of Asaph,<sup>a</sup>]

- 1 O God, keep not silence,  
Hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.
- 2 For lo, thine enemies make a tumult,  
And they that hate thee have lifted up (their) head.
- 3 Against thy people they plot craftily,<sup>b</sup>  
And take counsel together against thy hidden ones.
- 4 They say, “Come, let us cut them off that they be no more  
a nation,  
And that the name of Israel be no more in remembrance.”<sup>c</sup>

1. KEEP NOT SILENCE; lit. “Let (there) not (be) silence to thee,” as in Isa. lxii. 7. In both places the LXX have made the same blunder, rendering here *τις ἠμιοθήσεται σοι*, and there *οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμιοιός*. On the general sense of this verse see note on xxviii. 1.

2. THINE ENEMIES, in itself a ground of appeal and of consolation.

MAKE A TUMULT; lit. “roar like the waves of the sea.” See the same word in xlvi. 3 [4].

HAVE LIFTED UP (THEIR) HEAD. Cf. iii. 3 [4]; xxvii. 6; and Judges viii. 28.

3. PLOT CRAFTILY; lit. “make crafty (their) plot, or secret consultation.”

THY HIDDEN ONES, those whom God holds in the hollow of his hand; those to whom he is a wall of fire round about them, that none may do them hurt; those of whom he says, he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye. Comp. xvii. 8; xxvii. 5; xxxi. 20 [21].

4. THAT THEY BE NO MORE A NATION.

- 5 For they have taken counsel with (one) heart together,  
 Against thee they are confederate : —
- 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 Asshur also is joined with them,  
 They have been an arm to the children of Lot.

Comp. Jer. xlvi. 2; Isa. vii. 8; and similar phrases in xvii. 1; xxv. 2. They would in their fury blot out Israel from the map of the world, or, as Calvin says: "It is as if they had formed the design of subverting the counsel of God on which the continued existence of the church had been founded."

5. WITH ONE HEART TOGETHER. The adverb seems to be used almost as an adjective (LXX *ἐν ὁμοιοῖᾳ ἐπιτροαυτό*), so that the phrase would answer to that in 1 Chron. xii. 38. But perhaps it would be simpler and more certain, with Hupfeld and Hengst., to render: "They have taken counsel in (*ineir*) heart together," (Jerome, *corde pariter*,) the heart being the source of their machinations. Comp. v. 9 [10]; lxiv. 6 [7].

AGAINST THEE, as in ver. 3 "against thy people." God and his people are one. So our Lord says to Saul, "Why persecutest thou me?"

6-8. The enumeration of the confederate tribes. First, those on the south and east. Then, those on the west, Philistia and Tyre. Lastly, the Assyrians in the north, not yet regarded as a formidable power, but merely as allies of Moab and Ammon.

6. THE TENTS, as properly descriptive of the nomad Arabian tribes.

EDOM. So in 2 Chron. xx. 2, "Edom" should be read instead of "Aram" (Syria), the confusion of the two words being discernible elsewhere.

THE ISHMAELITES, according to Gen. xxv. 18, were spread over the whole tract of country south of Palestine, lying between Egypt and the Persian Gulf. Part of this territory is occupied by Amalekites in 1 Sam. xv. 7.

THE HAGARENES dwelt to the east of Palestine in the land of Gilead. They were driven out by the tribe of Reuben in the time of Saul (1 Chron. v. 10, 18-20).

7. GEBAL, usually supposed to denote the mountainous country south of the Dead Sea, in the neighbourhood of Petra (Arab. *Djebel*). Mr. Ffoulkes, indeed, in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, identifies it with the Gebal of Ezekiel (xxvii. 9), a maritime town of Phœnicia. He says, "Jehoshaphat had in the beginning of his reign humbled the Philistines and Arabians (2 Chron. xvii. 9, 10), and still more recently had assisted Ahab against the Syrians (ibid. ch. xviii.). Now, according to the poetic language of the Psalmist, there were symptoms of a general rising against him. On the south the Edomites, Ishmaelites, and Hagarenes; on the south-east Moab; and north-east Ammon. Along the whole line of the western coast (and, with Jehoshaphat's maritime projects this would naturally disturb him most), (see 2 Chron. xx. 36), the Amalekites, Philistines, or Phœnicians and inhabitants of Tyre, to their frontier town Gebal; with Assur, i.e. the Syrians or Assyrians, from the more distant north. It may be observed that the Ashurites are mentioned in connection with Gebal no less (ver. 6) in the prophecy than in the Psalm." But the objection to this identification is the position which Gebal here occupies in the enumeration of the tribes.

8. ASSHUR. If the Psalm was written in Jehoshaphat's reign, this is the first mention of the Assyrians since the days of Nimrod, and here evidently they hold



- 9 Do thou to them as unto Midian,  
 As unto Sisera, as unto Jabin at the torrent of Kishon,  
 10 Who were destroyed at En-dor,  
 Who became dung for the land.  
 11 Make them, their nobles, like 'Oreb and like Zeeb ;  
 Yea, all their princes, like Zebah and like Zalmunna,  
 12 Who said : " Let us take to ourselves  
 The pastures of God in possession."

a subordinate place. We do not hear of the Assyrian kingdom as a great power formidable to Israel till the time of Menaham, who "was reduced to the necessity of buying off an invasion of the Assyrians (the first incursion of that people), under Pul" (2 Kings xv. 19).

THEY HAVE BEEN AN ARM. Comp. xlv. 4 ; Isa. xxxiii. 2. This agrees with the statement in Chronicles that Moab and Ammon were the leaders of the confederacy.

9. MIDIAN, mentioned by anticipation, with reference, not to the example which immediately follows, but to that in ver. 11. The victory of Gideon over the Midianites was one of the most glorious in the national history, one the memory of which was fondly cherished. When Isaiah would describe the victories which are to precede the peaceful reign of Messiah, he can compare the overthrow of the enemy to nothing so well as to that on "the day of Midian." The allusion to it here may also have been suggested by the fact, that many of the enemies now arrayed against Israel were the same as on that occasion ; for with the Midianites were the "Amalekites and all the children of the east" (Judges vi. 36). See Isa. ix. 4 [3] ; x. 26 ; Hab. iii. 7.

SISERA . . . JABIN. See the history in Judges iv., v.

THE TORRENT OF KISHON, which swept away the corpses of the enemy (Judges v. 21). Others, "the valley or Wady of Kishon" : the Hebrew word means both.

10. EN-DOR is not mentioned in Judges, but the Psalm shows us that tradition associated with that spot the death of

the two chiefs. It is a considerable, but now deserted village, four miles south of Tabor. The name occurs besides, Josh. xvii. 11 ; 1 Sam. xxviii. 7.

11. 'OREB AND ZEEB, the two "princes," or probably "generals of the army," whilst Zebah and Zalmunna have the title of "kings" (Judges vii. 25 ; viii. 5, 6). The allusions here and in Isa. x. 26 help us to complete the narrative in Judges. Isaiah implies that the slaughter must have been awful beyond anything that history records, for "he places it in the same rank with the two most tremendous disasters recorded in the whole of the history of Israel—the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, and of the army of Sennacherib." Here the discomfiture and flight of the Midianites is prominent. "In imagery both obvious and vivid to every native of the gusty hills and plains of Palestine, though to us comparatively unintelligible, the Psalmist describes them as driven over the uplands of Gilead like the clouds of chaff blown from the threshing-floors ; chased away like the spherical masses of dry weeds which course over the plains of Esdraelon and Philistia—flying with the dreadful hurry and confusion of the flames, that rush and leap from tree to tree and hill to hill when the wooded mountains of a tropical country are by chance ignited." See the article "Oreb," by Mr. Grove, in *Smith's Dict. of the Bible*.

12. PASTURES. Others, "habitations," which Gesen. gives as the first meaning. But there is no reason to depart from the usual signification. See on lxxix. 7. Comp. xxiii. 2. Israel is God's flock lying down in *his* pastures. The figure

- 13 O my God, make them as a rolling thing,  
As stubble before the wind.
- 14 As a fire that burneth a forest,  
And as a flame that setteth the mountains in a blaze,
- 15 So pursue them with thy tempest,  
And with thy hurricane make them afraid.
- 16 Fill their faces with confusion,  
That they may seek thy name, O Jehovah.
- 17 Let them be ashamed, and afraid for evermore,  
Yea, let them be confounded and perish,
- 18 And let them know that thou, (even) thy name Jehovah alone,  
Art most high over all the earth.

accoras with the usage of Psalms ascribed to Asaph. See General Introduction, Vol. i. pp. 77, 78.

13. AS A ROLLING THING. So the same word is rendered by the E.V. in the parallel passage, Isa. xvii. 13.

And (they) shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind,  
And like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.

Here both the A.V. and Prayer-book versions have "as a wheel," and so all the ancient versions, and this Hupfeld, maintains is the only correct rendering. But the parallel rather suggests "spherical masses of weeds" (as Mr. Grove renders), chaff, dust, anything driven in rolling masses by the wind. And so Gesen., Ewald, Delitzsch, etc.

14. The image in this verse is also found in Isaiah. See ix. 18 [17]; x. 17, 18; and comp. Zech. xii. 6. Hupfeld connects this with the preceding verse, and so supposes a confusion in the figure (such as he finds also in xxi. 9), the sense being, "O my God, make them as a forest which is burned with fire." But it is far better to take ver. 14 and ver. 15 as the two members of the comparison, and then there is no need to resort to such metonymy.

15. With this verse and what follows comp. xxxv. 4-6.

16. The object with which the Psalmist prays for the divine judgment upon the foes who are gathering to swallow up his people is remarkable. It is "that they

may seek the name of Jehovah, that they may know (ver. 18) that he is most high over all the earth." This is the nobler aspiration which mingles with the prayer for vengeance. The man in danger, feeling his own and his country's peril, desires to see his enemies destroyed with a slaughter as terrible, a discomfiture as complete, as that on "the day of Midian." The man who loves and fears Jehovah desires to see others, even his enemies, love and fear him too. A pious Englishman in Lucknow, or Delhi, or Cawnpore, during the Indian mutiny, might have understood how possible it was to reconcile the two parts of the prayer. The prayer in ver. 18 might, indeed, only mean that by their overthrow they should be forced to acknowledge the power and greatness of Jehovah, an external subjection as in xxxi. 17 [18], but the prayer that they should *seek his name* must mean more than this. The end of all God's judgments, as of all history, is the same, that all should confess that Jehovah is One, and his name One (Zech. xiv. 9).

18. THOU, THY NAME, i.e. thou who dost reveal thyself as Jehovah. Calvin observes that the pronoun is emphatic, because there is implied a comparison between the true God, the God of Israel, and all false gods, "as though the prophet had said, Lord make them feel that their idols which they have made for themselves are nothing." The construction is that of a double nominative. See note on xlv. 2.

<sup>a</sup> See General Introduction, Vol. i. p. 77.

<sup>b</sup> סוּר, here used in a bad sense, as in lv. 3, is the object of the verb, the constr. being the same as in lv. 14 [15], "to make counsel sweet"; so here "to make counsel crafty." In other places, it is true the Hiph. of this verb occurs intransitively, and so Hengst. would take it here, "*they act craftily* in reference to their counsel"; but this is unnecessary. See on xiv. 1. In the next clause the Hithp. רִתְּצֵי, which occurs only here, expresses the *mutual* deliberation.

## PSALM LXXXIV.

In its general character this Psalm very nearly resembles Psalm xlii.-xliii. Like that, it is the ardent outpouring of a man of no common depth and tenderness of feeling, the expression of a devoted love for the house and worship of Jehovah. Like that, it is written under circumstances of suffering and depression, at a time when the Psalmist was in exile, or at a distance from the sanctuary. Like that, it touches, and even more fully, on the celebration of the national feast, and pictures the crowd of pilgrims on their way to the holy city. In both Psalms there is the same deep pathos, the same "exquisite delicacy and tenderness of thought," in both the same strain of remembrance and of anticipation, half sad, half joyful. Certain turns of expression are the same in both. Compare verse 2 here with xlii. 1, 2; verse 4 [5] here, "they will still (or *yet*) praise thee," with xlii. 5, "for I shall yet praise him"; the name of God as the "living God," verse 2 here, and xlii. 2 (occurring nowhere else in the Psalter); the phrase, "appear before God," verse 7 here, and xlii. 2; "thy dwellings" or "tabernacles," verse 1 here, and xliii. 3. But with all these resemblances, there is this difference, that here nothing is said to define exactly the locality in which the Psalm was written; nor is there any allusion to the taunts of enemies, to "men of deceit and wrong," such as meet us in xlii.-xliii.

From the general likeness in structure and sentiment and coloring of language, and yet perfect distinctness and originality, of the two poems, Ewald is doubtless right in concluding that both are by the same author. Whether he is right in inferring from verse 9 [10] of this Psalm that the author was a king, has been questioned. The form of expression points that way, and scarcely admits of a different explanation (see note on the verse). Ewald supposes the king to have been

Jehoiachin (or Jeconiah), "who, according to Jer. xxii. 28, etc., was no contemptible person, and who, after having been long in exile (and in confinement), was at last restored to a place of honor, 2 Kings xxv. 27-30." But see more in the introduction to Psalm xlii.

The former part of this Psalm may also be compared with Psalm lxiii., and there are expressions which connect it with Psalms xxvii. and lxxv.

Hengstenberg, who is a zealous upholder of the inscriptions, maintains that the Psalm was composed by some member of the Levitical family of the Korahites who accompanied David when he fled from Absalom to the east side of the Jordan. But his explanation of the fact is not very intelligible. He says: "The ninth verse renders it evident that the speaker is the anointed of the Lord. This fact can be reconciled with the title, which ascribes the Psalm to the sons of Korah, only by the supposition that it *was sung from the soul of the anointed.*"

Mr. Plumptre, who gives reasons for concluding that all the Korahite Psalms were written during the reign of Hezekiah by members of that Levitical family, considers the Psalm to have been written on the same occasion as Psalm xlii., and supposes that "a devout Levite or company of Levites was hindered by the presence of Sennacherib's army from going up at the appointed seasons to take their turn in the ministrations of the temple." He draws attention to "the touch which indicates the possible familiarity with the temple precincts. The Levite minstrel remembers 'the sparrow and the swallow' that fluttered about the courts of the sanctuary there, and built their nests upon its eaves, as they now love to haunt the enclosure of the Mosque of Omar." He observes what new force his words acquire, "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God," etc., if we regard them not as the vague indeterminate wish of any devout worshipper, but remember that they fell from the lips of one of those sons of Korah "whose special function it was to be *'keepers of the gate of the tabernacle'* in the time of David (1 Chron. ix. 19), and sure to be appointed, therefore, to an analogous service in the temple." And he concludes that "this Psalm, like Psalm xlii., was written by some Levite detained against his will 'in the land of Jordan' and 'on the slopes of Hermon,' somewhere, i.e. in the upland Gilead country, and that then the recollection of past journeys to Jerusalem would bring back the scenes of travel through the valley of the Jordan, which, with its deep depression and tropical climate, had from the earliest date been famous for its balsam-weeping trees. Some parched rock-ravine on the way would be that which the Psalmist would think of as having been watered by the tears of pilgrims." (*Biblical Studies*, pp. 163-166.)

The Psalm consists of two principal divisions; the first of which dwells on the blessedness of God's service in his house, the supreme happiness of those who are permitted to take their part in it (ver. 1-7); the second consists of a prayer that the Psalmist himself, though shut out from access to the sanctuary, may nevertheless find God to be his sun and shield (ver. 8-12). Or we may divide the whole into three parts, thus: ver. 1-3 (or 4); ver. 4 (or 5) to 7; ver. 8-12. If we make the first strophe end with ver. 3, then the first strophe and the last resemble one another in structure so far, that both begin and end with the same address to God, "O Jehovah of hosts" (slightly varied in ver. 8). On the other hand, ver. 4 completes the subject of the first strophe (see note on the verse).

Hupfeld, Delitzsch, De Wette, and others, follow the division suggested by the *Selah*, and arrange the strophes accordingly: ver. 1-4; ver. 5-8; ver. 9-12. But it is quite impossible to regard ver. 8 as the natural conclusion of the second strophe.

[For the Precentor. Upon the Gittith.<sup>a</sup> A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.<sup>b</sup>]

- 1 How lovely are thy dwellings, O Jehovah (of) hosts!  
 2 My soul longeth, yea even fainteth, for the courts of Jehovah;  
 My heart and my flesh cry aloud to the living God.

1. **THY DWELLINGS.** The plural may either be used to denote *the several parts* of the sanctuary (see on lxviii. 35), or perhaps rather poetically, instead of the singular. Comp. xliii. 3; xlvi. 4 [5]; cxxxii. 5, 8. And the same may be said of the plural "courts," in the next verse (which Mendelssohn renders by the singular, *Vorhof*). But see General Introduction, Vol. i. p. 79.

2. By the **COURTS**, that part of the building is meant which was for the people at large. (So in Isa. i. 12, "Who hath required this at your hand to tread my courts." Comp. lxxv. 4 [5]; cxvi. 19.) No inference can be drawn from the plural, that the reference is to the court of the people and the court of the priests in the temple (as the Rabbis explain), and that consequently the temple was already built. On this intense expression of personal affection to God and his worship, see note on lxiii. 1.

**SOUL ... HEART ... FLESH.** Even more strongly than there (where "heart" is omitted) marking the whole man, with every faculty and affection. The verbs are also very expressive. The first, **LONGETH**, means literally, "hath grown pale," as with the intensity of the feeling; the second, **FAINTETH**, is more exactly, "faileth," or "is consumed" (Job xix. 27).

**CRY ALOUD.** The verb in this conjugation is used elsewhere of a *joyful* utterance, and some would retain this meaning here, as if, even amidst the sadness of exile, there mingled with his longing a joy as he remembers, and anticipates, in spite of all that is adverse, communion with God in Zion. Mendelssohn, keeping to this meaning of the verb, renders: "My soul . . . fainteth for the court of the Eternal, (where) heart and flesh shout aloud (*jauchzen*) to the God of life." But this ignores

3 Yea the sparrow hath found a house,  
 And the swallow a nest for herself where ° she hath laid  
 her young,  
 (Even) <sup>d</sup> thine altars, O Jehovah (of) hosts,  
 My King and my God !

the pronominal suffixes. However, the cry of *prayer* may be all that is meant. So the noun from the same root is frequently used, and so the verb (in the Kal conjug.) of the cry of distress (Lam. ii. 19).

LIVING GOD. See note on xlii. 2, the only other place in the Psalms where God is so named. This particular form of expression, *'El Chav* occurs but twice besides in the Bible (Josh. iii. 10; Hos. i. 10). The similar name, *'Elohim Chayim*, is found, Dent. v. 26 (the first use of the epithet); 1 Sam. xvii. 26, 36; Jer. x. 10; xxiii. 36; and the corresponding Chaldee, Dan. vi. 26. A third combination of the noun and adjective, *Elohim Chay*, occurs in 2 Kings xix. 4, 16, and the corresponding passage in Isa. xxxvii. 4, 17. In the New Testament the name "Living God" is found in St. Matthew's and St. John's Gospels, in the speech of Paul and Barnabas in the Acts (xiv. 15), in several of St. Paul's Epistles, four times in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and once in the Revelation.

3. MY KING AND MY GOD. Thus joined also in v. 2. It will be seen from my rendering of this verse, which coincides with that of the E.V., that I do not find in it that "insuperable difficulty" which has presented itself to some of the modern commentators. The Psalmist, at a distance from Zion, envies the birds who are free to build their nests in the immediate precincts of the temple. They have a happiness which he cannot enjoy. They are nearer to God, so it seems to him in his despondency, than he is. This is all that is meant. Nor can I see anything "trivial" in such a thought. "Thine altars" is a poetical way of saying "thy house." It is manifestly a special term instead of a general. Yet it has been seriously argued, that

no birds could or would ever be suffered to build their nests on the altar. Surely this sort of expression, which is hardly a figure, is common enough. *A parte potiori fit denominatio*. We say, "There goes a sail." What should we think of a man who should argue that a sail cannot go? The altars mean the temple. There was

"No jutting frieze,  
 Buttress, nor coigne of vantage, but  
 these birds

Had made their pendent bed,"  
 not to mention that trees grew within the sacred enclosure, where birds might have built their nests. The comparison between the lot of the birds, happy in their nearness to the house of God, and the Psalmist far removed and in exile, is suggested rather than developed; but it is sufficiently obvious; hence there is no need to adopt any of the different interpretations of the last clause of the verse which have been proposed, in order to escape a purely imaginary difficulty. Such as (1) "Oh for thine altars, O Jehovah," etc., as if the meaning were: "The birds have their nests, their homes, their shelter; oh that I could find my place of refuge and shelter in thy temple!" Or (2) supposing an ellipsis or omission of certain words, "The sparrow hath found an house, etc., . . . but I would find thine altars," etc., or, "When shall I come (as in xlii. 6) to thine altars?" Or (3) by a transposition (which Hupfeld proposes), so that the last two clauses of ver. 3 [4] would stand after the first clause of ver. 4 [5]:

"Blessed are they that dwell in thy house,  
 (Even) thine altars (or, by thine altars),  
 O Jehovah of hosts,  
 My King and my God ;  
 They will be always praising thee."

(4) The most improbable view of all is

4 Blessed are they that dwell in thy house !

They will be still praising thee. [Selah.]

5 Blessed are the men whose strength is in thee,

In whose heart are (the) ways,°

that of Hengst. and Delitzsch, who suppose that the Psalmist speaks of himself under the figure of a bird. If that be so, what is the meaning of the allusion to the young ones ? They are a pointless addition to the figure. Again, what is the force of the particle “yea” (וַיֵּא) with which ver. 3 opens, unless it be to institute a comparison and a conclusion *a minori* ? Lastly, how can the Psalmist express this longing for God’s house in ver. 2, and in ver. 3 say that he *has found* (observe the perfect tense) a home and a rest there ? This has been well argued by Hupfeld, who, however, himself misses the simple and obvious explanation of the verse.

4. It is doubtful whether this verse should be regarded as closing the first strophe, or commencing the second. The Selah has been urged in favor of the former view, but no stress can be laid upon this, as in the very next Psalm it is inserted in the middle of a strophe, and in some instances, as has been noticed elsewhere, even in the middle of a verse. The chief argument in favor of that division is, that thus the thought of ver. 3 is completed. Even the birds are happy, who find shelter beneath that sacred roof ; far more happy — truly blessed — are they who dwell there, rendering the reasonable service of a thankful heart. *The blessedness of God’s house is that there men praise him.* This it was that made that house so precious to the Psalmist. And what Christian man can climb higher than this, — to find in the praise of God the greatest joy of his life ?

THEY WILL BE STILL PRAISING THEE, i.e. “always, continually.” Others, who suppose that a contrast is implied between the gloomy present and the more hopeful future, render, “They will *yet* praise thee,” taking the particle in the same sense as in xlii. 5 [6], 10 [11].

5-7. But not only blessed are they who dwell in the holy place in God’s city, and near to his house ; blessed are they who can visit it, with the caravan of pilgrims, at the great national festivals. They cherish the remembrance of such seasons. Every spot of the familiar road, every station at which they have rested, lives in their heart. The path may be dry and dusty, through a lonely and sorrowful valley, but nevertheless they love it. The pilgrim band, rich in hope, forget the trials and difficulties of the way ; hope changes the rugged and stony waste into living fountains. The vale blossoms as if the sweet rain of heaven had covered it with blessings. Hope sustains them at every step ; from station to station they renew their strength as they draw nearer to the end of their journey, till at last they appear before God, present themselves as his worshippers, in his sanctuary in Zion. Such appears to be the general scope of the passage, though the meaning of the second clause, “In whose heart are the ways,” has been much questioned. (1) The Chaldee renders the verse : “Blessed is the man whose strength is in thy word, who has *confidence* in his heart.” This preserves the parallelism, “strength”... “confidence.” It probably rested on a figurative interpretation of the word “highways,” roads carefully constructed being firm, strong, safe, and hence an image of confidence. (2) Others again, as Kimchi, understand by “the ways,” the “commandments of God” (in which men are said to walk), and these are in their heart, because they love and meditate thereon. (3) Hengst. explains the ways or roads constructed in the heart as the second condition of salvation (the first being that a man has his strength in God), and thinks that the expression designates zealous moral effort, righteousness, etc. ; the heart of

6 Who passing through the vale of weeping, make it a place  
of springs;

Yea, the early rain<sup>f</sup> covereth (it) with blessings.

7 They go from strength to strength,

(Every one of them) appeareth before God in Zion.

8 O Jehovah, God (of) hosts, hear my prayer,

Give ear, O God of Jacob. [Selah.]

man being naturally like a pathless and rocky wilderness, in which roads are levelled by repentance. He quotes Ps. l. 23; Prov. xvi. 17; Isa. xl. 3, 4. But these interpretations do not fall in with the general strain and tenor of ver. 5-7. The ways (lit. "highways") are those traversed by the caravans of pilgrims — the ways to the sanctuary. No wonder that in all ages men have rejoiced to find in this beautiful picture an image of the Christian life. To what can that so aptly be compared as to a pilgrimage in a vale of tears? Is it not by the hope of appearing before God in the heavenly Jerusalem that the Christian is sustained? Does he not find fountains of refreshment in the wilderness of the world? Does not God's grace visit him like the sweet refreshing shower from heaven? Does he not advance from strength to strength, from grace to grace, from glory to glory, till he reaches his journey's end?

6. THE VALE OF WEEPING. The meaning of the word "Baca" is doubtful, but all the ancient versions render it by "weeping," and according to the Masora it is the same as "Bacah," *weeping*, the word being written here only with  $\aleph$ . Comp. xxiii. 4, "valley of the shadow of death." Burckhardt tells us that he found a valley in the neighborhood of Sinai, which bore the name of "the valley of weeping." Others, as Delitzsch and Ewald, take Baca to be the name of a tree, as it is in 2 Sam. v. 24; 1 Chron. xiv. 4; and either (as the E.V. there renders) "a mulberry-tree," or more probably some species of balsam-tree, dropping its tears of balm, and so taking its name from the Hebrew root which signifies "weeping." In this case some sandy valley

is meant, where these trees grew, and which took its name from them. With the love for detecting allusive and, as it were, ominous meanings in proper names, which was characteristic of Hebrew thought at all times, . . . the Psalmist plays upon its etymological significance. Plumptre, *Biblical Studies*, p. 165. The meaning of the verse is, that the faith and hope and joy of the pilgrims make the sandy waste a place of fountains, and then (this is the divine side of the picture) God from heaven sends down the rain of his grace. The word denotes the soft, gentle autumnal rain (Joel ii. 23) which fell after the crops were sown. Thus the vale of weeping becomes a vale of joy. "Compare for the use of the same figure in a simpler form, Isa. xxxv. 7; Hos. ii. 15 [17 Heb.]. The entrance into Palestine is, as a matter of fact, waste and arid." — *Ewald*.

A PLACE OF SPRINGS. This is the strict meaning of the word, rather than "a spring" or "fountains." Comp. cvii. 35.

7. FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH, ever renewing it, in spite of the toils of the way, and in view of the journey's end, as Isa. xl. 31. Comp. John i. 16, and 2 Cor. iii. 18, and similarly Rom. i. 17, *ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν*, "from first to last of faith, and nothing but faith."

APPEARETH. See note on xlii. 2. Cf. especially Ex. xxiii. 17; xxxiv. 23.

8. The Psalmist has pictured to himself the blessedness of those who dwell in the holy city, in immediate proximity to God's house, the blessedness of those who can join the pilgrim-caravans. Now he pours out a prayer for himself that he, though distant, may share the same blessing.



- 9 See, O God our shield,  
 And look upon the face of thine anointed ;
- 10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand (elsewhere) ;  
 I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God,  
 than dwell in the tents of wickedness.
- 11 For Jehovah God is a sun and a shield,  
 Jehovah giveth grace and glory,  
 No good thing doth he withhold from them that walk  
 uprightly.
- 12 O Jehovah (of) hosts,  
 Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee !

9. SEE (absol. as in lxxx. 14 [15]).

OUR SHIELD, and again ver. 11 ; so God is called in iii. 3, where see note, xxviii. 7, etc.

LOOK UPON THE FACE OF THINE ANOINTED. This following immediately upon the words in ver. 8, "hear *my* prayer," favors the supposition that the Psalm was written by the king. So also does the use of the pronoun of the first person in ver. 10, introduced by the conjunction "for." Another might, however, offer the prayer on his behalf. See xx., xxi., lxi. 6 [7].

10. BE A DOOR-KEEPER ; lit. "lie on the threshold" (LXX παραρριπτεῖσθαι), or "busy oneself on the threshold" ; the lowest place, the meanest office in God's house is a happiness and an honor beyond all that the world has to offer. Delitzsch sees in the comparison with "tents" rather than "palaces," an intimation that the ark of God was still in a tent, and the temple not yet built.

11. JEHOVAH GOD (Elohim). This form of the divine name is characteristic, as is well known, of the section (Gen. ii. 14-iii. 24, where it first occurs. We find it again in Ex. ix. 30, and in David's prayer, 2 Sam. vii. 22. This is the only passage in the Psalter where it is employed. In lxxviii. 18 [16] it is the shorter

form "Jah Elohim." In lxxxv. 8 the order of the two names is different, "The Elohim Jehovah." In lxxi. 5, and in a large number of passages in the prophets where the E.V. has "the Lord God," this represents the Hebrew "Adonai Jehovah."

A SUN. This is the only place where God is directly so called. In other passages we have the more general name of "Light," as in xxvii. 1. Comp., however, Isa. lx. 19, 20 ; Rev. xxi. 23 ; and the expression, "Sun of Righteousness," as applied to the Messiah, Mal. iii. 20 [iv. 2 in E.V.]. Instead of "Jehovah God is a sun and a shield," the LXX and Theod. have, "The Lord God loveth mercy and truth."

UPRIGHTLY ; lit. "in perfectness" ; see xv. 2. To such persons God will show his salvation, all that is comprised in those two great words, "grace" and "glory," whether they can enter his earthly house or not. And the Psalmist rises at last to the joyful conviction, not only that they are blessed who dwell in God's house (ver. 4), or they who swell the festal throng on their way to that house (ver. 5), but they who, whether they worship in it or not, are one with him by faith : "Blessed is the man that *trusteth* in thee."

<sup>a</sup> See on the title of Psalm viii., and General Introduction, Vol. i. p. 71.

<sup>b</sup> See on title of xlii., and General Introduction, Vol. i. p. 79.

<sup>c</sup> אֲפֻרָה, *where*, as in xcv. 9; Num. xx. 13. The two names of birds here mentioned are found together also in Prov. xxvi. 2. The Chald. render "dove" and "turtle," but the rendering as above is preferable. See the words in Gesen. *Thesaur.*

<sup>d</sup> אֶת־. The אֶת may be, as I have taken it, the sign of the accus. (in appos.), or it may be a preposition, *by, near*. In this last sense it is taken by the Syr., and so Ewald.

<sup>e</sup> בְּסֶלֶה. As the word stands, it can only mean *highways, roads*, and here, the roads leading to the sanctuary. So the LXX, seeing a reference to the caravans going up to the yearly feast, render, ἀναβάσεις ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ. The Syro-hex. supplies the pronoun: "Thy path is in their heart." The Chald., we have seen, gives the word a figurative meaning, *confidence*. This meaning Hupfeld thinks is required by the parallelism, and he proposes to read בְּסֶלֶה־וּ, the plur. of the noun בְּסֶלֶה, which occurs in this sense, Job iv. 6. The plur. of abstract nouns is frequently used for the sing., and this plur. is found in a proper name, Josh. xix. 22.

<sup>f</sup> מוֹרֵה. The same word occurs in Joel ii. 23, of the *autumnal rain* (elsewhere יוֹרֵה); here, perhaps, any rain as softening and fertilizing. The older versions generally took the word in the sense of *teacher, lawgiver*. LXX. ὁ νομοθετῶν; Symm., ὁ ὑποδείκτης; E'. ὁ φωτίζων; S'. ὁ διδάσκων; Jerome, *doctor*; but Aquila has πρῶμος. Herder understands by it *the leader* of the caravan.

וּבְרֵכָה. Hiph. with double accus. (the nearer object being here omitted) as in lxxv. 13. Hengst. makes it Kal (as in Lev. xiii. 45; Jer. xliiii. 12), and insists that בְּרֵכָה means *teacher*, as in 2 Kings xvii. 28, Isa. xxx. 20; Prov. v. 13, and so renders: "the teacher (i.e. David himself) shall even be covered with blessings." In this he follows Jerome: *Benedictionibus amicitur doctor*; but the whole beauty of the image is thus destroyed.

בְּרֵכֹתָי. Some with the change of a single vowel read בְּרֵכֹתָי, *pools*. Hence the E. V.: "The rain also filleth the pools." But the LXX follow our present pointing; καὶ γὰρ εὐλογίας δώσει ὁ νομοθετῶν, and so does Symm. The accusative is placed first in the sentence as emphatic, whilst the part. אַי, *yea, also*, shows that the rain produces its effect *also* in blessing, as well as the springs in the valley: "Yea with blessings doth the rain cover it."

The Chaldee paraphrase of this verse is singular enough to be worth quoting: "The sinners who pass through the depths of Gehenna, greatly weeping, make it a fountain; but [God] shall cover with blessings those that return to the doctrine of his law."

## PSALM LXXXV.

THERE seems every reason to conclude that this Psalm was written after the return of the exiles from the Babylonish captivity. It opens with an acknowledgment of God's goodness and mercy in the national restoration, in terms which could hardly apply to any other event. But it passes immediately to earnest entreaty for deliverance from the pressure of existing evils, in language which almost contradicts the previous acknowledgment. First we hear the grateful confession, "Thou hast turned the captivity of Jacob"; and then we have the prayer, "Turn us, O God of our salvation." If the third verse contains the joyful announcement, "Thou hast withdrawn all thy wrath," etc., the fifth pleads as if no such assurance had been given: "Wilt thou forever be angry with us? Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?"

The most probable way of explaining this conflict of opposing feelings is by referring the Psalm to the circumstances mentioned by Nehemiah (i. 3). The exiles on their return, he learnt, were "in great affliction and reproach." And when he obtained leave to go to Jerusalem himself, it was only in the midst of perpetual opposition and discouragement (chap. iv.) that he was able to carry on his work of restoration. The bright prospect which was opening before them had been quickly dashed. They had returned, indeed, but it was to a desolate land and a forsaken city, whose walls were cast down, and her gates burned with fire; whilst jealous and hostile tribes were ever on the watch to assail and vex them. Hence it is that the entreaty for mercy follows so hard upon the acknowledgment that mercy has been vouchsafed. The hundred and twenty-sixth Psalm is conceived in a somewhat similar strain. In the latter portion of this Psalm (from ver. 8) the present misery is forgotten in the dawning of a glorious future. The prayer has been uttered; the storm of the soul is hushed; in quietness and resignation the Psalmist sets himself to hear what God will say, and the divine answer is given, not in form, but in substance, in verses 9-12. It is a glowing prophecy of Messianic times, most naturally connecting itself with the hopes which the return from Babylon had kindled afresh, and well fitted to enable those who heard it to triumph over the gloom and despondency of the present. Delitzsch traces in the Psalm the influence of the later portion of Isaiah's prophecy (xl.-xlvi.). It is one of the many Psalms which were inspired, he says, by the unsealing of that great book, and which in

their flowing, graceful, transparent style, their figurative allegorizing language, and their great prophetic thoughts of consolation, reminds us of the common source whence they draw.

Mr. Plumptre, who holds that all the Korahite Psalms belong to the time of Hezekiah, thinks that this Psalm refers to the Assyrian invasion. He reminds us that the language of Isaiah in reference to that invasion is, that "the cities shall be wasted without inhabitant," that "the Lord shall remove men far away" (Isa. vi. 11, 12); that he speaks not only of "the remnant of Israel," "the remnant of Jacob" as returning (x. 29), but in terms hardly less strong, at the very crisis of Sennacherib's invasion, of "the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah" (xxxvii. 32). After the overthrow of Sennacherib, and when the alliance of Hezekiah was courted by Babylon, there would be ample opportunities for many of those who had been carried into exile to return to the land of their fathers. "The vision of mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, is the same with the Psalmist as with the prophet." It may be added, he remarks, that the prayer, "Turn us, O God of our salvation" (ver. 4), is identical with the ever-recurring burden of Psalm lxxx., which clearly refers to the captivity of "Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh," i.e. of "Jacob" rather than of "Judah." (*Biblical Studies*, pp. 166, 167.)

It is not surprising, considering the bright picture which the latter verses contain, that this Psalm should have been appointed by the church for the services of Christmas-day.

According to Hupfeld, the Psalm falls into two nearly equal portions :

(1) The prayer of the people or for the people (ver. 1-7); (2) the divine promise (ver. 8-13). Ewald and Olshausen suppose that the first was intended to be sung by the congregation, the second by the priest, who after prayer seeks and receives the divine answer.

[For the Precentor. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.\*]

- 1 THOU hast become favorable, O Jehovah, unto thy land,  
 Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.  
 2 Thou hast taken away the iniquity of thy people,  
 Thou hast covered all their sin. [Selah.]

1-3. The acknowledgment of God's goodness to his people in their restoration from the Babylonish captivity. It is not necessary to translate the tenses as aorists, "Thou *didst* become" (as Ewald, and others); for though the res-

toration is a past event, we need not regard it as long past.

1. THOU HAST BROUGHT BACK, etc. See on xiv. 7, and on lxxviii. 18. Others, "Thou hast returned to."

2. TAKEN AWAY . . . COVERED. Both

- 3 Thou hast withdrawn all thy wrath,  
 Thou hast turned <sup>b</sup> from the fierceness of thine anger.
- 4 Turn us, O God of our salvation,  
 And cause thine indignation towards us to cease.
- 5 Wilt thou forever be angry with us?  
 Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?
- 6 Wilt not THOU quicken us again,  
 That thy people may rejoice in thee?
- 7 Show us thy loving-kindness, O Jehovah,  
 And grant us thy salvation.
- 8 I will hear what God Jehovah will speak,  
 For he will speak peace to his people and his beloved,  
 Only let them not turn again to folly.
- 9 Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him,  
 That glory may dwell in our land.

words are used in xxxii. 1, where see notes.

5. FOREVER. The emphatic word placed first, because there seemed to be no end to their calamities. Even the return to their own land had brought them apparently no rest, no consolation, no hope for the future.

6. THOU. The pronoun is emphatic; for God alone can thus revive the sad hearts and broken hopes of his people.

QUICKEN, etc. Cf lxxi. 20; lxxx. 19.

IN THEE. Not in any earthly blessings, even when they are vouchsafed; not in corn, or wine, or oil; not in the fatness of the earth or the dew of heaven; but in him who giveth all these things; who giveth more than all these — himself.

8. I WILL HEAR, or, "let me hear." Having uttered his sorrows and his prayer for better days, he would now place himself in the attitude of calm and quiet expectation. Like Habakkuk, he will betake him to his watch-tower, and wait to hear what the Lord will speak. "He might have said," Calvin observes, "what the Lord will *do*; but since God's benefits to his church flow from his promises, the Psalmist mentions his mouth rather than his hand (os potius

quam manum posuit), and at the same time teaches us that patience depends on the calm, listening ear of faith."

GOD JEHOVAH; lit. "the God Jehovah," the two nouns being in apposition.

PEACE; that is God's great word, which in fact sums up and comprises all else, peace with him declared to all who are HIS BELOVED, the objects of his loving-kindness (see on xvi. 10) having the privileges of their covenant relation to him.

HIS BELOVED, or, "his godly ones." See on iv. 3 [4] note <sup>b</sup>, and lxxxvi. 2.

ONLY LET THEM NOT TURN, or, "that they turn not."

FOLLY; so the infatuation of sin is spoken of. Comp. xiv. 1; xlix. 13 [14]. Or, perhaps, idolatry may be meant, and especially if the reference is to the Babylonish captivity.

9. GLORY, i.e. the manifested presence of God tabernacling visibly amongst them, as of old. This hope was destined to have its fulfilment, but in a better and a higher sense, when he who was the brightness of the Father's glory tabernacled in human flesh, and men "beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father."

- 10 Loving-kindness and truth have met together ;  
 Righteousness and peace have kissed (each other).  
 11 Truth springeth out of the earth,  
 And righteousness hath looked down out of heaven.  
 12 Jehovah will give that which is good,  
 And our land will give her increase.  
 13 Righteousness shall go before him,  
 And shall follow his footsteps in the way.<sup>c</sup>

10. The four virtues here mentioned are, as Calvin remarks, the four cardinal virtues of Christ's kingdom. Where these reign amongst men, there must be true and perfect felicity. He adds, however, "If any one prefers to understand, by the loving-kindness and truth here mentioned, attributes of God, I have no objection to such a view." But the truth is, the last are the basis and source of the first.

11. The earth brings forth truth, as she brings forth the natural fruits, and righteousness looks down from heaven like some approving angel on the renewed and purified earth. Or, as Calvin more generally explains: 4. *Tantumdem valet ac si dixisset utramque fore sursum et deorsum ubique diffusam, ut coelum et terram impleant. Neque enim seorsum illis aliquid diversum tribuere voluit.* The figures are designed in both verses to show that these virtues are not regarded merely in their separate aspect, but as meeting, answering one another, conspiring in perfect harmony to one

glorious end. For this mutual blessing from the heaven above and the earth beneath, comp. Isa. xlv. 8; Hos. ii. 23-25.

12. The Psalmist passes from spiritual to temporal blessings. "If any one objects to this mixing of the two, the answer is easy; there is nothing to shock us, if God, whilst he blesses the faithful with spiritual blessings, should vouchsafe to them also some taste of his fatherly love in the good things of this world; for St. Paul assures us that godliness hath the promise of this life, as well as of that which is to come." — *Calvin*. He adds an important remark: "This verse, moreover, shows us that the power of fruitfulness was not once for all bestowed on the earth (as men of no religion choose to imagine, that God at the creation gave to the several parts of his universe their several office, and then left them alone to pursue their own course), but that every year it is fertilized by the secret virtue of God, according as he sees fit to testify to us his goodness.

<sup>a</sup> See above on the title of Psalm xlii., and General Introduction, Vol. i. pp. 77, 78.

<sup>b</sup> הַשִּׁירָה. The Hiph., which elsewhere is used with the accus. (Ixxviii. 38; cvi. 23; Job ix. 13, etc.) is here used like the intrans. Kal, with כִּי, see Ex. xxxii. 12; Jonah iii. 9. There is apparently here a confusion of the two constructions, the phrase being borrowed from the passage in Exodus, with substitution of Hiph. for Kal. See a similar case in Ezek. xviii. 30, 32.

<sup>c</sup> The constr. is literally "and maketh his footsteps for a way," i.e. in which to follow him. So apparently the LXX, καὶ θήσει εἰς ὁδὸν τὰ διαβήματα αὐτοῦ, and Symm., κ. θ. εἰς ὁδ. τοῦς πόδας αὐτοῦ. Others, as Delitzsch, explain: "and (righteousness) setteth (her feet) in the way of

his steps," a possible rendering, perhaps, but against the accents. Strictly speaking, יָשָׁם is the optat. form, and therefore the whole verse ought rather to be rendered, "*Let* righteousness go before him," etc.

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PSALM LXXXVI.

THIS Psalm, which is inserted amongst a series of Korahite Psalms, is the only one in the third book ascribed to David. That it was written by him we can hardly suppose. Many of the expressions are, no doubt, such as we meet with in his Psalms, but there are also many which are borrowed from other passages of Scripture. Indeed, the numerous adaptations of phrases employed by other writers may reasonably be taken as evidence of a much later date. Further, the style is, as Delitzsch remarks, liturgical rather than poetical, and is wholly wanting in that force, animation, and originality for which David's poems are remarkable. The Psalm is stamped by the use of the divine name, Adonai, which occurs in it seven times.

There is no regular strophical division, nor is it always easy to trace clearly the connection between the several parts of the Psalm. Hupfeld denies that there is any. Tholuck has traced it far more carefully than any commentator I am acquainted with, and in the notes I have given the substance of his remarks.

The introductory portion (ver. 1-5) consists of a number of earnest petitions, based on several distinct pleas — the suffering (ver. 1), the faith (ver. 2), the continued and earnest supplication (ver. 3, 4) of the Psalmist, and the mercy and goodness of God (ver. 5).

In the next part (ver. 6-13) he resumes his petition; expresses his confidence that God will hear him, comforting himself with the majesty and greatness of God, who is able to do all that he asks (ver. 8-10); prays for guidance and a united heart, mixing with his prayer resolves as to his conduct, and thanksgiving for deliverance (ver. 11-13).

Finally (ver. 14-17), he speaks of the peril by which he has been threatened, turns to God with affectionate confidence as to a gracious God, and casts himself fearlessly upon his mercy.

[A Psalm of David.]

1 Bow down thine ear, O Jehovah, answer me!

For I am afflicted and poor.

1. BOW DOWN, etc. Comp. lv. 1, 2. the same way as a reason, xl. 17 [18].  
**AFFLICTED AND POOR**; alleged in This is not the highest ground which

- 2 Keep my soul, for I am one whom thou lovest ;  
 O THOU my God, save thy servant,  
 Who putteth his trust in thee.
- 3 Be gracious unto me, O Lord,  
 For upon thee do I call all the day long.
- 4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant,  
 For unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
- 5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive,  
 And plenteous in loving-kindness to all them that call  
 upon thee.
- 6 Give ear, O Jehovah, unto my prayer,  
 And hearken unto the voice of my supplications.
- 7 In the day of my distress, I will call upon thee,  
 For thou wilt answer me.

can be taken in pressing for an answer to our prayer, but it is a ground which God suffers us to take, both because he declares himself to be the helper of the needy (comp. xii. 5 [6]), and because it is the sense of their need and misery which drives men to God. Comp. for the same epithets xxxv. 10; xxxvii. 14; lxxiv. 21.

2. ONE WHOM THOU LOVEST. The first plea was his need; now he pleads his own covenant relation to God; for this is implied in the adjective here used, *châsîd*. Comp. iv. 3 [4] note b, and the note on xvi. 10. It is unfortunate that the E. V. renders: "for I am *holy*." (The margin gives the true rendering.) The appeal is not to anything in himself, but to God's goodness. This is clear from ver. 5. At the same time he does not hesitate to say what the attitude of his heart is towards God, and to urge his simple, absolute confidence in God, as well as his unceasing, earnest prayer, as reasons why he should be heard. This is the language of honest, straightforward simplicity, not of self-righteousness.

4. I LIFT UP MY SOUL, as in xxv. 1. Comp. cxxx. 6.

5. READY TO FORGIVE. The adjective occurs nowhere else. The general sentiment of the verse (repeated in 15) is borrowed from such passages as Ex. xx. 6; xxxiv. 6, 9; Num. xiv. 18, 19.

It is on the broad ground of God's mercy, and of that mercy as freely bestowed on *all* who seek it, that he rests. He applies the general truth (ver. 5) to his own case (ver. 6). In ver. 7 he pleads again the need, under the pressure of which he cries to God; it is no unmanly, petulant, peevish complaint that he utters. The calamity is real, and there is but one who has power to deliver him.

6. Comp. v. 2; xxviii. 2; cxxx. 2. The peculiar form of the word SUPPLICATIONS occurs only here.

7. Comp. xx. 1; l. 16; lxxvii. 2 [3]; xvii. 6.

8-10. There are two kinds of doubt which are wont in the hour of temptation to assail the soul; the doubt as to God's *willingness*, and the doubt as to God's *power* to succor. The first of these the Psalmist has already put from him; he now shows that he has overcome the second. God is able as well as willing to help, and every being on the face of the earth who receives help, receives it from the hand of him who is the only God, and who shall one day be recognized (so speaks the strong prophetic hope within him, ver. 9) as the only God. This hope rests on the fact that God has created all men ("all nations whom *thou hast made*"), and nothing can be imagined more self-



- 8 There is none like unto thee among the gods, O Lord,  
Neither (are there any works) like unto thy works.
- 9 All nations whom thou hast made  
Shall come and bow themselves down before thee, O Lord,  
And shall give glory to thy name.
- 10 For thou art great, and dost wondrous things,  
Thou art God alone.
- 11 Teach me, O Jehovah, thy way,  
I will walk in thy truth :  
Unite my heart to fear thy name ;
- 12 I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord my God, with my  
whole heart,  
And I will glorify thy name forever.

contradictory than that the spirit which has come from God should remain forever unmindful of its source. In ver. 8 it might seem as if God were merely compared with the gods of the nations. In ver. 10 they are plainly said to be "no gods," though they "be called gods." There is but one God : "Thou art God alone."

8. The first half of the verse is borrowed from Ex. xv. 11. Comp. lxxxix. 8 [9] ; lxxi. 19, etc. With the second half comp. Deut. iii. 24.

9. Nearly as in xxii. 27 [28]. Comp. lxxvi. 4 ; Isa. lxxi. 18, 23 ; Zech. xiv. 9, 16.

10. Comp. lxxvii. 13, 14 [14, 15] with Ex. xv. 11. See also lxxxiii. 18 [19] ; 2 Kings xix. 15, 19 ; Neh. ix. 6.

11. The first clause is word for word as in xxvii. 11. Comp. xxv. 4.

WALK IN THY TRUTH, xxvi. 3. Although in a great strait, and in fear of his enemies, the Psalmist, like all who pray aright, offers first the petition, "Hallowed be thy name," before he asks, "Give us this day our daily bread," and "deliver us from evil." He confesses that his spiritual eye is not yet perfectly enlightened, his heart not yet perfect with God. And while he rejects every other way, every other rule of life, but the eternal rule of God's truth, he prays first that he may more clearly discern that way, and then that all the various

desires, interests, passions, that agitate the human heart, may have no hold upon him, compared with the one thing needful — "to fear God's name."

UNITE MY HEART — suffer it no longer to scatter itself upon a multiplicity of objects, to be drawn hither and thither by a thousand different aims, but turn all its powers, all its affections in one direction, collect them in one focus, make them all one in thee. The prayer derives a special force from the resolve immediately preceding : "I will walk in thy truth." The same integrity of heart which made the resolve could alone utter the prayer. The nearest Old Testament parallels are : the "one heart" (Jer. xxxii. 39) ; "And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever" ; and the "whole heart" of love to God (Deut. vi. 5 ; x. 12). Our Lord teaches us how needful the prayer of this verse is. Comp. what he says of "the single eye," the impossibility of serving two masters, the folly and the wearisomeness of those anxious cares by which men suffer themselves to be hampered and distracted, and, in contrast with all this, the exhortation, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," etc. (Matt. vi. 19-34.) See also the history of Martha and Mary, Luke x. 38-42.

12. Why does he offer this prayer for a "united heart" ? That he may then

- 13 For thy loving-kindness is great toward me,  
 And thou hast delivered my soul from the unseen world  
 beneath,
- 14 O God, (the) proud are risen up against me,  
 And an assembly of violent men have sought after my soul,  
 And have not set thee before them.
- 15 But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion and gracious,  
 Long-suffering and plenteous in loving-kindness and truth.
- 16 O turn unto me, and be gracious to me,  
 Give thy strength unto thy servant,  
 And save the son of thy handmaid.
- 17 Show me a sign for good,  
 That they who hate me may see and be ashamed,  
 Because thou, Jehovah, hast holpen me, and com-  
 forted me.

with his "whole heart" give thanks to God for all his infinite loving-kindness. God's mercies are a motive to greater thankfulness, and to a more whole-hearted, undivided service. Briefly, the connection in ver. 11, 12, is this: "Teach me thy way, (and then) I will walk, etc. Unite my heart, (and then) I will give thanks."

13. Comp. lvii. 8; lvi. 13; cxvi. 8.

THE UNSEEN WORLD BENEATH, i.e. under the earth. Comp. Ex. xx. 4 with Phil. ii. 10. For similar phrases see Ezek. xxxi. 14, 16, 18; Ps. lxiii. 9 [10]; cxxxix. 15; Ezek. xxvi. 20; xxxii. 18, 24; Isa. xlv. 23, and Ps. lxxxviii. 6 [7]; Lam. iii. 55.

14. Now, at last, he comes to the peril, and now (ver. 15) his appeal lies, even more fully than in ver. 5, to God's glorious name by which he made himself known to Moses (Ex. xxxiv. 6).

This verse explains what the peril was, and what he means by the deliverance from Hades. The words are borrowed, with a slight variation ("proud men" instead of "strangers"), from liv. 3 [5].

VIOLENT, or rather "overbearing."

Αἱ. κατισχυρομένων.

16. SON OF THY HANDMAID, as in cxvi. 16.

17. A SIGN, i.e. not a *miraculous* sign, but an *evident* proof of thy good-will towards me, such as shall force even my haters to acknowledge that thou art on my side. "Is it not the fact," says Tholuck, "that the more we recognize in every daily occurrence God's secret inspiration guiding and controlling us, the more will all which to others wears a common every-day aspect, to us prove a sign and a wondrous work?"

FOR GOOD. Comp. Neh. v. 19; xiii. 31, and often in Jeremiah.

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## PSALM LXXXVII.

THIS Psalm present us with one of those startling contrasts to the general tone of Jewish sentiment and belief which meet us in various passages of the prophetic writings. The Jewish nation was, even

by its original constitution, and still more by the provisions of the law of Moses, an isolated nation. Shut in by the mountains, the sea, the desert, it was to a great extent cut off from the world. And the narrowness of its spirit corresponded to the narrowness of its geographical position. It was pervaded by a jealous exclusiveness which was remarkable even among the nations of antiquity, and which derived its force and sanction from the precepts of its religion. The Jews were constantly reminded that they were a separate people, distinct, and intended to be distinct, from all others. Their land was given them as a special gift from Heaven. Both they and their country belonged to God, in a sense in which no other people and country belonged to him. It was a holy ark which no profane hands might dare to touch; or if they did, they must perish in the attempt. As a natural consequence of this belief, the Jewish people, for the most part, regarded their neighbors as enemies. Judaism held out no hope of a brotherhood of nations. The Jewish church was not a missionary church. So far as the Jews looked upon the world around them, it was with feelings of antipathy, and with the hope, which was never quenched in the midst of the most terrible reverses, that finally they, as the chosen race, should subdue their enemies far and wide, and that, by the grace of Heaven, one sitting on David's throne should be king of the world. Psalmists and prophets shared the feeling. They exulted in the thought that the king who ruled Zion would dash the nations in pieces like a potter's vessel, fill the places with dead bodies, and lead rival kings in the long array of his triumph.

But mingling with these anticipations, and correcting them, there were others of a nobler kind. The prophets speak not only of victories, but of voluntary submission. The vision which arises before them is not only of a forced unity of nations, such as that which was achieved by the iron hand of Roman dominion, but of a unity of faith and love. They see the mountain of the Lord's house exalted above the hills, and all nations flowing to it with one impulse, not led thither in the conqueror's train, but attracted by its glory, longing to taste its peace (Isa. ii. 2-4). They see Gentiles coming to the light of Jerusalem, and kings to the brightness of her rising. They foretell a time when all wars and all national antipathies shall cease, when "the root of Jesse" shall be as a standard round which all nations shall flock, and the temple of Jehovah the centre of a common faith and worship.

It is this last hope which expresses itself in this Psalm, but which expresses itself in a form that has no exact parallel in other passages. Foreign nations are here described, not as captives or tributaries, not

even as doing voluntary homage to the greatness and glory of Zion, but as actually incorporated and enrolled, by a new birth, among her sons. Even the worst enemies of their race, the tyrants and oppressors of the Jews, Egypt and Babylon, are threatened with no curse, no shout of joy is raised in the prospect of their overthrow, but the privileges of citizenship are extended to them, and they are welcomed as brothers. Nay more, God himself receives each one as a child newly-born into his family, acknowledges each as his son, and enrols him with his own hand in the sacred register of his children.

It is this mode of anticipating a future union and brotherhood of all the nations of the earth, not by conquest, but by incorporation into one state, and by a birthright so acquired, which is so remarkable. In some of the prophets, more especially in Isaiah, we observe the same liberal, conciliatory, comprehensive language toward foreign states, as Tyre and Ethiopia, and still more strikingly toward Egypt and Assyria (chap. xix. 22-25). But the Psalm stands alone amongst the writings of the Old Testament, in representing this union of nations as a new birth into the city of God.

This idea gives it a singular interest, and clearly stamps it as Messianic. It is the Old Testament expression of the truth which St. Paul declares, when he tells us that in Jesus Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free": or when he writes to the Gentile church at Ephesus, "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

It is the first announcement of that great amity of nations, or rather of that universal common citizenship of which heathen philosophers dreamed, which was "in the mind of Socrates when he called himself a citizen of the world," which had "become a commonplace of the Stoic philosophy," which Judaism tried finally to realize by the admission of proselytes, through baptism, into the Jewish community; which Rome accomplished, so far as the external semblance went, first by subduing the nations, and then by admitting them to the rights of Roman citizenship. But the true fulfilment of this hope is to be found only in that kingdom which Christ has set up. He has gathered into his commonwealth all the kingdoms of the earth. He has made men one, members of the same family, by teaching them to feel that they are all children of the same Father. He has made it evident that the hope of the Jewish singer is no false hope; that there is a Father in heaven who cares for all, whatever name they bear. Thus the Psalm has received a better and higher fulfilment than that which lies on the

surface of its words. It was fulfilled in Christ. When he came, "the city of God, of which the Stoics doubtfully and feebly spoke, was set up before the eyes of men. It was no insubstantial city, such as we fancy in the clouds; no invisible pattern, such as Plato thought might be laid up in heaven; but a visible corporation, whose members met together to eat bread and drink wine, and into which they were initiated by bodily immersion in water. Here the Gentile met the Jew, whom he had been accustomed to regard as an enemy of the human race; the Roman met the lying Greek sophist, the Syrian slave the gladiator born beside the Danube. In brotherhood they met, the natural birth and kindred of each forgotten, the baptism alone remembered in which they had been born again to God and to each other."<sup>1</sup>

There are two principal epochs to which the Psalm may be referred:

I. Its tone, as has already been observed, falls in with that of some of the prophecies of Isaiah. Hence it has been referred, not without reason, to the reign of Hezekiah. Some have supposed that it was a song of triumph, written, like Psalms xlvi.-xlviii., after the defeat of Sennacherib; others, more probably, that it was a hymn composed for some solemn reception of proselytes into the church, "the Psalmist and his brother Levites exulting in this admission of converts as they would do in a national victory." Mr. Plumptre gives several reasons in favor of this view. He refers (1) to the similarity between the opening verse and the language of Psalm xlviii. 2 (written, as we have seen, in Hezekiah's reign), compared with Isa. xxv. 6, 7 and ii. 3. (2) He thinks the use of the name "Rahab" as designating Egypt is almost sufficient to fix the date of the Psalm. For the use of the word in this sense is characteristic of Isaiah, as in li. 9: "Art thou not in it that hast *cut Rahab* (i.e. smitten Egypt) and wounded the dragon?" And again, Isa. xxx. 7, "The Egyptian shall help in vain. . . They are *Rahab* (proud, mighty, ferocious as the monstrous forms of their own river). and yet they sit still." (3) The hope thus expressed, that Egypt and Babylon shall be enrolled among the worshippers of Jehovah is a hope identical with that in Isaiah xix.: "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land," etc. And Babylon is substituted for Assyria in the Psalm, because of the greater intercourse with the former kingdom, and the seeming overthrow of the latter towards the close of Hezekiah's reign. Babylonish ambassadors came to Hezekiah, and Isaiah's prophecies in chaps. xiii., xiv., xxxix., are evidence that

<sup>1</sup> *Ecce Homo*, p. 136.

Babylon was prominent at this time. (4) The mention of Philistia, Tyre, and Ethiopia also synchronizes with Hezekiah's reign. As Isaiah had foretold (xiv. 29), he subdued the Philistines (2 Kings xviii. 3). This was a token that the Lord "had founded Zion." His reign witnessed a renewal of the intercourse with Tyre, and this was accompanied by a partial conversion, and by gifts and tribute in token of it. Ethiopia, too, had come at the same time into fresh prominence in connection with Judah (see Isaiah xxxvii. 9, and compare Zeph. iii. 10). (5) Hezekiah was conspicuous for his catholic spirit. He not only seeks to effect the reunion of Israel and Judah (2 Chron. xxx.), but also brings with them into fellowship "the *strangers* that came out of the land of Israel," as distinct from "the congregation" (ver. 26). In 2 Chron. xxxii. 23, other nations are said to have brought gifts for the temple. (6) Traces of this admission of proselytes meet us in the later history of the kingdom of Judah. Isaiah pronounced a solemn blessing on "the *sons of the strangers* that *join themselves to the Lord*," who are to be made joyful in the "holy mountain" (Isa. lvi. 7). Comp. also Isa. lv. 1 and Jer. xxxviii. 7. — *Biblical Studies*, pp. 167-71.

II. Calvin and others refer the Psalm to a time subsequent to the return from the captivity. It was designed, as Calvin thinks, to console the exiles, whose hearts must have died down within them as they thought of the present enfeebled, impoverished, defenceless state of the city; who sighed as they looked at their temple, so far inferior in beauty and stateliness, as well as in the imposing splendor of its worship, to the house which their fathers remembered; and who, dispirited and girt by enemies, needed every encouragement for the future. A study of the earlier chapters of Zechariah, and the later chapters of Isaiah, in connection with this Psalm, may favor this view. But our conclusion must depend chiefly on the date which we are disposed to assign to the later chapters of Isaiah (xl.-lxvi.).

The outline of the Psalm is as follows:

It opens with an outburst of intensely national feeling, celebrating the glory of Zion as the city of God (ver. 1-3).

But the patriotic sentiment is too large and too grand to suffer any narrow jealousy to interfere with it, and therefore all nations are said to be gathered to her as children to one mother. It lends more force and dignity to this idea, that God himself appears as the speaker, declaring of one and another, foreign and hostile nations, that their true birth-place is *there*, in Zion. Finally, one brief, obscure verse tells of the joy and happiness of the holy city, welcoming new children on all sides, and making them partakers in her joy (ver. 7).

[Of the Sons of Korah.<sup>a</sup> A Psalm. A Song.]

- 1 His foundation<sup>b</sup> upon the holy mountains doth Jehovah love,  
 2 (He loveth) the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings  
 of Jacob.  
 3 Glorious things<sup>c</sup> are spoken of thee,  
 O city of God! [Selah.]  
 4 "I will mention Rahab and Babylon among them<sup>d</sup> that  
 know me;  
 Lo Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia:  
 'This one is born there.'"

1-3. The same deep affection and admiration for the holy city are expressed here which are expressed in Ps. xlvi. But there is nothing in the language employed to lead us to suppose that the city had just escaped from the horrors of war. The "gates" are mentioned, not as a part of the fortifications, but as one of the most prominent features of the city — the place of concourse, of judgment, etc. Every word is emphatic. His FOUNDATION, the city and the temple which *he*, Jehovah himself, hath built; UPON THE HOLY MOUNTAINS, consecrated by his immediate and manifested presence; which Jehovah LOVETH with a special and distinguishing affection, as compared not only with other nations, but even with other parts of the holy land itself.

UPON THE HOLY MOUNTAINS. The plural is used with reference to the mountainous character of the whole country. "Jerusalem was on the ridge, the broadest and most strongly marked ridge, of the backbone of the complicated hills which extend through the whole country from the Desert to the plain of Esdraclon." — Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, chap. iii. p. 176. He compares its position in this respect to that of Rome, that "each was situated on its own cluster of steep hills" (p. 175).

3. GLORIOUS THINGS; not earthly splendor or victories, but such a gathering of nations into her bosom as follows in the next verse.

4. I WILL MENTION. The words are the words of God. We have the same abrupt introduction of the divine speaker in other Psalms. Comp. xiv. 4; perhaps xxxii. 8; lxxv. 2 [3]; lxxxi. 6 [7]; and (according to some expositors) lxxxii. 2.

RAHAB. Originally the word denotes pride, ferocity. So in Job ix. 13, "the helpers of pride (*Rahab*) do stoop under him." Possibly even there, and certainly in Job xxvi. 12, it is the name of some fierce monster of the deep, probably the crocodile: "He divideth the sea by his power, and by his understanding he smiteth the proud monster (*Rahab*)," where the LXX have κήτος. In Ps. lxxxix. 10, there can be no doubt of the reference to Egypt: "Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces," the crocodile of the Nile being there taken as the symbol of that kingdom. So too in Isa. li. 9, "Art thou not it that hast cut *Rahab* (i.e. smitten Egypt) and wounded the dragon?" and xxx. 9, "The Egyptians shall help in vain, etc. . . they are Rahab (proud, mighty, ferocious as the forms of their own river), and yet they sit still" (i.e. they do nothing). The name, then, is applied to Egypt as a vast and formidable power, of which the crocodile might naturally be regarded as the symbol. Ewald supposes it to be connected with the Egyptian name Rif, and refers to Burckhardt's *Nubia*, p. 457.

AMONG THEM THAT KNOW ME; lit. "as belonging to (the number of) them that know me." See Critical Note. The

5 And to Zion it is said :

“One after another<sup>e</sup> is born in her,  
And the Most High himself shall stablish her.”

6 Jehovah shall reckon when he writeth the peoples,

“This one is born there.” [Selah.]

verb *to know* is here used in that deeper and wider sense in which it frequently occurs in Scripture, both of God and of man. Comp. i. 6 (where see note), and xxxvi. 10 [11]; John x. 14, 15. It is the knowledge of friendship, the knowledge which springs of intimate acquaintance, the knowledge of parent and child.

PHILISTIA, TYRE, ETHIOPIA. Of all these nations it shall be said, that one and another of them (“this one,” as if pointing to them) has become a worshipper of Jehovah, and an adopted citizen of Zion, “born *there*.” With regard to these nations, see the prophecies of Isaiah quoted in the introduction, and comp. lxviii. 31. THERE, so Zion is designated even before she is named. Others refer THERE to the countries mentioned before, and explain: “Only a few are to be found there; great numbers, many a one (see next ver.) in Zion.”

5. AND TO ZION, or “of Zion,” it is said, ONE AFTER ANOTHER; lit. “man and man,” i.e. vast multitudes are born in her, as the nations one after another become incorporated as her children. The LXX here render, not “it shall be said to Zion,” but “Mother Zion shall say” (Μήτηρ Σιών ἐρεῖ), and Zion is spoken of as a mother (Isa. lxvi. 7; liv. 1-3; lx. 4, 5; but the sense here is different (other copies of the LXX read μὴ τῆ Σιών; and so the Syro-hex. and the Psalt. Gall. *Numquid Sion*). It is remarkable that the figure of a new birth is used to express the admission of the different nations to the rights of citizenship in Zion. So Cicero speaks of his restoration to his privileges and honors on his return from banishment as “a regeneration”: “Amicorum literae nos ad triumphum vocant, rem a nobis, ut ego arbitror, propter hanc παλιγγενεσίαν nostram, non negligendam” (*Ep. ad. Att.* vi. 6, § 4). “Clearly Zion stands

in opposition to the countries mentioned before, the one city to the whole of the different countries, the one city of God to all the kingdoms of the world.”—*Delitzsch*. These kingdoms one after another lose their population, cease to be kingdoms, whilst their inhabitants all contribute to swell the population of that city which God’s own right hand establishes and makes glorious.

6. WHEN HE WRITETH, i.e. takes a census of the nations (Ε’ ἐν ἀπογραφῇ λαῶν, comp. the figure of Ezek. xiii. 9; Isa. iv. 3, and see note on Ps. lxix. 28), the most glorious thing that he can say of each of them, the crown of all their history, shall be this, not the record of their separate national existence or polity or dominion, but the fact that they have become members by adoption of the city of God. Zion shall be the metropolis of the world.

THIS ONE IS BORN THERE. The words are repeated, as by God himself, as he enters one after another in the register of his city.

7. Great shall be the joy, great the pomp of festival and music when Zion welcomes her new inhabitants. This is doubtless the sense; but the compressed brevity of this verse makes it extremely obscure. It has been rendered: (1) “Both they that sing and they that dance (or, as others, *play the flute*) say: ‘All my fountains (of salvation, or of delight) are in thee (O city of God).’” (2) “Both they that sing and they that dance, All my fountains of (delight) are in thee”; meaning that every source of pleasure, music, singing, etc., was to be found in Zion. (3) By a change in the reading “They both sing and dance, all who dwell in thee (or, all my dwellers in thee).” Of these, (2) is clearly preferable. The verse might be arranged thus:



7 Both they that sing and they that dance,<sup>f</sup>  
All my fountains, are in thee.<sup>g</sup>

(In *thee*) are they that sing and they that dance. “Both they who sing and they who dance

In thee are *all* my living springs. This is abrupt, but still a natural touch of genuine poetic feeling. Milton, in his paraphrase, gives a similar interpretation :

With sacred songs are there ;  
In thee fresh brooks and soft streams glance,  
And all my fountains clear.”

<sup>a</sup> See above, General Introduction, Vol. i. p. 79, and pp. 324, 325.

<sup>b</sup> יָסִדָּהּ. This is not the part. pass. (as Hengst. and others maintain), “*the founded city*,” but a subst., as is clear from the use of the suff. ; and although the word occurs nowhere else, it is fully supported by the analogy of מְלִיכָהּ, יְהוֹיָדָה, etc. Comp. מוֹסֵר, of Zion, Isa. xxviii. 16. So the LXX, οἱ θεμέλιοι αὐτοῦ; Symm., θεμελίωσις αὐτοῦ. The suff. evidently refers, not to Zion, but to God. As regards the constr. it is far better, instead of taking ver. 1 as a separate clause, “His foundation (is) upon the holy mountains,” to connect it with ver. 2, and to consider the words אֱהֵב י' as belonging to the first member. The verb can then readily be repeated with the second. If we follow the accents, ver. 1, 2 will be arranged as follows: 1. His foundation is on the holy mountains. 2. Jehovah loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

<sup>c</sup> נִבְרָרָהּ, not an adv., as נִרְאִיתָ in cxxxix. 14, nor an accus. as in lxxv. 5 (see note <sup>f</sup> there), as Ewald, Hengst., and others explain, taking מְרָרָהּ as an impersonal: “*it is said of thee = men say of thee* glorious things”; but fem. plur. = neut. (as in xlv. 5), joined irregularly with the masc. sing. part., not however to be defended by such passages as those quoted by Hupfeld, Gen. xxvii. 29; Isa. iii. 12; Prov. iii. 18, where the sing. part. is used *distributively*; better on the principle which he suggests, that the part. is regarded as a kind of neuter noun: “*that which is spoken of thee, is glorious*,” lit. glorious things. He quotes, as similar, lxxiii. 28; Prov. xi. 23; Gen. xlix. 15, where the masc. טוב is used as predicate of a fem. noun, and Isa. xvi. 8, נִשְׂרָמֵית אֶמְלֵל. The last is an exact parallel. But the simplest way is to regard all such instances as covered by the general principle that the predicate is frequently in the masc. sing. (not only when it stands first), whilst the subject is fem. or plural, or both, as here. (Gesen. § 144.) Comp. Isa. viii. 22, וְאַשְׁלָה מִנְהָח.

<sup>d</sup> לְיָרֵעֵי. The לְ is here used in the sense of *belonging to*, not as

marking merely apposition, as Hupfeld and others explain. The constr. cannot be compared with that of לָּ in such phrases as לָּ הָיָה, *to become*, לָּ חָשַׁב, *to reckon as*, nor with such a usage as that in Ex. xxi. 2 or Ps. vii. 14, לָּרִלְקִים, “he maketh his arrows (*for, as*) fiery arrows,” where the verb determines the sense in which the לָּ occurs.

The LXX render *μνησθήσομαι* Ῥαὰβ καὶ Βαβυλῶνος τοῖς γνώσκεισίν με. Neither Aq. nor Symm. takes Rahab as a proper name, and they understand the construction differently. Aq., ἀμνησῶ ὁρμήματος καὶ Βαβυλῶνος τοὺς γνώσκοντας με; Symm., ἀν. ὑπερηφανίαν καὶ Βαβ. τοῖς εἰδῶσί με.

<sup>e</sup> אִישׁ יְאִישׁ, lit. “man and man,” *every man* (Ges. § 106. 4), as in Lev. xvii. 10; Esth. i. 8, or perhaps more exactly, *one man after another*, as it were in a series extended indefinitely. Hofmann compares the phrases דָּוָר נְדָוָר, *one generation after another*, and מִי נָמִי, Ex. x. 8.

<sup>f</sup> מְחַלְלִים לְהַלְלִים, *dancers engaged in the sacred solemnities*, as maidens who celebrated a victory, and as David himself danced before the ark, 2 Sam. vi. 16. The prefixed מְ must be supplied also before מְשִׁירִים, “*as well singers as dancers*.” Or better, as Hupfeld (following Is. and Dathe), who takes the participles as finite verbs, “They shall sing and leap for joy,” viz. all they that dwell in thee (see next note). Gesen. and others regard הָּ as a denom. from הָּלִיל, *flute-players*. Aq. has καὶ ἄδοντες ὡς χοροὶ, πᾶσαι πηγαί μου ἐν σοί; Symm., καὶ αἰνέουσιν ὡς ἐν αὐλοῖς πᾶσαι αἱ πηγαὶ ἐν σοί. Jerome and the LXX read מְשִׁירִים, and connect it with the preceding verse, καὶ ἀρχόντων τούτων τῶν γεγεννημένων ἐν αὐτῇ, and then render the last clause ὡς εὐφραινομένων πάντων ἢ κατοικία ἐν σοί. See next note, and Hupfeld’s rendering based on this.

<sup>g</sup> כָּל-מְצִיְתֵי קָדְשׁ. According to the existing punctuation this can only mean, “all my fountains are in thee” (and so Aq. and Symm. among the ancients), which has been variously explained. Many interpreters suppose these to be the words of the nations keeping festival with songs and dances, and saying, in the joy of their new birth into the city of God: “All my fountains of salvation (comp. Isa. xii. 3) are in thee.” But there is nothing in the context to favor this paraphrase of the word “fountains.” Hence Ewald would connect it with a מְצָן root, cognate with the similar Arab. and Syr. roots, meaning *to help, to be of service*, and take מְצָן in the sense of *place of refuge*, or something *useful*, and hence *an art*. Accordingly he renders, “singers as well as flute-players, all my arts are in thee.” Hupfeld, on the other hand, follows the guidance of the LXX, who have κατοικία. He

would read מְדִינָי, Hiph. part. constr. of שָׁן, *to dwell*, or rather מְדִינָי, “*My dwellers*, i.e. those who dwell with me” (as spoken by God). Hofmann also (Schriftb. ii. 2. 526) supposes the word to be spoken by God, and renders: “all my *fountains* are in thee,” and explains this by reference to such passages as lxviii. 27, “the fountain of Israel” (comp. Prov. v. 18), or Isa. xlviii. 1, “the waters of Judah,” and Zech. ix. 1, “the fountain of Adam (the source of man) is Jehovah.” Hence, according to this view, Jehovah here says that all his fountains are in Zion, that is, all his children are born there. Hofmann connects this with the previous words thus: singers as they join in the dance repeat these words, as the words of a song in which Jehovah says of Zion, “all my fountains,” etc.

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PSALM LXXXVIII.

THIS is the darkest, saddest Psalm in all the Psalter. It is one wail of sorrow from beginning to end. It is the only Psalm in which the expression of feeling, the pouring out of the burdened heart before God, fails to bring relief and consolation. In every other instance, however heavy the gloom, however oppressed and dejected the spirit of the sufferer, prayer and supplication are mingled with thanksgiving, the accents of lamentation are changed into the notes of triumph, the darkness of midnight gives way to the brightness of faith's morning-dawn. The deeper the sorrow at the opening, the greater the joy at the close. But here the darkness continues to the end. There is no confidence expressed that prayer will be heard, no hope uttered, much less any triumph. The Psalm ends with complaint, as it began. Its last word is “darkness.” One ray of light only struggles through the gloom, one star pierces that thick midnight blackness; it is the name by which the Psalmist addresses God: “O God of *my salvation*.” That he can address God by that name is a proof that faith and hope are not dead within him; it is the pledge of his deliverance, though he cannot yet taste its comfort. There is but one such Psalm, as if to teach us that our Father's will concerning us is not to leave us in our dejection, but, in answer to the prayer of faith, to lift us out of it; there is one, that we may remember that even his truest servants may be called upon “to walk in darkness and have no light,” that thus they may be the better trained, like a child holding his father's hand in the dark, “to trust in the name of the Lord, to stay themselves upon their God.”

The older expositors commonly interpreted the Psalm of Christ and his passion, either in Gethsemane or on the cross. And our church has, in a measure, sanctioned this application by appointing this as one of the Psalms for Good Friday.

As to the author, and the circumstances under which the Psalm was written, various conjectures have been made, but they are really worth nothing. One thing only is clear, that it is not a national Psalm, and that it does not deplore the Babylonish captivity, or any other *national* calamity. It is, throughout, personal and individual. Uzziah when smitten with leprosy, Jeremiah in the dungeon, Hezekiah in his sickness, Job in his sufferings—to all these in turn has the authorship of the Psalm been assigned. But neither the thoughts nor the expression of the thoughts favor one of these hypotheses more than another, except that, in one or two instances, the language has some affinity with that of the Book of Job, whereas the language of verse 15, "I am afflicted from my youth up," is, to say the least of it, very exaggerated language in the mouth of any of these persons, and hardly to be justified by any pressure of sorrow.

Delitzsch goes so far as to draw hence the inference, that Heman the Ezrahite was the author of the Book of Job; but the words which he quotes as common to this Psalm and Job are to be found in other places of Scripture; they cannot be called characteristic words, and therefore the argument built upon them falls to the ground.

[A Song, A Psalm of the Sons of Korah. For the Precentor. "After Machalath L'Annoth." A Maskil of Heman the Ezrahite.<sup>a</sup>]

- 1 O JEHOVAH, God of my salvation,  
I have cried day<sup>b</sup> and night before thee.
- 2 Let my prayer come before thee,  
Incline thine ear to my cry.
- 3 For my soul is full of troubles,  
And my life draweth nigh to the unseen world.
- 4 I am counted<sup>c</sup> with them that go down into the pit,  
I am become as a man that hath no strength,

1. GOD OF MY SALVATION. "Deum salutis suae vocans, quasi injecto freno, cohibet doloris intemperantiam, desperationi januam claudit, sequae ad crucis tolerantiam munit et comparat."—*Calvin*.

of the grave, is urged as a reason why God should hear him. Comp. vi. 4, 5 [5, 6]; xxx. 3 [4]; Isa. xxxviii. 10, 11.

3. The greatness of his affliction, which has brought him to the very edge

IS FULL OF TROUBLES; lit. "is satiated with evils." Comp. exxiii. 4; Lam. iii. 15, 30.

4. THAT HATH NO STRENGTH, i.e. not

- 5 Among the dead, cast away,<sup>d</sup>  
 Like (the) slain lying in the grave,  
 Whom thou rememberest no more,  
 But they are cut off from thy hand.
- 6 Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit,  
 In darkness, in the deeps.
- 7 Upon me thy fury lieth hard,  
 And thou hast afflicted (me) with all thy waves.\* [Selah.]
- 8 Thou hast removed my familiar friends far from me,  
 Thou hast made me an abomination unto them;  
 I am shut up, so that I cannot go forth.
- 9 Mine eye wasteth away because of affliction;  
 I have called upon thee, O Jehovah, every day,  
 I have stretched forth my hands unto thee.

merely as worn out with pain and suffering, which would be an anti-climax, but, as the parallelism shows, like the unsubstantial shadowy phantoms which people the unseen world.

5. CAST AWAY, or as the E.V. "free," i.e. left alone, with none to care for me, in that unseen world whence even God's presence seemed to be withdrawn. Calvin suggests that such a mode of expression may be accounted for, either "ex vulgi sensu . . . quia ad futuram vitam, quae abscondita est, non nisi gradatim conscendimus," or rather on the principle that the prophet spoke, "ex turbulento afflicti hominis sensu." "Nec mirum est," he adds, "hominem Spiritu Dei praeditum, ubi praevaluit moeror, quasi attonitum fuisse, ut vocem parum consideratam emitteret." But it is the same strain of feeling which we have already had in vi. 5; xxx. 9, where see notes. His eye is looking down into the darkness, he sees himself already numbered with the dead. But what are the dead? Beings who "know not anything," "clean forgotten, out of mind," beings whom God himself remembers not. "The living, the living, he shall praise thee"; this was the feeling, not of Hezekiah only, but of all the Old Testament saints, in seasons of gloom

and despondency. It could not be otherwise till the bright light of Christ's resurrection was cast upon the grave and the world beyond.

6. IN THE LOWEST PIT. See on lxiii. 9 [10]; lxxxvi. 13. Comp. Lam. iii. 55, and Ezek. xxvi. 20.

IN DARKNESS; lit. "in dark places," as in lxxiv. 20; Lam. iii. 6.

IN THE DEEPS, usually said of the sea, as in lxxviii. 22 [23]; Ex. xv. 5; here of Hades.

7. WITH ALL THY WAVES. On this Calvin beautifully remarks: "Jam quum tam horribile diluvium prophetam non impedierit quominus cor suum et vota ad Deum extolleret, discamus, ejus exemplo, in omnibus naufragiis nostris ancoram fidei et precum in coelos jacere."

8. THOU HAST REMOVED, as before, "Thou hast laid," etc., thus directly tracing all to God's will and fatherly hand.

MY FAMILIAR FRIENDS. The word expresses close intimate friendship, more than the mere "acquaintance" of the E.V. He is like one shut up in prison—these cannot come in to him, nor he go to them. Delitzsch thinks that, according to Lev. xiii., this sounds like the complaint of a leper, the leprosy more-over being just that death in life (Num.

- 10 Wilt thou show wonders unto the dead ?  
 Shall the shades below <sup>f</sup>arise and give thee thanks? [Selah.]
- 11 Shall thy loving-kindness be told in the grave,  
 Thy faithfulness in destruction ?
- 12 Shall thy wonders be known in the dark ?  
 And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness ?
- 13 But as for me — unto thee, O Jehovah, have I cried,  
 And in the morning my prayer cometh to meet thee.
- 14 Why, O Jehovah, castest thou off my soul ?  
 (Why) hidest thou thy face from me ?
- 15 I am afflicted, and ready to die from my youth <sup>g</sup> up,  
 I have suffered thy terrors (till) I am distracted.<sup>h</sup>
- 16 Over me thy fierce wrath hath passed ;  
 Thy horrors have cut me off.<sup>i</sup>
- 17 They have compassed me like waters all the day long,  
 They have come round about me together.

xii. 12) which is so pathetically described as the Psalmist's condition. The cry here is repeated in ver. 18.

AN ABOMINATION ; lit. "abominations," the plural intensifying and enlarging the idea. Comp. note on lxxviii. 35.

10. Ewald takes this and the two following verses as the words of the prayer implied in saying, "I have stretched forth my hands unto thee," and cited from some former Psalm.

ARISE, i.e. "rise up," not "rise again from the dead" (comp. lxxviii. 5 [6]). The language refers to what takes place in the unseen world, not at the resurrection. Comp. Isa. xiv. 9. The expostulation is like that of Job: "If a man die, shall he live again?" There is no question of the general resurrection, but only the improbability that God should restore to life one who was already dead. Calvin observes that this state of feeling "cannot be excused, inasmuch as it is not for us to prescribe to God when he shall give us succor; for we wrong his power, if we are not assured that it is as easy for him to restore life to the dead, as to prevent and avert the last extremity. And of a

truth the constancy of the saints has ever shown some traces of the weakness of the flesh, so that God's fatherly indulgence has had to make allowance for the defects which are mingled even with their very virtues."

13. BUT AS FOR ME, emphatic; though thus at the very edge of death, though bowed down with the heavy load of affliction, still I look to thee. This unwearied "continuing instant in prayer" is the victory of faith in the midst of trials which, but for this, would end in despair. It had been one life-long suffering *from his youth up*, yet still his earnest pleading had never ceased. Such prayers are those "unutterable groanings" of which St. Paul speaks.

COMETH TO MEET, or, as E. V., "preventeth." Symm. *προφθάνει σε*.

16. THY HORRORS; a frequent expression in the Book of Job (vi. 4; ix. 34; xiii. 21, etc).

18. DARKNESS; lit. "the place of darkness," the dark kingdom of the dead, is now all I have to look to, instead of friends, or, as we might say, The grave is now my only friend. Similar expressions occur in Prov. vii. 4, and in

18 Thou hast removed lover and friend far from me,  
My familiar friends — are darkness.<sup>j</sup>

Job xvii. 14, "I have said to the grave, Thou art my father," etc. Or perhaps the sense is rather, "I have no friends. When I look for them, I see nothing but darkness." "The Psalm ends with an energetic expression of its main thought — the immediate vicinity of death. The darkness is thickest at the end, just as it is in the morning before the rising of the sun." — *Hengstenberg*. But here, at least, the sun does not rise.

<sup>a</sup> עַל-יְהַחֲלֵהוּ: see on liii. note <sup>a</sup>.

לְעִנְיָהּ has been interpreted either (1) *for chastisement*; or (2) *for singing* (as in Ex. xxxii. 18; Isa. xxvii. 2).

Heman the Ezrahite, celebrated, together with Ethan (to whom the next Psalm is ascribed), for his wisdom, 1 Kings iv. 31 [v. 11] including reputation as a writer and a poet. In 1 Chron. vi. 18, 29 (33, 42 in E. V.), both are mentioned as Levitical singers.

The inscription is a double one, and is evidently derived from two different sources. This is plain, because the Psalm is ascribed to different authors; in the one instance to the Korahites, in the other to Heman; and is differently described, in the first as "a song, a Psalm," and in the second as "a Maskil." Besides, לְעִנְיָהּ always stands *at the beginning* of the title. Hence one title was "A song, a Psalm of the sons of Korah"; the other, "For the Precentor. After 'Machalath l'annoth.' A Maskil of Heman the Ezrahite."

<sup>b</sup> יוֹם-צְרָתִי. Grammatically, this can only be explained, "in the day (when) I cry," and the next clause must then be rendered, "in the night is my crying before thee, or I am before thee." But this would be placing a peculiar emphasis on the night, and the whole sentence is lame. (Unless, indeed, we could take יוֹם צ' as merely equivalent to "when I cry," and carry on the construction into the next verse, "when I cry in the night before thee, let my prayer," etc.) But it would seem that "day" and "night" are used as marking the unceasing character of the cry, as we find often elsewhere; xxii. 3; lv. 18; lxxvii. 3, etc. Hence it is probable that we ought to read יוֹמָם, *in the daytime*.

<sup>c</sup> נִחְשָׁבְתִי עִם; a mixed constr. compounded of two expressions, *to be considered as*, (עִם, as xliv. 23), and *to be made equal with*, as in xxviii. 1; cxliii. 7.

<sup>d</sup> חֶפְזִי. This may be either (1) a noun with pron. suff. from חֶפֶץ (Ezek. xxvii. 20), *my bed, my couch*; or (2) an adj. *free, let loose*, which occurs usually in a good sense, of freedom from chains, wounds, burdens, and the like, or freedom, as of a slave, from a master, Ex.

xxi. 3, 26, etc.; so of one set free by death, Job iii. 19. The LXX and Aq. both have ἐλεύθερος, Symm., ἀφείς ἐλεύθερος. Here in a bad sense: either (a) *forsaken, neglected, uncared for*; or (b) *separated, cut off*, i.e. from human companionship. Comp. בַּיִתָּהּ הַפְּטוּיָה, “a separate house,” 2 Kings xv. 5. a hospital or asylum for lepers, etc.; or (c) *set free, discharged*, from the cares and duties of life, from communion with God and intercourse with men (Chald., Rashi, Calvin, Delitzsch, Hengst.). Others, again, would connect the word with the Arab. *خفش*, *to be weak, prostrate*, which would accord with בְּפִשְׁתִּי, v. 11.

<sup>e</sup> פְּטוּיָהּ. Against the common explanation of the constr. that the accus. of the pers. pron. is understood, and that פְּטוּיָהּ is the accus. of the instrument, “Thou hast afflicted (me) (with) all thy waves,” Hupfeld objects first, that such a constr. is unheard of with פְּטוּיָהּ, and next, that the accent forbids it. He accordingly supplies the verb from the first clause, and inserts the relative, “and all thy waves (lie upon me) *with which* thou hast afflicted me,” referring to the constr. in li. 10, “the bones *which* thou hast broken,” where the accent is the same. Others (as Ewald and Delitzsch), “Thou hast hurled down (lit. *bowed down*) upon me (like a cataract) all thy waves.” So the LXX, πάντας τοὺς μετεωρισμούς σου ἐπήγαγες ἐπ’ ἐμέ. But Symm., ταῖς καταγίσι σου ἐκάκωσάς με. And Jerome, *fluctibus tuis afflixisti me*; and in answer to Hupfeld it may be said, that the use of the accus. instrum. is common with all verbs, as well as the omission of the personal object, and that the accent is not an infallible guide.

<sup>f</sup> רַפְּאֵיִם: here “the spirits of the departed” (εἰδῶλα καμόντων). Comp. Isa. xxvi. 14; Prov. xxi. 16, etc., but in other places used of “the race of giants.” Many attempts have been made to connect the two significations (see Gesen. *Thesaur.* in v.); but perhaps Hupfeld’s is the most plausible. He connects the word with the root רַפַּח, *to be relaxed*, and so (a) *weak, feeble*, as “the shades,” and on the other (b) *extended*, at a vast length, *immania corpora*, like “the giants.” Jerome here has *gigantes*. The LXX, ἰατροί (as also in Isa. xxvi.), connecting it curiously with the root רַפַּא, *to heal*.

<sup>g</sup> נַעַר, abstr. from נָעַר, *youth*, as Prov. xxix. 21; Job xxxiii. 25; and not from נָעַר, *excutere, expellere*, which derivation has led some to explain it *propter concussionem*.

<sup>h</sup> אֶפְסֵיָהּ, only here, and both the root and the form occasion difficulty. Usually connected with the Arab. *افس*, *infirma mente et consilii incops fuit*. LXX, ἐξηπορήθη; Jerome, *conturbatus sum*. Hupfeld would read אֶפְסֵיָהּ, in the sense of *growing cold* (spoken of the ces-



sation of physical and spiritual life). The paragog. form is to be explained of *an inner necessity*, as in lv. 2; see note <sup>c</sup>, there.

<sup>1</sup> צָמְחָהּ יָיִר. Such a reduplication of the *termination* is unexampled. The Dagesh in the 2d rad. makes it look like a Piel (as in cxix. 139, where the 3d fem. sing. occurs), whereas the reduplication of the last rad. points to a Pilel form. Besides the Kibbutz instead of Sh'va defies all grammar, and the form cannot be compared with סִתְּרָהּ יָיִר and such forms. It would be better to suppose that there is a play upon the form צָמְחָהּ יָיִר, Lev. xxv. 23, 30 (as Köst. and Hengst. suppose), or that it is the mistake of a copyist for צָמְחָהּ יָיִר (see Hupfeld).

## PSALM LXXXIX.

THERE can be little doubt that this Psalm was written in the latter days of the Jewish monarchy, when the throne of David had fallen or was already tottering to its fall, and when the prospect for the future was so dark that it seemed as if God had forgotten his covenant and his promise. Tholuck's conjecture is not improbable that the king of whom the Psalm speaks (ver. 45 [46]) is the youthful Jehoiachin, who, after a reign of three months, was deposed and imprisoned by Nebuchadnezzar, and of whom it was said, that no man of his seed should "prosper, sitting on the throne of David." The lamentation over him, in Jer. xxii. 24-29, may be taken as evidence that he was beloved by his subjects, and the prophet and the Psalmist indulge in a similar strain as they behold the last hope of David's house perish.

There is no reason to conclude from verse 47 [48] that the king himself is the author of the Psalm (see note there); and from verse 18 [19], indeed, the contrary perhaps may be inferred.

The Psalm opens with a reference to the promise given to David (2 Sam. vii. 8, etc.). This promise, and the attributes of God on which the promise rests, and which are the great pledge of its fulfilment, form the subject of the poet's grateful acknowledgment, before he passes to the mournful contrast presented by the ruin of the house of David, and the blighting of his people's hopes. He turns to the glorious past, that by its aid he may rise out of the grief and discouragement of the present. He takes the promise, and turns it into a song. He dwells upon it and lingers over it. He dwells on that which is the ground and pillar of the promise — the faithfulness of God — and

then he first lifts his loud lament over the disasters which have befallen his king and people, speaking out his disappointment, till his words sound like a reproach; and next pleads earnestly with God that he would not suffer his enemies to triumph.

Certain words and thoughts run through the Psalm, and give it a marked character. Such are, especially, the constant reference to the "faithfulness of God," in confirming his covenant and promise (ver. 1, 2, 5, 8, 14, 24, 33, 49; comp. also the use of the participle "faithful," ver. 28, 37); the phrase "I will not lie" (ver. 33, 35); "I have sworn" (ver. 3, 35, 49); and the covenant" (ver. 3, 28, 34, 39).

[A Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite.<sup>a</sup>]

- 1 I WILL forever sing of the loving-kindnesses<sup>b</sup> of Jehovah,  
 I will make known thy faithfulness with my mouth to all  
 generations.
- 2 For I have said, forever shall loving-kindness be built up,  
 In the heavens shalt thou establish thy faithfulness.
- 3 "I have made a covenant with my chosen,  
 I have sworn unto David my servant;

1, 2. The loving-kindness and the faithfulness of Jehovah are the source of the promise. We are led to the source, that thence we may track the stream.

1. FOREVER. The position of these words before the verb has been supposed to indicate that the Psalmist is not speaking in his own name, but in the name of the church which abideth "ever." But they may refer to the everlasting continuance of God's love and faithfulness, as pledged to David and his seed.

LOVING-KINDNESSES, plural, as in Isa. lv. 3, "The sure mercies [faithful loving-kindnesses] of David." For the same union of these two attributes of God, see xxxvi. 5 [6].

2. FOR I HAVE SAID, i.e. this is the conviction whence springs the resolve in ver. 1.

BE BUILT UP, like some stately palace, rising ever greater and fairer, stone by stone, before the wondering eyes of men, knowing no decay, never destined to fall into ruin.

IN THE HEAVENS; lit. "The heavens, thou shalt establish thy faithfulness in them." The heavens are the type of unchangeableness and perpetuity, as compared with the restless vicissitudes, the ever-shifting shows of earth. Comp. exix. 89.

3, 4. These are the words of God, the sum of his promise as given in 2 Sam. vii. They are introduced with remarkable abruptness, standing alone in their forcible brevity, whilst the Psalmist passes on to celebrate at length the might and faithfulness of the Promiser. In the nineteenth verse he returns to the promise, and then expands and dwells upon it. Most of the expressions, "David my servant," "establish," "forever," "build," the parallelism of "seed" and "throne," "my chosen," are taken, either directly or indirectly, from the original passage in 2 Sam.

MY CHOSEN. The LXX have the plural *τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς μου*, but all the other versions follow the Heb. and retain the singular. See Critical Note <sup>e</sup> on ver. 19.

- 4 Forever will I establish thy seed,  
 And build up thy throne to all generations." [Selah.]
- 5 And the heavens shall praise thy wondrousness, O Jehovah,  
 Thy faithfulness also, in the assembly of the holy ones.
- 6 For who in the sky can be compared with Jehovah,  
 (Who) is like unto Jehovah among the sons of the mighty?
- 7 A God very terrible in the council of the holy ones,  
 And to be feared above all them that are round about him?
- 8 O Jehovah, God of hosts,  
 Who is mighty<sup>c</sup> as thou, O Jah!  
 And thy faithfulness is round about thee.
- 9 THOU rulest the pride of the sea,  
 When the waves thereof arise,<sup>d</sup> THOU stillest them.
- 10 THOU hast crushed Rahab, as one that is slain,  
 With thy mighty arm thou hast scattered thine enemies.

5. At first sight the passage which follows, to ver. 18, appears to break the train of thought. But the object of the Psalmist is to place in the strongest light those attributes of God on which the *fulfilment* of his promise depends, for "in a promise everything depends upon the person who promises." The question therefore occurs, "Has he the will and the power to fulfil the promise?" — *Hengstenberg*. Hence the Psalmist dwells first upon God's power as exhibited and confessed in creation, then upon his righteousness, goodness, and truth, as manifested especially to his people, of whom and of whose king he is the protector.

THY WONDROUSNESS (lit. wonder): either (1) "Thy wondrous works," as in lxxxviii. 10, 12 [11, 13]; or (2) "Thy wonderful mysterious nature and being," as separate and distinct from that of all created beings. The word occurs in Isa. ix. 6 [5], as one of the names of Messiah (comp. also Judges xiii. 18).

ASSEMBLY OF THE HOLY ONES, i.e. the angels, to which corresponds in the next verse, "the sons of the mighty," comp. xxix. 1. They are called an "assembly" or "congregation," as the church above, which, like the church

below, worships and praises God. In this second clause the verb must be repeated from the first: "Thy faithfulness also is praised," etc.

7. A GOD. It is more forcible to regard this as a predicate, or as standing in a kind of free apposition with "Jehovah," than to take it as the subject of a fresh sentence: "God is very terrible," etc.

8. WHO IS MIGHTY, or, "Who is like unto thee, a mighty one, O Jah."

AND THY FAITHFULNESS; or, as Ewald: "And what faithfulness is like thy faithfulness," etc.

ROUND ABOUT THEE, God's attributes being personified, as in ver. 14 and lxxxv. 13 [14]. Then follow proofs and instances, first, of God's might, ver. 9-13, and then of his faithfulness, ver. 14-18.

10. RAHAB; here probably, as in lxxxvii. 4 (where see note), a name of Egypt. God's power as ruling the sea would naturally be connected in the Psalmist's mind with that great manifestation of his power in the deliverance from Egypt. Compare the same association of ideas in lxxiv. 13-17. Others take it in the more general sense of *pride* (i.e. our proud foes), as in Job ix.

- 11 Thine are (the) heavens, thine also is the earth ;  
 THOU hast founded the world and the fulness thereof.
- 12 THOU hast created the north and the south,  
 Tabor and Hermon shout for joy in thy name.
- 13 Thine is an arm (clothed) with might,  
 Strong is thy hand, exalted is thy right hand.
- 14 Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of thy throne,  
 Loving-kindness and truth go to meet thy face.
- 15 Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound,  
 That walk, O Jehovah, in the light of thy countenance.
- 16 In thy name do they exult all the day,  
 And in thy righteousness are they exalted.
- 17 For THOU art the excellency of their strength,  
 And in thy favor dost thou exalt our horn :
- 18 For to Jehovah belongeth our shield,  
 And to the Holy One of Israel our king.

13; xxvi. 12. In the context of both passages in Job, God's power over the sea is magnified, but the book is too far removed from the circle of Israelitish history to allow of our seeing any reference there to the passage of the Red Sea.

AS ONE THAT IS SLAIN. The particle of comparison must not be pressed. The sense is : "Thou hast crushed Egypt, so that it lies fallen, like one who has received a deadly wound."

11. THOU HAST FOUNDED, etc.; lit. "The world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them." And so in the next verse: "The north and the south, thou hast created them."

12. TABOR AND HERMON do not denote merely the west and east, as most interpreters explain. They are mentioned rather as conspicuous mountains in a mountain land. Tabor, "remarkable for the verdure, which climbs—a rare sight in eastern scenery—to its very summit" (Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 350); Hermon, as its name imports, "The lofty, prominent peak," crowned with snow, the most striking of all the mountains of Palestine, are fit representatives of the whole country;

open, as it were, the loud hymn of praise. See lxxii. 3; xcvi. 8.

FOUNDATION. Others render "pillar," but Aq. has ἔδρασμα and Sym. βάρσις. The LXX ἐτοιμασία. The same word occurs in xxxiii. 14, where the renderings are similar. The E. V. has "place" there (in 1 Kings viii. 13, "settled place,") and "habitation" here, but in the margin "establishment."

GO TO MEET. See on lxxxviii. 13.

15-18. Such is the God, so full of majesty and power, who has given the promise. Blessed, therefore, are the people who have Jehovah for their God. They may well rejoice in their privilege.

15. THE JOYFUL SOUND, i.e. the loud music of trumpets, etc., in the festivals, especially on the new year's day (Lev. xxiii. 24), or on extraordinary occasions (Num. x. 1-10; xxix. 1; Josh. vi. 5, 20, etc.). See on xxvii. 6; lxxxi. 1 [2]. This Israel only knows, because Israel only is the people of God. They are blessed, because they, and they only, of all nations, can keep these solemn feasts to his praise.

18. OUR SHIELD, i.e., as is evident from the parallelism, the king. Comp.

- 19 Then thou spakest in vision to thy beloved,<sup>e</sup> and saidst,  
 “I have laid help<sup>f</sup> upon a mighty man,  
 I have exalted one chosen out of the people.
- 20 I have found David my servant,  
 With my holy oil have I anointed him ;
- 21 With whom my hand shall be established ;  
 Mine arm also shall strengthen him.
- 22 No enemy shall exact<sup>g</sup> upon him,  
 No son of wickedness shall afflict him.
- 23 And I will beat down his adversaries before his face,  
 And plague them that hate him.
- 24 My faithfulness also and my loving-kindness shall be with  
 him,  
 And in my name shall his horn be exalted.
- 25 And I will set his hand on the sea,  
 And his right hand on the rivers.

xlvii. 9 [10]. The rendering, “Jehovah is our shield,” is against grammar.

19. The mention of the king in the preceding verse leads now to the resumption and expansion of the promise given to David. The two aspects of God's relation to David and his house and kingdom are herein presented to us, an outward and an inward, corresponding to the two great attributes of God which are praised in ver. 1-18, his omnipotence and his faithfulness. To the first of these belong : (a) David's exaltation to the throne (ver. 19) ; (b) God's constant aid, and hence his victory over his foes (ver. 21-23), and extended dominion (ver. 21, 25). To the second, which is the most prominent, God's fatherly relation to David's seed, which is shown in (a) the exaltation to the dignity of a son, who is also the first-born, and therefore holds the pre-eminence above all kings (ver. 26, 27) ; accordingly (b) an *everlasting* covenant made with him and his seed, and an everlasting kingdom (ver. 28, 29) ; hence, too, (c) the transgressions of his sons cannot make the covenant void (ver. 33, 34) ; (d) with the assurance finally repeated,

that this covenant, which God has once confirmed by an oath, cannot lie, and that therefore the seed as well as the throne of David must endure as the very heavens. For this outline of the connection I am indebted to Hupfeld.

THEN, referring to the time when the promise was given.

THY BELOVED. On this word see note on xvi. 10. David is evidently meant, though the revelation was made in vision, not to him, but to Nathan (2 Sam. vii. 4, 17). If we adopt the plural, which is the reading of many mss., then the revelation is made to the nation at large.

A MIGHTY MAN. Comp. 2 Sam. xvii. 10.

22. SON OF WICKEDNESS. This clause is taken verbatim from the words of the promise in 2 Sam. vii. 10.

25. THE SEA . . . THE RIVERS, i.e. the Mediterranean Sea and the Euphrates, with reference, no doubt, to the extent of Solomon's dominion. See above on lxxx. 11. Or the range of hope may be wider, as in lxxii. 8. The plural “rivers” is in accordance with poetic usage, and need not be explained of the

- 26 He shall call me, 'THOU art my Father,  
My God, and the Rock of my salvation.
- 27 Also I will make him my first-born,  
Highest of the kings of the earth.
- 28 Forever will I keep for him my loving-kindness,  
And my covenant shall stand fast with him.
- 29 And I will make his seed (to endure) forever,  
And his throne as the days of heaven.
- 30 If his children forsake my law,  
And walk not in my judgments,
- 31 If they profane my statutes,  
And keep not my commandments,
- 32 Then will I visit their transgression with the rod,  
And their iniquity with stripes.
- 33 But my loving-kindness will I not break off<sup>h</sup> from him,  
Nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.
- 34 I will not profane my covenant,  
Nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips ;
- 35 Once have I sworn by my holiness,  
I will not lie unto David :
- 36 His seed shall be forever,  
And his throne as the sun before me :

Euphrates and its separate channels, or the Euphrates and Tigris, etc.

27. MY FIRST-BORN. As he calls me "Father," so I not only acknowledge him as my son, but as my first-born, and therefore my heir. (So Israel is called the first-born Ex. iv. 22, and Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 9).

28. SHALL STAND FAST; lit. "is faithful," the word being the same as in ver. 37, "the faithful witness."

30. There follows a paraphrase of 2 Sam. vii. 14. The chastisement is a necessary part of the paternal relationship (Heb. xii.). The sins of individuals will be punished by God's fatherly correction, but the covenant cannot cease, the promises made to the seed as a whole cannot be withdrawn. Their unfaithfulness cannot make the faithfulness of

God of none effect (Rom. iii. 3). But see, as presenting a different view, 1 Kings viii. 25.

32. THE ROD . . . STRIPES. In 2 Sam. vii. qualifying expressions are added: "rod of men," "stripes of the children of men"; not meaning "such punishments as all men, because all are sinners, are exposed to" (Hengst.); but either (1) chastisements such as men (comp. for similar phraseology Hos. vi. 7; Job xxxi. 33), human fathers, employ, for the correction, not the destruction of their children; "for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not"? or (2) chastisements fitted to the measure of man's endurance (comp. 1 Cor. x. 13).

35. ONCE, i.e. "once for all" (LXX, *ἄραξ*). Or, as others, "one thing."

BY MY HOLINESS, as in Amos iv. 2.

- 37 He shall be established forever as the moon,  
And (as the) faithful witness in the sky.”
- 38 But THOU hast cast off, and rejected,  
Thou hast been wroth with thine anointed.
- 39 Thou hast made void<sup>i</sup> the covenant of thy servant,  
Thou hast profaned his crown (even) to the ground.
- 40 Thou hast broken down all his hedges,  
Thou hast made his strongholds a ruin.
- 41 All they that pass by the way have spoiled him,  
He is become a reproach to his neighbors.
- 42 Thou hast exalted the right hand of his adversaries,  
Thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.
- 43 Yea, thou hast turned back the edge<sup>j</sup> of his sword,  
And hast not made him to stand in battle.
- 44 Thou hast made his splendor<sup>k</sup> to cease,  
And hast cast his throne down to the ground ;

Other formulæ are “by myself,” (Isa. xlv. 23); “by my name” (Jer. xliv. 26). For the general sentiment of the verse comp. Rom. xi. : “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”

37. THE FAITHFUL WITNESS. This, according to the parallelism, must be “the moon.” Luther and others have supposed the rainbow to be meant. Others, again, think that the witness is God himself, and render, “And a faithful witness is in heaven.” But the moon is more for certain seasons than any other orb ; in all countries she has been the arbiter of festivals.

38. But now comes the mournful contrast. This covenant, made by the Almighty and all-faithful God, confirmed and ratified by an oath, eternal as the heavens are eternal, sure as the order of the universe is sure — what has become of it? Has it not failed, or is it not in danger of failing? Appearances are against its perpetuity, against the truth of God. The expostulation of the Psalmist is nothing less than a reproach. God has with his own hand cast down the throne of David, and annulled the covenant ; so it seems to one who mea-

sures promise and performance by a human standard. The boldness of the expostulation has scandalized the Jewish interpreters. Aben-Ezra tells the story of a wise and pious Jew in Spain, who would never read nor listen to this Psalm, and he and others would get rid of the offence by taking ver. 38-45 as expressing the scoff of enemies, not the reproach of the Psalmist. But see the exactly similar language in xliv. 9-22, and notes there.

40. HIS HEDGES. The pronouns in this and the next verse refer grammatically to the king, but in sense to the people, who are regarded as one with their monarch. The expressions are borrowed from lxxx. 12 [13].

43. HAST TURNED. Although there is a change here to the present tense in the Hebrew which is probably due to the poetic imagination vividly bringing the past before the eye, it is better, perhaps, to render it as a perfect. See on xviii. note e.

44. SPLENDOR ; lit. “purity,” and thus “brightness,” “lustre,” and the like. The literal rendering of the clause is, “Thou hast made (him) to cease

- 45 Thou hast shortened the days of his youth,  
 Thou hast covered him with shame. [Selah.]
- 46 How long, O Jehovah, wilt thou hide thyself forever?  
 Shall thy fury burn like fire?
- 47 O remember how short a time<sup>1</sup> I have to live!  
 For what vanity hast thou created all the sons of men!
- 48 What man is he that liveth and shall not see death,  
 That can deliver his soul from the hand of the unseen  
 world? [Selah.]
- 49 Lord, where are thy former loving-kindnesses,  
 Which thou swarest unto David in thy faithfulness?
- 50 Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants,  
 How I bear in my bosom [the reproach of] many peoples,<sup>m</sup>

from his brightness, or splendor." See Critical Note.

45. THOU HAST SHORTENED, etc. This has been explained by Grotius and others of the short reigns of the later sovereigns of Judaea. But if spoken of an individual monarch, the expression would naturally mean that he had grown old before his time; comp. Hos. vii. 9; if of the family of David, it would be a figure denoting its failing strength before it attained to the glory and dominion promised. In this latter sense the clause is understood by Hupfeld and Hengst.; and so Rosenm.: "Quum regnum Judae vix ad maturitatem aliquam perductum, et quasi in ipso flore extinctum sit, neque enim ad quingentos annos pervenit Davidicae stirpis regnum."

46. The transition from expostulation to pleading, which of itself shows how the expostulation is to be understood. It is human weakness discovering to God its inmost heart. There is a sense of wrong, and the true man says that he feels it, speaks it out, and asks God to set it right. It is an example of the perpetual clash between convictions and facts. See Hab. i. 2, 3. The pleading consists of two parts, each comprised in three verses. The argument of the first is the shortness of human life; that of the second, the dishonor cast upon God by the triumph of his enemies.

HOW LONG . . . FOREVER. See note on xiii. 1, and comp. lxxix. 5.

47. HOW SHORT A TIME; a frequent ground of appeal to God's forbearing mercy (xxxix. 5; Job vii. 6; xiv. 1, etc.). For the sentiment in this and the two following verses, see note on lxxxviii. 10. The occurrence of the pronoun of the first person singular can only be explained by its being intended to describe a fact of common experience, for in ver. 17, 18 the people speak in the first person *plural*, and the anointed is always spoken of in the third person. The "I" is the expression of personal feeling, measuring others by itself. Or ver. 47-49 may mean, "Let me, even me, see thy restoring love."

49. FORMER LOVING-KINDNESSES; not the promise itself, but the manifold proof of its fulfilment in past times.

50. I BEAR IN MY BOSOM. The phrase elsewhere signifies "cherishing with tender care and affection" Num. xi. 12; Dent. i. 31; Isa. xl. 11; xlvi. 3, a signification which is here, of course, quite out of the question. See more in the Critical Note. It is rather the expression of an intense sympathy with the anointed as the representative of Jehovah, and is urged as a plea why God's faithfulness should be vindicated.

51. FOOTSTEPS, i.e. as we might say, "every step he takes." Comp. xvii. 11;



51 Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O Jehovah,  
Wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine  
anointed.

52 Blessed be Jehovah for evermore.

Amen and Amen.

xxii. 16 [17]; xlix. 5 [6]. The Targum interprets this as a reproach, because of the *tarrying* of the footsteps of the Messiah. And so Kimchi: "He delays so long in coming, that they say he will never come."

Thus ends the third book of the Psalter, like the first and second, with a Messianic Psalm.

52. The Doxology is no part of the original Psalm, but was added subsequently, to mark the close of the book.

\* Ethan the Ezrahite. The Greek versions differ, the LXX rendering τῷ Ἰσραηλίτῃ, another τῷ Ζαραίτῃ, and another τῷ Ἐζραίτῃ. (See note <sup>a</sup> on lxxxviii.) Compare 1 Kings iv. 31 [v. 11]; 1 Chron. ii. 6. An Ethan or Jeduthun, a Levite, is also mentioned 1 Chron. vi. 29 (44 in E. V.); xv. 17, 19, whom some hold to be the same person. He and Heman, according to Hengst., are called Ezrahites as belonging to the family of Serah, the *א* being *Aleph prosthetic*. At the same time, as they were Levites, he thinks they were incorporated into the family of Serah, the son of Judah. So Elkanah the Levite, 1 Sam. i. 1, is called an Ephraimite. Comp. Judges xvii. 7.

<sup>b</sup> חֲסִידֵי, with *Dagesh lene*, contrary to the rule, here and in Lam. iii. 22.

<sup>c</sup> חֲסִידֵי, not constr., but like the forms חֲסִידֵי, חֲסִידֵי, חֲסִידֵי. Perhaps חֲסִידֵי may be a special designation, as it occurs only here, "the strong Jah."

<sup>d</sup> שׂוֹא, either infin. = נְשׂוֹא, xxviii. 2; Isa. i. 14 (instead of שָׂא) or infinitival noun, like שֵׂא, Job xx. 6.

<sup>e</sup> חֲסִידֵי. The sing. refers clearly to David, but many of De Rossi's and Kenn.'s mss., 16 edd., and all the Greek versions (LXX, τοῖς υἱοῖς σου, the others τοῖς ὁσίοις σου, except S'. which has τοῖς προφήταις σου), the Chald., Syr., and Jerome, *sanctis tuis*; the Bab. and Jerus. Talmud and the Rabbis have the plur., which would refer to the people. See the same various reading in xvi. 10, and the double reference below in ver. 41.

<sup>f</sup> כִּוְנֵי. Hupfeld objects to the word as inapplicable, and would read either כִּוְנֵי *a crown* (comp. ver. 40), or כִּוְנֵי, *majesty*. But the ancient versions vouch for the present reading.

<sup>g</sup> נְשִׂיא, the Hiph. usually means *to deceive, lead astray* (and so here Symm., ἐξαπατήσει, J. H. Michaelis, Maurer, Delitzsh), but, construed

with פָּ, it is better to take it in the sense in which it occurs in Kal, *to act as a creditor, to exact*.

<sup>h</sup> אָפַר. Both the form and the meaning of this word occasion some difficulty. פָּרַר, to which it is commonly referred, means properly *to break, violate, a covenant, etc.*, and hence could only be used improperly here; and besides, the fut. Hiph. of that verb would be אָפַר. Hence we must either refer it to a root פּוּר, as Gesenius does (*Thesaur.* v. פָּרַר), or read אָפַר, *I will take away*, from the parallel passages, 2 Sam. vii. 15; 1 Chron. xvii. 13.

<sup>i</sup> נִאֲרָהָה. The word occurs only here (LXX, *κατέστρεψας*) and Lam. ii. 7, (LXX, *ἀπέτιναξέ*). It seems to be cognate with נָעַר.

<sup>j</sup> צוֹר. The only place where it occurs in this sense, “*edge of a sword*,” but the sense is amply justified by the cogn. Arab. حار, an onomatopoeic root, used of sharp, shrill, grinding, grating noises, etc., as Fleischer has elaborately shown in a note to Delitzsch’s commentary. Hence it is quite unnecessary to translate, “*O thou Rock*” (Olsh.), or, “*the rock of his sword*” (Hengst.), in a metaphorical sense, “*the strength, etc., of his sword*.” LXX, *τὴν βοηθείαν τῆς ῥομφαίας αὐτοῦ*.

<sup>k</sup> מִטְהָרוֹ. This is the reading of Nurzi, Heidenheim, and the best Christian editors. The Jewish interpreters (as Aben-Ezra Kimchi, etc.) assume a noun מִטְהָר, with euphonic Dagesh, as in מִקְרָשׁ, Ex. xv. 17. The anomalous compound Sh’va is defended by such a form as בִּפְסָעָה, 2 Kings ii. 1. But it is better to take the מ as the prep. *from*, “*Thou hast made (him) to cease from his splendor*.” Nor is it necessary to have recourse to a form מִטְהָר or טְהָר (if we read with some mss. (מִטְהָרוֹ)), like אָרַב, מְהָר, etc. It may be a heteroclite from טָהַר, instead of טְהָר, with rejection of the first syllable instead of the second.

<sup>l</sup> אֲנִי מ’ ה’. mss. vary considerably (see in Davidson’s *Hebrew Text*), and editors have troubled themselves with explanations, but there is really no difficulty. The pronoun stands emphatically first instead of אֲנִי מ’ ה’, *ego quantilli sim aevi*. See on xxxix. 4 [5], note °. The LXX, *μνήσθητι τίς ἡ ὑπόστασις μου*; Symm. (Syro-hex.), *μν. τί εἰμι ζῶν πρὸς ἡμέραν* (s. *ἐφήμερος*) *εἰμί*; Jerome, *memento mei de profundo* (Δα, *ἐκ καταδύσεως*).

<sup>m</sup> The whole of the latter clause of ver. 50 [51] presents difficulties such as render the correctness of the existing text questionable: (1) the singular number, when the plural has just preceded (for the reading עֲבַרְךָ of some mss., and the Syr., looks as if altered on purpose to meet the difficulty); (2) the sense in which the phrase *to bear in the bosom* is here used, contrary to that in which it elsewhere occurs; (3)

the strange collocation of כָּל רְבִירִים, *all, many*, which cannot be defended by Ezek. xxxi. 6, where כָּל stands in appos. with גִּוִּירִים ר', following; (4) the position of the adj. רְבִירִים before its noun, which in a common phrase of this kind is indefensible, and derives no support from Jer. xvi. 16, to which Maurer refers, as רְבִירִים is there emphatically placed first. It seems necessary to repeat the word *reproach* from the first member of the verse, as the object of the verb in the second, either making this second clause a relative one, as the LXX, οὐ ὑπέσχεον ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ μου πολλῶν ἐθνῶν (Symm. without the relative or the personal pron., ἐβάστασα ἐ. τ. κ. παμπολλῶν ἐθ.), "which I bear from [the whole of] many nations"; or supplying רַרְפָּר after כָּל, "all the reproach of many nations." Aquila may have had some other word instead of רְבִירִים, for he renders ἀῤροντός μου ἐν κόλπῳ πάσας ἀδικίας λαῶν, and so Jerome, *portavi in sinu meo omnes iniquitates populorum*. This would remove all difficulty.

Delitzsch gives a different interpretation. He renders, "That I carry in my bosom all the many nations," and supposes the Psalmist to complain as a member of the body politic, that his land is full of strangers, Egyptians and their allies (he assigns the Psalm to the time of Shishak's invasion), whose outrages and taunts fill his heart with sorrow.

The literal rendering of the present text can only be: "How I bear in my bosom all the many nations."



THE PSALMS.



BOOK IV.

PSALMS XC.-CVI.



## PSALM XC.

“THE ninetyeth Psalm,” says Isaac Taylor, “might be cited as perhaps the most sublime of human composition, the deepest in feeling, the loftiest in theological conception, the most magnificent in its imagery. True is it in its report of human life as troubled, transitory, and sinful. True in its conception of the Eternal,—the Sovereign and the Judge, and yet the refuge and the hope of men who, notwithstanding the most severe trials of their faith, lose not their confidence in him; but who, in the firmness of faith, pray for, as if they were predicting, a near-at-hand season of refreshment. Wrapped, one might say, in mystery, until the distant day of revelation should come, there is here conveyed the doctrine of immortality; for in this very plaint of the brevity of the life of man, and of the sadness of these his few years of trouble, and their brevity and their gloom, there is brought into contrast the divine immutability; and yet it is in terms of a submissive piety; the thought of a life eternal is here in embryo. No taint is there in this Psalm of the pride and petulance, the half-uttered blasphemy, the malign disputing or arraignment of the justice or goodness of God, which have so often shed a venomous color upon the language of those who have writhed in anguish personal or relative. There are few, probably, among those who have passed through times of bitter and distracting woe, or who have stood the helpless spectators of the miseries of others, that have not fallen into moods of mind violently in contrast with the devout and hopeful melancholy which breathes throughout this ode. Rightly attributed to the Hebrew lawgiver or not, it bespeaks its remote antiquity, not merely by the majestic simplicity of its style, but negatively, by the entire avoidance of those sophisticated turns of thought which belong to a late, a lost, age in a people’s intellectual and moral history. This Psalm, undoubtedly, is centuries older than the moralizing of that time, when the Jewish mind had listened to what it could never bring into a true assimilation with its own mind—the abstractions of the Greek philosophy.”—*Spirit of the Hebrew Poetry*, pp. 161–63.

Two objections have been urged by Hupfeld against the Mosaic authorship of the Psalm, neither of which can be regarded as very

weighty. (1) The first of these is, that the Psalm contains no clear and distinct reference to the circumstances of the Israelites in the wilderness. (2) The next is, that the span of human life is limited to threescore and ten or fourscore years, whereas not only Moses himself, but Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb, are all said to have reached a period of life considerably beyond this (Deut. xxxiv. 7; Num. xxxiii. 39; Josh. xxiv. 29; xiv. 10).

As regards the first objection, it is sufficient to reply that the language of the Psalms is in almost every case general, not special, and that all that can be reasonably demanded is that there be nothing in the language at variance with the supposed circumstances, or unsuitable to the person, the time, the place to which a particular Psalm is alleged to belong. Hupfeld himself admits that the general strain of thought and feeling is in every respect worthy of a man like Moses, as well as in perfect accordance with the circumstances under which this Psalm is commonly believed to have been written, viz. towards the close of the forty years' wandering in the wilderness.

The second objection seems at first sight of more force. Yet there is no evidence that the average duration of human life at that period was as extended as that of the few individuals who are named. On the contrary, if we may judge from the language of Caleb, who speaks of his strength at eighty-five as if it were quite beyond the common lot (Josh. xiv. 10), the instances mentioned must rather be regarded as exceptional instances of longevity. The life of the majority of those who died in the wilderness must have fallen short of fourscore; and there is no reason to suppose that their lives were prematurely cut short. Not this (as Hupfeld asserts), but the forty years' wandering in the wilderness was their punishment; and this limit seems to have been placed to their desert sojourn, because thus all the generation who left Egypt, having reached man's estate, would, not exceptionally, but *in the natural course of things*, have died out.

All the ablest critics, even those who, like Ewald and Hupfeld, deny the Mosaic authorship of the Psalm, nevertheless admit, that in depth and loftiness of thought, in solemnity of feeling, and in majesty of diction, it is worthy of the great lawgiver and prophet. "The Psalm," writes Ewald, "has something uncommonly striking, solemn, sinking into the depths of the Godhead. In subject-matter and style it is original, and powerful in its originality, and would be rightly attributed to Moses, the man of God (as the later collector calls him, comp. Deut. xxxiii. 1; Ezra iii. 2), if we knew more exactly the historical grounds which led the collector to this view." It is strange that



Ewald's one reason for bringing down the Psalm to a later time, the ninth or eighth century, B.C., is the deep sense of human infirmity and transitoriness which pervades it, and which he imagines could not have been felt at an earlier period of the history.

"There are important *internal* reasons," says Hengstenberg, "which may be urged in favor of the composition of the Psalm by Moses, as announced in the title. The poem bears throughout the stamp of high antiquity;<sup>1</sup> there is no other Psalm which so decidedly conveys the impression of being the original expression of the feelings to which it gives utterance. There is, moreover, no other Psalm which stands so much *by itself*, and for which parallel passages furnish so little kindred matter in its characteristic peculiarities. On the other hand, there occurs a series of striking allusions to the Pentateuch, especially to the poetical passages, and above all others to Deut. xxxii., allusions which are of a different kind from those which occur in other passages in the Psalms, and which do not appear, like them, to be *borrowed*. Luther remarks in the Psalm another peculiarity: 'Just as Moses acts in teaching the law, so does he in this prayer. For he preaches death, sin, and condemnation, in order that he may alarm the proud who are secure in their sins, and that he may set before their eyes their sin and evil, concealing, hiding nothing.' The strong prominence given to the doctrine of *death as the wages of sin*, is characteristic of the Psalm, a doctrine of not frequent occurrence in holy Scripture, and especially not in the Psalms, and which is proclaimed as distinctly and impressively as it is here only in the Pentateuch (Gen. ii., iii.) and in those ordinances of the ceremonial law which threaten death."

The points of resemblance between the language of the Psalm and expressions occurring in parts of the Pentateuch, and more particularly in Deuteronomy, will be found mentioned in the notes. To those who believe, as I do, that Deuteronomy was written by Moses, they furnish an argument for the Mosaic authorship of the Psalm.

"This Psalm, then, is one of the oldest of the inspired utterances. It is the prayer which is read over the mortal dust of some hundreds of the children of men, every week, in London alone. And so used, none of us finds it antiquated. The lapse or three thousand years has not made it necessary to discard this clause and that. Words that described the relation of the children of Israel to the Eternal God, serve still to express the devotion of English hearts turning to God in their sorrow. As these grand words are uttered, the curtain that hangs round our life seems to draw back, and we see, beyond, depths that we

<sup>1</sup> So Herder calls it "that ancient Psalm, that hymn of eternity."

dreamed not of. From time and the slow succession of events, from the minutes and the hours that seem so long and so many, we turn to God, whose eternal nature was as it now is even when the world was formed, and to whom a thousand years are no more than the middle watch of the night is to a sound sleeper. Nations that seem established for ever are carried off down the roaring cataract of time; men full of pride and glory and power grow and perish like grass; and God alone remains unchangeable, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."—Archbishop of York's *Sermons preached at Lincoln's Inn*, p. 2.

The Psalm has no strophical division, nor even any regular rhythmical arrangement. It consists of two principal parts:

I. The first is a meditation on the eternity of God, as it stands in contrast with the weakness and transitoriness of man (ver. 1–12); and here we have, first, the contrast stated (ver. 1–6), and then the reason of this transitoriness, viz. man's sin, and God's wrath as following thereon, together with the prayer for wisdom to turn to a practical account these facts of human life (ver. 7–12).

II. The second (ver. 13–17) is a prayer that God—who, notwithstanding Israel's sin, and notwithstanding the chastisement that sin has provoked, is still Israel's hope and refuge—would now at last have compassion upon his people, give them joy for sorrow (ver. 13–15), and crown all their labors with success (ver. 16, 17).

[A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God.]

1 LORD, thou hast been our dwelling-place

In all generations.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth,

Or ever thou gavest birth to<sup>a</sup> the earth and the world,

Yea from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

1–6. The eternity and unchangeableness of God contrasted with the transitoriness of man.

THOU HAST BEEN, or "hast proved thyself to be." It is the record of a past experience, not merely the statement of what God is in his own nature. It is the acknowledgment of what God had been to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, when they had no fixed dwelling-place, but "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims"—of what he had been both to their fathers and to themselves.

OUR DWELLING-PLACE, or "a place of refuge for us." The word, which

occurs Deut. xxxiii. 27, combines both ideas, and would have a peculiar force of meaning for the Israelites in the wilderness. For Israel was without a country and without a *home*, finding here and there only a brief resting-place beside the well and under the palms of the desert. And Israel was without a *refuge*, exposed to enemies and a thousand perils.

IN ALL GENERATIONS; lit. "in generation and generation," a phrase which occurs Deut. xxxii. 7.

2. THOU GAVEST BIRTH TO. Perhaps the passive rendering, which involves

- 3 Thou turnest frail man to dust,<sup>b</sup>  
 And thou sayest : Return, ye children of men.  
 4 For a thousand years in thy sight  
 Are (but) as yesterday, when it passeth,<sup>c</sup>  
 And as a watch in the night.

only a very slight change in a single vowel-point (see Critical Note), is to be preferred: "Or ever the earth and the world were formed."

**EARTH . . . WORLD.** The former is the more common and general word; the latter, which is exclusively used in poetry, denotes, according to its etymology, the *fruitful* earth (comp. Prov. viii. 31; Job xxxvii. 12).

3. To **DUST**; lit. "to the state of one who is crushed, reduced to dust," with allusion, no doubt, to Gen. iii. 19.

**RETURN.** As men perish by the breath of God, so by his word he calls others into being: "one generation goeth, and another cometh." This is the sense given in the Prayer-book version; "again thou sayest: Come again, ye children of men." Others suppose the second clause of the verse to be merely a repetition of the first:

"Thou turnest men to destruction,  
 And sayest, Turn (i.e. to destruction),  
 ye children of men."

But if an emphatic repetition were designed, the form of the sentence would rather have been:

"Thou sayest, Turn to destruction, ye  
 children of men,  
 And they are turned."

Besides, the fut. consec. "and sayest," would indicate that the act in the second clause of the verse is to be regarded as a consequence of that in the first; or, at least, as subsequent to, and not merely as parallel with it. Others, again, interpret the word "return" of a moral returning or conversion; or of the return of the spirit to God who gave it; or even of the resurrection. But none of these explanations harmonizes with the context.

4. **YESTERDAY.** To a Jew, the new

day began in the evening. . . . A **WATCH IN THE NIGHT.** The night was anciently divided into three, later into four watches. There is a climax; for the past day, short as it seems, was, whilst it was passing, capable of measurement; it had its hours and its minutes, its thoughts and its acts, and its memories. But the night-watch "is for us as though it were not; we sleep through the watch of the night, living, but observing nothing." "In those words, 'a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday,' etc. the Psalmist has thrown a light upon the nature of God such as a volume of reasoning could not have kindled. With God there are no measures of time. With us time is the name we give to the duration of a certain succession of thoughts and efforts, each of which for a moment held full possession of us, each of which cost us a certain pain, and contributed a little to that weariness which at last took shelter in repose. The Most High does not, and cannot, so govern the world. He does not look away from the earth to add fuel to the sun; he does not leave one nation of the earth neglected whilst he works mighty social changes in another. . . . All that we mean by time must now be left out of the account. . . . It would be a longer and more tedious task, if a man were the worker, to build a world than to guide a wayward nation through its fortunes; but what means longer or shorter where there is no labor nor waiting nor weariness, but only the streaming forth of an omnipotent will? Dare we say that it cost more to construct the universe than to guide the footsteps of one man during the short year that has just closed!"—Archbp. of York's *Sermons*, pp. 6-8. The sentiment of the verse is repeated by St.

5 Thou sweepest them away (as with a flood);<sup>d</sup> they are  
(as) a sleep :

In the morning they are as grass which springeth afresh;<sup>e</sup>

6 In the morning it flourisheth and springeth afresh,

In the evening it is cut down<sup>f</sup> and withereth.

7 For we have been consumed by thine anger,

And by thy fury have we been terrified ;

8 Thou hast set our iniquities before thee,

Our secret (sins) in the light of thy countenance.

9 For all our days are passed away in thy wrath,

We have spent our years as a thought :

Peter, who gives also the converse (2 Pet. iii. 8).

5. THOU SWEEPEST, etc. Or the two clauses may be dependent upon one another, as in the Prayer-book version: "As soon as thou hast swept them away, they are (or, become) as a sleep."

IN THE MORNING. This can hardly mean "in early youth," as some of the Rabbis explain. The words, strictly speaking, are a part of the comparison ("they are as grass which springeth afresh in the morning") and are only thus placed first to give emphasis to the figure. In the East, one night's rain works a change, as if by magic. The field at evening was brown, parched, arid as a desert; in the morning it is green with the blades of grass. The scorching hot wind (Jas. i. 11) blows upon it, and again before evening it is withered.

6. IT IS CUT DOWN. Others (see Critical Note) render, "it is dried up." The Prayer-book version gives both meanings: "it is cut down, dried up, and withered."

7. FOR; explanatory, not argumentative. The reason of all this transitoriness is to be found in Israel's sin, which has provoked God's heavy displeasure against his people. The statement is not a general one of human sinfulness and frailty. The use of the first person, and the past tenses, shows that the writer is dealing with the facts of his own history and that of his people.

HAVE BEEN TERRIFIED, or, "utterly confounded." See the same word xlvi.

5 (note), "driven away in panic terror."

8. OUR SECRET SINS (this is favored by the parallelism) or, "our secret (heart)"; for the word is singular. The whole inner being, that which is in man (John ii. 25), the pollution and sinfulness of which is hidden from a man himself, till it is set in the light of God's countenance.

LIGHT, or more properly "lunary"; the same word which is found in Gen. i., used of the heavenly bodies, but nowhere else used in this particular phrase. (It is always *'ōr* not *m'ōr*). There seems, however, to be a special reason for this. The light of God's countenance is everywhere else spoken of as a light of love and approbation. (Hence, the Syriac renders the second clause "make us grow young again in the light of thy countenance.") Here it is a revealing light. The "light" or rather "sun" of God's countenance shines down into the dark abysses of the human heart, bringing out its hidden evils into strong and painful relief. The nearest parallel expression occurs in Prov. xv. 30, where the same word is used, rendered in the E.V. "the light of the eyes." It means "that which contains and gives the light, as the sun, a lamp," etc.

9. ARE PASSED AWAY; lit. "are turned," or "have declined," comp. Jer. vi. 4, "the day turns," i.e. declines. The same word is used in Ps. xlv. 5

- 10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten,  
 Or (perchance) by reason of much strength,<sup>g</sup> fourscore  
 years ;  
 And their pride is (but) labor and vanity,  
 For it passeth swiftly,<sup>h</sup> and we have fled away.
- 11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger,  
 And thy wrath, according to the fear that is due unto  
 thee ?
- 12 So teach us to number our days,  
 That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

[6], of the *turning*, i.e. dawn of the morning.

AS A THOUGHT. The same comparison is found in Homer, as an emblem of speed: *ὡσεὶ πτερὸν ἤε νόημα*. And Theognis speaks of the years of youth as fleeing like a thought: *αἴψα γὰρ ὥστε νόημα παρέρχεται ἄγλαος ἥβη*. But perhaps we ought to render, "as a *sigh* or *sound*," a meaning which the word has in the two other passages where it occurs, Job xxxvii. 2 (E. V. *sound*), Ezek. ii. 10 (E. V. *mourning*). Referring to this passage in Ezekiel, Kay renders here: "sad reverie." But the root idea of רָחַח is rather *to think aloud*. Hence the word may mean "a brief, passing utterance," "a fleeting sound." Others again, "as a *breath*." So the Chald., "as the breath of the mouth in winter." (Comp. xxxix. 5, 6 [6, 7], where, however, the word is different.) The LXX, and the Syr., have "as a *spider*." On this rendering and its probable origin, information will be found in Rosenm.'s note.

10. THE DAYS OF OUR YEARS (a common expression in Genesis). The literal rendering of this clause is, "The days of our years (nom. absol.) — in them are seventy years."

OR (PERCHANCE). More literally, "or if they (the years) be with much strength"

THEIR PRIDE (the word occurs only here), i.e. the pride of the years, meaning all in which men make their boast, as health, strength, honor, riches, etc.

FOR IT PASSETH, etc. Words which

come with double force from the lips of one now standing himself on the extreme verge of life, and looking back on the past. Comp. the language of St. John, "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof," etc.

11. WHO KNOWETH, i.e. "regardeth, considereth aright." This must be repeated with the next hemistich, "Who regardeth thy wrath, according," etc.

12. TEACH US; lit. "To number our days, so teach us." i.e. *in this manner* teach us, give us *this* kind of instruction. The position of the words and the accents justify this interpretation. Others take *so* (סֵךְ) in the sense of *accordingly*. Others, as meaning *rightly*. And others again connect it with what goes before: "So, i.e. according to the fear due unto thee"; or, in accordance with all the previous meditation. Of the need of this divine arithmetic Calvin well says: "Nam qui optimus erit arithmeticus, et myriades myriadam distincte ac subtiliter tenebit ac excutiet, non tamen poterit octoginta annos supputare in propria vita. Hoc certe prodigio simile est homines extra se ipsos metiri omnia intervalla, cognoscere quot pedibus distet luna a centro terrae, quam longis inter se spatiis planetae dividantur, denique omnes coeli et terrae dimensiones tenere, quum in seipsis septuaginta annos non numerent."

THAT WE MAY GAIN, gather, bring in as a harvest, the fruit of the earth, etc. Comp. the use of the same word, 2 Sam. ix. 10; Hag. i. 6; a heart of

13 Return, O Jehovah! — how long? —

And let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

14 O satisfy us in the morning with thy loving-kindness,

That we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

15 Make us glad according to the days<sup>1</sup> wherein thou hast afflicted us,

The years wherein we have seen evil.

16 Let thy work appear unto thy servants,

And thy majesty upon their children.

wisdom, a wise heart is the fruit which we are to gather from the divine instruction.

13. The prayer which follows springs from the deep source of the preceding meditation. God is everlasting, man transitory and sinful. Man does not consider his sin aright, even when God lays his hand upon him. He needs divine instruction that he may take to heart the lesson both of his sinfulness and his transitoriness. But Moses does not forget that, in spite of all, God has been and still is the home of his people. He is a compassionate God, as well as a God that punisheth transgression. And therefore he asks not only that he and his people may learn the lesson of divine wisdom, but that the God who had chastened them would visit them with his loving-kindness, that the night of sorrow may flee away, and the morning of gladness dawn. God's love, God's personal manifestation of himself, his blessing descending upon them as they enter upon their new life in the promised inheritance, — for this, and not for anything less, he prays. "And the prayer is a presage of the end of their pilgrimage, and of their forgiveness, and their settlement in the land that God had given them."

RETURN. This may mean, as in Ex. xxxii. 12, "Turn from thine anger," or, as in vi. 4 [5], "Turn to thy people."

HOW LONG. See notes on vi. 3, 4.

LET IT REPENT THEE, or, "show compassion towards." The fuller expression is found in Ex. xxxii. 12, "Let

it repent thee of the evil," etc. The phrase occurs frequently in the prophets.

14. IN THE MORNING, when the night of sorrow is spent. Comp. xlvi. 5 (note); exliii. 8.

15. AFFLICTED US, or "humbled us," the same word which is used in Deut. viii. 2, where this "humbling" is said to have been God's purpose in those forty years' wandering.

16. THY WORK. The word is used both of God's judgments and of his acts of grace. Some editions have the plural, "Thy works," but the sing. is most common in the Psalms when the reference is to God. Comp. lxxvii. 12 [13]; xcii. 4 [5]; xc. 9, and Hab. iii. 2. Here, the bringing of Israel into his inheritance is meant. The noun occurs nowhere in the Pentateuch, except in Deuteronomy. See, for instance, Deut. xxxii. 4. "Quia Deus Ecclesiam suam deserens, quodammodo alienam personam induit, scite Moses *proprium ejus opus* nominat protectionis gratiam quam pollicitus fuerat, filiis Abrahæ. . . . Hæc ratione Paulus (Rom. ix. 23) Dei bonitatem gloriæ titulo specialiter insignit." — Calvin.

THY MAJESTY. "Notandum est," says Calvin: "*decoris et pulchritudinis* nomen, unde colligimus quam incomparabilis sit erga nos Dei amor. Quamvis enim suis donis nos ornans, nihil sibi acquirat, liberaliter tamen nobiscum agendo splendere vult, et decorem suum palam facere; ac si forma ejus obscura esset, ubi nos sua beneficentia prosequi cessat."

UPON, as coming down out of heaven,

17 And let the graciousness of Jehovah our God be upon us ;  
 And the work of our hands do thou establish upon us ;  
 Yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

and so descending upon. Comp. Isa. lx. 1, 2; but this is not certain, as the prepositions **לְ** and **עַל** are often interchanged.

17. GRACIOUSNESS, or "favor." This is perhaps a better rendering here than "beauty," which I have retained in xxvii. 4, where see note; but see Prov. iii. 17; Zach. xi. 7.

THE WORK OF OUR HANDS, another expression which runs all through Deut. The order deserves notice. *God's* work is first to appear, his majesty to be revealed; then *man's* work, which is God's

work carried out by human instruments, may look for his blessing. Referring to the use of this Psalm in the office for the burial of the dead, Mr. Housman observes: "It is remarkable how not only this but the thirty-ninth Psalm, as well as the lesson (1 Cor. xv.) all close with the same thought,—*work*; as though the one great use of the shortness of life, and the coming on of death, were to stir us up to use the very utmost of the time that is left."—*Readings on the Psalms*, p. 189.

<sup>a</sup> **וַיְהוּזְלֵל**. (1) According to the existing punctuation, this is active (Pilel); but it may be either 2d pers. masc., as in the E. V., or it may be 3d fem., as the Syr. takes it: "or ever it" (i.e. the earth) "was in travail," or "brought forth," viz. plants, animals, etc. (comp. Gen. i. 11, 24). So Ewald: "*ek' kreiste Erd' und Land*. Hupfeld, Delitzsch, and Bunsen adopt the former rendering, which makes God the subject of the verb, appealing to Deut. xxxii. 18, where the same verb is used of God in reference to Israel. The act of creation, says Delitzsch, is compared to the pangs of travail. There is, however, greater harshness in the application of such a figure to the origin of the material universe, than in its application to describe the relation of his people to God. But (2) a very slight change of punctuation will give us the passive, **וְהוּזְלֵל**, which accords with the pass. **וְזָרַר** before, and which is the rendering of the Chald.; LXX, *πλασθῆναι*; Aq. and Symm., *ὠδνηθῆναι*, and Jerome, who says that this is what the Hebrew had in his time, and all the versions, "*illud autem, quod et Hebraicum habet et omnes alii interpretes: Antequam montes nascerentur, et parturiretur terra.*" Then the rendering will be: "Or ever the earth and the world were formed," lit. "born."

<sup>b</sup> **וְזָרַר**, according to Ewald, fem. subst., for **וְזָרָה**, the termination in **ר** being found early, Num. xi. 20. (Comp. Deut. xxiii. 2, where the reading varies between the form in **ר** and that in **רָ**.) The form, however, is rather that of the adj. (xxxiv. 19; Isa. lvii. 15), either in a neuter sense, *contritum, comminutum*, i.e. *dust* (comp. Gen. iii. 19), or as a predicate, *eo ut fiat contritus*, "to the condition of one who is

crushed" (comp. for the constr. Num. xxiv. 24). LXX, εἰς ταπεινώσιν; Symm. (Syro.-hex.), *ad condemnationem contritionis*; Chald., "Unto death."

<sup>c</sup> פִּי יִתְגַּבֵּר. This can neither be rendered "when it *is* past" (as the E. V.), nor "when it *shall have* past" (as De Wette); grammatically it can only be "when it passeth" or "is passing" (so Ewald, who observes, "it is at evening, when the day is just passing away, that it seems the shortest," but?), or "because it passeth"; but neither of these yields a satisfactory sense; we want the rendering of the E. V., "when it *is* past" Hupfeld therefore would take 'ט יִתְגַּבֵּר as the subject of יִתְגַּבֵּר, "For a thousand years are in thy sight when they pass (or, because they pass) but as yesterday." We have יִתְגַּבֵּר with the sing. verb in xci. 7, but there the verb stands first in the sentence (and nothing is more common than for the verb to be in the sing. when it precedes a plur. subject), and יִתְגַּבֵּר is without a substantive.

<sup>d</sup> יִזְרְקָהֶם. The verb occurs only here and lxxvii. 18, formed from the noun יִזְרַק. The preterite may stand in the protasis as the condition of what follows: "(When) thou hast swept them away with a flood, they become as a sleep," etc., like the shadowy image of a dream, which leaves no trace behind. Hupfeld connects יִזְרְקָהֶם with this clause: "they become as a sleep in the morning" (comparing lxxiii. 20; Isa. xxix. 7). No doubt this gives a good sense, and there is a difficulty in explaining the Masoretic text, "In the morning they are as grass," etc., for "the morning" cannot mean the morning of human life, or youth, as Kimchi and others understand. But on the other hand, Hupfeld's arrangement of the clauses leaves the second miserably lame: "As the grass passeth away." [On the question whether יִזְרְקָהֶם can thus be construed with the verb, see on xlii. note<sup>b</sup> (3).] On the whole, it is better to assume an incorrectness of expression, and to take "in the morning they are," etc., as = "they are as grass which *withereth* [or *springs* *afresh*, see below] in the morning."

<sup>e</sup> יִתְגַּבֵּר. Two exactly opposite interpretations have been given of this verb, both proceeding from the same radical idea, that of *change*, *transition* from one place or condition to another; but the one implying the change of new life, growth, etc., the other that of decay and death. The first meaning is common, in the Hiph. of this verb (comp. Isa. ix. 9; xl. 31; xli. 1; and of plants, Job xiv. 7; xxix. 20), but is nowhere else found in the Kal (though Gesen. gives this sense in Hab. i. 11, but wrongly). Hence Ewald, Hupfeld, Bunsen, and others, adopt the second meaning of *passing away*, in the sense of *perishing* (so the LXX has *παράλθοι*, and Jerome, *quasi herba pertransiens*). Accord-



ing to this view, the first member of ver. 6 contains the whole figure, the latter part of which is then repeated and expanded in the second member :

In the morning it flourisheth, and (then) perisheth,  
In the evening it is dried up and withered.

Gesenius, on the other hand (*Thesaur. in v.*), gives to חֲלָה, in this passage, the sense of *virot revirescit*. Zunz's Bible has *sprossset*, Delitzsch, *schosset wieder*. And amongst the older interpreters, the Chald. and Syr. render similarly. Hupfeld and others object to the repetition involved in this rendering; but that exists on either interpretation, and the repetition is merely emphatic, as for instance in xcii. 10.

<sup>f</sup> חָצַק. According to the punctuation, Paley, act., which is usually taken as an impers. instead of the passive: "one cuts down," instead of "it is cut down." Ewald, Hupfeld, and others give to the verb חָצַק the sense of *withering*, here and in xxxvii. 2; and the former observes that the beauty of the comparison consists in the fact that the flower which was so lovely in the morning fades away *of itself*, the same day, in the scorching heat of the sun. But perhaps here the pass., with the same slight change of the vowel as in note <sup>a</sup>, is preferable.

<sup>g</sup> בְּנִבְרוֹת. "Poet. plur. for sing. The word, an abstract from נָבוֹר, occurs nowhere else in this sense, but always of physical strength as *exercised*, *put forth*, as for instance in warlike prowess; so of the war-horse cxlvii. 10; Job xxxix. 19 (comp. חָרַל, Ps. xxxiii. 16), of the sun at his rising, Judges v. 31 (comp. Ps. xix. 6). The plural in particular is always used of deeds of valor, of the mighty acts of God or of men. The notion of physical strength, natural vigor, etc., is usually expressed by בְּנִבְרוֹת, בְּנִיָּו, and the like." — *Hupfeld*.

<sup>h</sup> חָצַק, not from חָצַק, in a pass. sense, *is cut off*, as Symm., *τμηθέντες*, but to be connected with חָצַק, Aram. and Syr., *to pass by*. See on lxxi. note <sup>b</sup>, where, however, חָצַק is spoken of as the part. It is better, as the Vau consec. follows, to take it as the pret.

<sup>i</sup> חָצַק, only here and Deut. xxxii. 7, instead of חָצַק; the following חָצַק, poet. plur. for חָצַק, occurs first in the same passage of Deut. Both are in construct. with the verbal clauses following, Gesen. § 114, 3.

## PSALM XCI.

THIS Psalm, which in the Hebrew has no inscription, is by the LXX, apparently without sufficient reason, ascribed to David. It celebrates, with considerable variety and beauty of expression, God's

loving and watchful care, and the perfect peace and security of those who make him their refuge. "Can the providence of God," asks Herder, "be taught in a more trustful or more tender spirit? The language is the language of a father, growing ever more fatherly as it proceeds, till at last the Great Father himself takes it up, and declares his truth and faithfulness."

Mr. Plumptre speaks of it as "an echo, verse by verse almost, of the words in which Eliphaz the Temanite (Job v. 17-23) describes the good man's life. — *Biblical Studies*, p. 184.

There is no reason to suppose that the Psalm was written during the prevalence of a pestilence (such, for instance, as that mentioned in 2 Sam. xxiv. 15),<sup>1</sup> for the variety of figures employed shows that the Psalmist is thinking of peril of every kind, coming from whatever source, and that he paints all dangers and fears vividly to the eye of his mind, in order to express the more joyfully his confidence that none of these things can move him, that over all he is more than conqueror. It is St. Paul's fervid exclamation, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" expressed in rich and varied poetry.

The structure of the Psalm is in some respects peculiar. The writer speaks at one time of or from, at another to, himself; he is both subject and object; now he utters his own experience, and now he seeks to encourage himself with divine promises; and the transitions are so abrupt, that various attempts have been made to soften or explain them. A full account of these will be found in the Critical Note on verse 2.

There is no strophical arrangement; but the general structure of the Psalm rests on the common principle of pairs of verses, except that the two concluding groups consist of three verses each, thus: 1, 2; 3, 4; 5, 6; 7, 8; 9, 10; 11-13; 14-16.

1 HE that sitteth in the secret place of the Most High,  
That resteth under the shadow of the Almighty,

1. In the first ed. this verse was rendered as if it were complete in itself:

"He that sitteth in the secret place of the Most High

Resteth under the shadow of the Almighty."

But it cannot be denied that such a rendering is open to the charge of tautology, the second clause being only a variation of the first, in accordance with

the common principle of Hebrew parallelism. There is no reason for affirming that the verb RESTETH (lit. "lodgeth, passeth the night,") is used in any emphatic sense, such as is implied by the rendering of the E.V., "He that dwelleth, etc. . . . shall abide," i.e. constantly and permanently continue. Hence the reading of the LXX, who in ver. 2 have the 3d per. ἐρεῖ, *he shall say*, instead of

<sup>1</sup> Stier mentions that some years ago an eminent physician in St. Petersburg recommended this Psalm as the best preservative against the cholera.

- 2 Saith<sup>a</sup> of Jehovah, he is my refuge and my fortress,  
My God, in whom I trust.
- 3 For HE shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunter,  
From the devouring pestilence.
- 4 With his feathers shall he cover thee,  
And under his wings shalt thou find refuge,  
His truth shall be a shield and a buckler.
- 5 Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night,  
(Nor) for the arrow that flieth by day,
- 6 For the pestilence that walketh in darkness,  
(Nor) for the sickness that wasteth<sup>b</sup> at noon-day.
- 7 A thousand shall fall at thy side,  
And ten thousand at thy right hand ;  
(But) it shall not come nigh thee.
- 8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold  
And shalt see the reward of the wicked.
- 9 For thou, O Jehovah, art my refuge : —  
Thou hast made the Most High thy habitation ;

the 1st, *I will say*, has much to commend it, and I have now adopted it. In each clause of ver. 1, 2, God is spoken of by a different name. God is "Most High," far above all the rage and malice of enemies ; "Almighty," so that none can stand before his power ; "Jehovah," the God of covenant and grace, who has revealed himself to his people ; and it is of such a God that the Psalmist says in holy confidence, he is "my God," in whom I trust.

2. SAITH, or "will say." In the Hebrew text the 1st person stands, "I will say." See more in Critical Note.

3. SNARE OF THE HUNTER. Comp. xviii. 5 [6] ; cxxiv. 7 ; Hos. ix. 8.

DEVOURING PESTILENCE. For the epithet, see Critical Note on v. 9 [10].

4. WITH HIS FEATHERS, or "pinion." See the beautiful passage, Deut. xxxii. 11, and note on Ps. xvii. 8 ; lxiii. 7.

5. TERROR BY NIGHT (comp. Song of Sol. iii. 8 ; Prov. iii. 23-26), in allusion, probably, to night-attacks like those of Gideon (Judges vii.), a favorite

artifice of Oriental warfare ; or, perhaps, to a destruction like that of Sennacherib.

7. IT SHALL NOT COME NIGH THEE. The singular refers to any and every one of the evils mentioned in ver. 5, 6. "As the general who carries within him the conviction that he is called to a great work, whilst the bullets fall thick as hail about him, stands with calm eye and firm foot, and says : I know that the bullet is not yet cast which can strike me, so stands the man of prophetic faith in the hour of danger, with the conviction that the thunderbolt will turn aside from his head, and the torrent dry up at his feet, and the arrows fall blunted from his breast, *because the Lord wills it.*" — *Tholuck.*

9. The change of persons is again perplexing. The Psalmist suddenly interrupts the address to himself which had been continued in one strain from ver. 3 (and which is resumed again in the second clause of this verse, "Thou hast made," etc.), to express his own trust in God. But whether we suppose

- 10 (Therefore) there shall no evil befall thee,  
 Neither shall any plague come nigh thy tent ;
- 11 For he will give his angels charge over thee,  
 To keep thee in all thy ways ;
- 12 On (their) hands they shall bear thee (up),  
 Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
- 13 Upon the lion and adder shalt thou tread,  
 Thou shalt trample the young lion and serpent under  
 thy feet.
- 14 " Because he hath set his love upon me,  
 Therefore will I deliver him ;  
 I will set him on high, because he knoweth my name.

the address in ver. 3-8, and again that which, beginning with the second member of ver. 9, extends to the end of ver. 13, to be the words of the Psalmist himself, or whether they are put into some other mouth with a view to musical effect — in either case the words are really a voice from heaven, the promise of God uttered to and appropriated by the soul.

10. **TENT.** An instance of the way in which the patriarchal life became stereotyped, so to speak, in the language, comp. Mal. ii. 12. There is an allusion, perhaps, to Israel's exemption from the plagues of Egypt (Ex. xii. 23).

11. **ANGELS;** not as "guardian angels," but as God's ministers in the government of the world, and especially as "sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation." Comp. xxxiv. 7. By the "lion and adder" there is no need to understand exclusively, or chiefly, the powers of darkness, the evil spirits (as Delitzsch thinks). As by "a stone" all hinderances, so by "the lion and dragon" all hostile powers, are denoted, more particularly in the natural world. This may be illustrated from histories like those of Samson, David, Daniel, etc., and especially in the New Test. by the history of the temptation (Mark i. 13). What a prophecy of the victory of faith over the material as well

as over the spiritual world, and that not only by miraculous, but by non-miraculous means! Comp. Mark xvi. 18 ; Luke x. 19 ; John xiv. 12. The LXX render ver. 11, 12, *ἔτι τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ ἐντελεῖται περὶ σοῦ, τοῦ διαφυλάξαι σε ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς σου. Ἐπὶ χειρῶν ἀρούσιν σε, μήποτε προσκόψῃς πρὸς λίθον τὸν πόδα σου.* The quotation both in Matt. iv. 6, and Luke iv. 10, 11, is made from the LXX, but the former omits the whole of the clause "to keep thee," etc., and the latter the words "in all thy ways," so that it would seem that the omission of this last was designed in the mouth of the tempter. The "ways" spoken of in the Psalm are the "ways" of obedience and duty, not the "ways" of presumption or self-seeking. S. Bernard, speaking of the temptation, says: "Non est via haec, sed ruina, et si via, tua est, non illius." "Quonquam autem de singulis Ecclesiae membris agit propheta, non temere hoc diabolus aptavit ad personam Christi. Nam uterque semper ei sit propositum pervertere et corrumpere veritatem Dei, in generalibus tamen principiis speciosum colorem adhibet, satisque acutus est theologus." — *Calvin.*

14-16. God's answer to the soul which trusts in him. "God himself comes forward to establish the faith of his servant, writes deeper in the soul so

15 When he calleth upon me, I will answer him.

I will be with him in trouble,

I will deliver him and honor him ;

16 With long life will I satisfy him,

And show him my salvation."

great a consolation, and confirms the testimony to his servant. 'He hath set his love upon me; he knoweth my name; he calleth upon me'—these are the marks of a true servant of God. God draws nigh to one who so draws nigh to him." Comp. with this passage l. 15, 23.

16. LONG LIFE; lit. "length of days."

The special promise of long life at the close, as a temporal blessing, is in accordance with the general character of the Old Testament. Still it is possible that men like the Psalmist, full of faith in God, attached a deeper and more spiritual meaning to promises and hopes like these, than was attached to them by the majority of their countrymen.

<sup>a</sup> אָזְיָרָא. This, as it stands, can only be the 1st pers. fut., which is embarrassing, as the 3d pers. precedes. This and other abrupt changes of person in the Psalm have given rise to every variety of explanation.

Delitzsch thinks that the Psalm is dramatic in character, and that it must be distributed between three voices, and may have been possibly so sung in divine service. The first voice utters ver. 1: "He that sitteth in the secret place, that abideth in the shadow of the Almighty," and is taken up by the second voice, which sings ver. 2. The first voice resumes at the beginning of ver. 3, and continues to the end of ver. 8. The second voice then utters the first clause of ver. 9, "For thou, O Jehovah, art my refuge." And the first voice begins with "Thou hast made the Most High thy habitation," and goes on to the end of ver. 13. The third voice, which utters the words of God himself, is heard in verses 14-16.

Probably this, on the whole, is the simplest explanation of the change of speakers in the Psalm; but ver. 1 may have been sung by the choir rather than by a single voice.

Tholuck's arrangement is the same, except that he makes ver. 1 complete in itself, and that he gives ver. 1, ver. 3-8, and 9b-13 to the precentor; ver. 2 and 9a to the choir, and supposes 14-16 (the divine words) to be sung by the precentor and choir together.

Herder in like manner distributes the Psalm between two voices, but gives verses 1, 2, and 9a to the first voice, and the rest of the Psalm to the second.

Ewald has a different conception of the structure of the Psalm. Partly, he thinks, the poet expresses his own feelings as from himself, and partly as if they were uttered by another. He seems to listen to

the thoughts of his own spirit, till they become clear and distinct, like some prophetic words, or some divine oracle speaking to him from without, and giving him thus the assurance and the consolation afresh which had already sprung up in his heart.

Hupfeld, who is followed by Bunsen, alters the text. He would supply אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה at the beginning of ver. 1, and read אֲשֶׁר instead of אֲנִי in ver. 2. He renders ver. 1, 2.

“ [Blessed is he] who sitteth in the hiding-place of the Most High,  
Who passeth the night in the shadow of the Almighty,  
Who saith to Jehovah, my refuge,” etc.

Again in ver. 9 he supplies הִיאֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה :

“ Because [thou hast said] ‘Thou Jehovah art my refuge,’  
(And) hast made the Most High thy habitation.”

Such alterations may, no doubt, “get rid of all difficulty at a stroke,” but they are purely conjectural, and have no support from mss. or versions. The difficulty is older than any of the existing versions. The LXX. felt the awkwardness of the change from the 3d pers. in ver. 1 to the 1st in ver. 2, and hence they retained the 3d pers., ἐρεῖ, in ver. 2. Jerome likewise has *dicens* in ver. 2, as if he read אֲשֶׁר. The Syr. also has the 3d pers. instead of the 1st. The Chald. distributes the Psalm between three speakers. On any view there is much difficulty in determining the relation of the first verse to what follows. Taken by itself it is tautological — the second clause is merely a repetition of the first, for the verb יִתְהַלֵּךְ is not, as Michaelis and others suppose, emphatic. It would seem better, therefore, with the Syr., LXX, and Jerome, to retain the 3d pers. in ver. 2, and to read either אֲשֶׁר or יִתְהַלֵּךְ, the change in either case being very slight. The latter is preferable, as in the former both the subject and predicate would be participial. Ewald, however, thinks the poet is himself the subject in both verses; first, as *looking at* himself (hence, 3d pers.), then, as *speaking of* himself, 1st pers.): “The man who sitteth . . . who resteth, etc., . . . even I say,” etc. He refers to Job xii. 4. See also Isa. xxviii. 16.

<sup>b</sup> יְהוָה for הַיְהוָה from יְהוָה. Comp. for similar forms Prov. xxix. 6; Isa. xlii. 4. The LXX καὶ δαυμονίου, from a false reading וְשֵׁר.

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## PSALM XCII.

THIS Psalm is called a Psalm for the Sabbath-day, and, as we learn from the Talmud (Tr. Kiddushin), was appointed to be used in the temple service on that day. It was sung in the morning, when, on the

offering of the first lamb, the wine was poured out as a drink-offering unto the Lord (Num. xxxviii. 9). At the evening sacrifice one of the three passages, Ex. xv. 1-10; 11-19; Num. xxi. 17-20, was sung. The Talmudic treatise above referred to gives the following as the selection of Psalms for the service, each day of the week, in the second temple. On the first day, Ps. xxiv.; on the second, Ps. xlvi.; on the third, Ps. lxxxii.; on the fourth, Ps. xciv.; on the fifth, Ps. lxxxv.; on the sixth, Ps. xciii.; on the seventh, "A Psalm or song for the Sabbath-day, i.e. a Psalm or song for the future age (the age of the Messiah), all of which will be Sabbath." In Rosh ha-Shana, however, the question is raised whether the Psalm refers to the Sabbath of creation (R. Nehemia), or the final Sabbath of the world (R. Akiba). The title in the Targum, "Of the first Adam," favors the former, as does also the opinion of the older Rabbis quoted by Kimchi, who tells us that this Psalm "was said by the first man who was created on the eve of the Sabbath, and when he awoke early in the morning of the Sabbath, uttered this Psalm" (Phillips, Vol. ii. p. 302). Athanasius supposes the latter to be intended, ἀνεί ἐκέλευν τὴν γενησομένην ἀνάπαυσιν. Better Augustine, "Dicit unde solent perturbari homines, et docet te agere sabbatum in corde tuo." It cannot be said, however, that there is anything in the contents of the Psalm which, as pointing either to the future or the present rest, would account for its selection as the Sabbatical Psalm.<sup>1</sup>

It celebrates in joyful strain the greatness of God's works, and especially his righteous government of the world, as manifested in the overthrow of the wicked, and the prosperity and final triumph of the righteous. The *apparent* success of the ungodly for a time is admitted, but this is a mystery which worldly men, whose understanding has become darkened, cannot penetrate (ver. 6). The Psalm therefore touches upon the same great principles of the divine government which are laid down in such Psalms as the first, the thirty-seventh, the forty-ninth, and the seventy-third. But here there is no struggle with doubt and perplexity, as in the seventy-third; the poet is beyond all doubt, above all perplexity; he has not fallen down to the low level of the brutish man (comp. lxxiii. 22 with ver. 6 of this Psalm); he is rejoicing in the full and perfect conviction of the righteousness of God.

The strophical arrangement of the Psalm is doubtful. Hupfeld

<sup>1</sup> This and all the Psalms which follow, as far as the one hundredth, are liturgical, in character, and were evidently intended for use in the temple service. They bear also some resemblance to one another in point of style, especially in the anadiplosis, xcii. 9 [10]; xciv. 1, 3; xcvi. 13. Compare also xciii. 1 with xcvi. 10, and the recurrence of the same expression in xciv. 3; xcvi. 4; xcvi. 9.

groups the first three verses and the last four together, and disposes the intermediate verses in pairs. Delitzsch is clearly wrong when he distributes the Psalm into five groups, each of three verses. I believe that we have two principal divisions (ver. 1-7, and ver. 9-15), each division consisting of seven verses, separated by a verse (the eighth), which, unlike all the rest, is comprised in a single line. Each seven is again subdivided into a three and four. The whole scheme, therefore, stands thus: 1-3, 4-7, (8) 9-11, 12-15. All the joy of the Psalmist culminates in that great fact, that Jehovah is throned on high for evermore; from that flows the overthrow of the wicked and the triumph of the righteous.

[A Psalm. A Song for the Sabbath-Day.]

- 1 It is a good thing to give thanks unto Jehovah,  
And to sing psalms unto thy name, O Most High,
- 2 To declare thy loving-kindness in the morning,  
And thy faithfulness every night,
- 3 With a ten-stringed instrument and with the lute,  
With sound of music <sup>a</sup> upon the harp.
- 4 For thou hast made me glad, O Jehovah, because of that  
thou hast done,  
I will sing for joy because of the works of thy hands.
- 5 How great, O Jehovah, are thy works!  
Very deep are thy thoughts.
- 6 A brutish man <sup>b</sup> knoweth not,  
And a fool doth not consider this.

1-3. Introduction, expressive of real delight in God's service.

IT IS A GOOD THING, i.e. a delightful thing, not merely acceptable to God, but a real joy to the heart.

4. The great reason of all this joy. The Psalmist has witnessed the manifestation and the triumph of the eternal righteousness of God.

THAT THOU HAST DONE, or "thy doing"; not here God's power in creation (a misunderstanding which may have led to this Psalm being associated with the sabbatical rest of creation), but God's moral government of the world.

So also in the next clause **THE WORKS OF THY HANDS**, as in cxliii. 5.

5. HOW GREAT; not as in lxxiii, "it was a trouble in mine eyes." <sup>a</sup> Faith wonders and adores. Men's thoughts on such subjects are but folly. It is as though they considered not (ver. 6). Faith is the true interpreter of the world (ver. 7).

VERY DEEP. Comp. xxxvi. 6 [7]; xl. 5 [6]; cxxxix. 17; Rom. xi. 33.

6. A FOOL; in the same sense as in xiv. 1. "Stultos autem vocat omnes incredulos, ac tacite eos fidelibus opponit, quibus Deus per Verbum suum et Spiri-



- 7 When the wicked spring as the green herb,  
 And all the workers of iniquity do flourish,  
 It is that they may be destroyed<sup>e</sup> forever.
- 8 And thou, O Jehovah, art (throned) on high for evermore.
- 9 For lo, thine enemies, O Jehovah,  
 For lo, thine enemies shall perish,  
 All the workers of iniquity shall melt away.
- 10 But thou hast exalted my horn like (the horn of) a wild ox ;  
 I am anointed<sup>d</sup> with fresh oil.
- 11 Mine eye also hath seen (its desire) upon them that lie in  
 wait for me,<sup>e</sup>  
 And my ear hath heard (its desire) of the evil-doers who  
 rise against me.
- 12 The righteous shall spring as the palm,  
 He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

tum illucet. Nam peraeque omnium mentes occupat haec inscitia et caecitas, donec coelesti gratia oculati reddamur." — *Calvin*.

8. This verse, consisting of but one line, expresses the great central fact on which all the doctrine of the Psalm rests. This is the great pillar of the universe and of our faith. "Hoc elogium non tantum honoris causa ad Dei essentiam refertur sed ad fidei nostrae futuram: ac si dictum esset, quamvis in terra anxie gemant fideles ac trepidant, Deum tamen, qui custos est vitae ipsorum, in sublimi manere et eos protegere virtute aeterna." — *Calvin*.

ON HIGH. The word only occurs here as a predicate of God; lit. "height," or "in the height" (accusative). Comp. the adverbial use of the same word in lvi. 2 [3], where see note. Elsewhere God is said "to inhabit the height." Isa. lvii. 15, to be "glorious in the height," xciii. 4, and in Mic. vi. 6 we have "God of height," i. e. "God on high," or "God in heaven."

9. SHALL MELT AWAY; lit. "shall separate themselves, disperse," breaking up, as it were, without the application of any external force.

10. FRESH OIL, or "green oil," as in Latin *oleum viride*, said of the best oil.

11. MINE EYE, etc. See for this expression liv. 7 [9]; lix. 10, etc.; the one which follows in the next clause, of the ear hearing with satisfaction of the overthrow of his enemies, seems to have been expressly framed to correspond to the other; it occurs nowhere else in this sense.

THEM THAT LIE IN WAIT FOR ME; the same whom in ver. 9 he calls "thine enemies." Sure of the triumph of the kingdom of God, he is sure also of his own triumph.

12-15. What is true of the Psalmist is true of all who are partakers of the same faith. The date-palm and the cedar are selected as the loveliest images of verdure, fruitfulness, undecaying vigor and perpetuity. "Throughout the year, in the winter's cold as in the summer's heat, the palm continues green. Not by years but by centuries is the cedar's age reckoned."—*Tholuck*. There is also a contrast: "The wicked spring as the green herb, or grass" (ver. 7), which soon withers away, "The righteous spring as the palm," which is ever green and ever fruitful. Besides this,

- 13 They that are planted in the house of Jehovah  
 Shall spring in the courts of our God ;  
 14 They shall still bear fruit in old age,  
 They shall be full of sap and green,  
 15 To declare that Jehovah is upright,  
 My rock in whom there is no unrighteousness.<sup>f</sup>

there are only two passages in the Old Testament where the palm is used in comparison, — Cant. vii. 7, where it is said of the bride, “Thy stature is like to a palm-tree”; Jer. x. 5, where the idols are said to be “upright as a palm-tree”; and one in the Apocrypha (Eccles. xxiv. 14), “I was exalted like a palm-tree in Engaddi.” This, as Dr. Howson (Smith’s *Dict. of the Bible*, art. “Palm-tree”) has noticed, is remarkable, considering the beauty of the tree, and its frequent recurrence in the scenery of Palestine.

13. The figure need not be so far pressed as to imply that such trees actually grew in the temple-court (see on lii. 8). Still it is by no means improbable that the precincts of the temple,

like the Haram es-Sherif, contained trees.

14. THEY SHALL BEAR FRUIT, in allusion probably to the great fruitfulness of the date-palm, which, when it reaches maturity, produces three or four hundred pounds’ weight of fruit, and has been known even to produce six hundred pounds’ weight.

15. TO DECLARE, etc. Thus in the end God’s righteous government of the world will be manifested. The flourishing of the workers of iniquity has been but for a moment (ver. 7, 9, 11); the joy and prosperity of the righteous is forever. This is the signal proof of God’s righteousness; this is the justification of the Psalmist’s confidence resting ever on that unshaken “Rock.”

<sup>a</sup> הַקִּיּוֹן. As this word occurs in the midst of others signifying musical instruments, it seems most natural to suppose that it also means an instrument of some kind. But usage and the derivation of the word are rather in favor of Gesenius’s interpretation, *noise, sound* (ad strepitum cithara factum; comp. ix. 16 [17]); nor does the prep. עָלַי militate against this. It may mean not only *upon*, but *accompanying*. Hupfeld renders, “zum Spiel mit der Harfe,” and Delitzsch, “auf sinnigem Spiel mit Cither.”

<sup>b</sup> פָּרַא אָרָם, “a brute-man,” a compound expression, like Gen. xvi. 12; Ezek. xxxvi. 38. Comp. xxxiv. 22, only that the relative position of the two words is inverted.

<sup>c</sup> לְהוֹשֵׁקָרָם. An instance of the periphrastic use of the infin., with לְ for the future (see on lxii. note<sup>e</sup>); but perhaps the apodosis begins with וְנִצְרִיעַי, “then all the workers of iniquity flourish to their everlasting destruction.”

<sup>d</sup> בְּלוֹתָי. 1st Perf. sing. anomalously with the accent on the last syllable (as cxvi. 6; Isa. xliv. 16). The form is rather that of the inf. with suffix, and so it was taken, against the context, by the older trans-

lators. LXX. τὸ γῆρας μου; Symm. ἡ παλαιώσις μου; Jerome, *senecta mea*. But this requires a verb to be supplied, on the principle of zeugma, from the first clause. "Thou hast exalted (= refreshed) my old age with fresh oil." It is preferable, therefore, to take the word as 1st Perf. sing., here apparently intrans. (so Kīmchi), though elsewhere trans. (cf. Gen. xi. 7, 9); and it *may* be trans. here, if we supply the object, *the horn*, or *the head*.

<sup>e</sup> שִׁוְרָר, similar participial forms occur Num. xxxv. 32; Jer. xvii. 13 (K'ri שִׁוְרָר), Mic. ii. 8. שִׁוְרָר = שִׁוְרָר v. 9, and the construction with the suffix may be compared with קָמַר xlviii. 40, but שִׁוְרָר takes the acc. in Num. xxiii. 9.

<sup>f</sup> עֲלָתָהּ, to be read עֲלָתָהּ, as in Job v. 16, from עוֹלָה, Isa. lxi. 8, fem. of עוֹלָה (by contraction of the original diphthong *au* into *o*), instead of the more common עוֹלָה, which the K'ri prefers (עוֹלָתָהּ, as cxv. 3).

## PSALM XCIII.

THE sum and substance of this Psalm is contained, as Hitzig has remarked, in the eighth verse of the preceding Psalm. It celebrates the majesty of Jehovah as ruler of the universe. He is Creator of the world. He has been its King from everlasting; it rests upon him, and is stayed by his might. All the powers of nature obey him, however lawless they may seem, as all the swelling and rage of men, of which those are but a figure, must obey him. But his majesty and his glory are seen, not only in controlling the powers of nature, and whatsoever exalteth and opposeth itself against him, but in the faithfulness of his word, and in the holiness of his house.

As the Psalm speaks of a particular manifestation of Jehovah's kingly rule, of a time when he has taken to himself his great power and reigned (see note on ver. 1), it may in this sense be termed Messianic. For, as Delitzsch has pointed out, the Old Testament prophecy concerning the kingdom of God consists of two series of predictions, the one of which speaks of the reign of the anointed of Jehovah out of Zion, the other of the reign of Jehovah himself as the great King over all the earth. These two lines of prophecy converge in the Old Testament, but never meet. Only here and there do we discern an intimation (as in xlv. 7) that the two are one.

The LXX (Codex B) has the inscription, εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ προσαββαίου, ὅτε κατόπισται ἡ γῆ, αἶνος ᾠδῆς τῆς Δαυίδ. The latter part of this

title is probably merely conjectural. The former agrees with the Talmudic tradition, according to which this is the Friday Psalm, and, as is said in Rosh ha-Shana, 31 *a*, "because God on the sixth day had finished his work, and begun to reign over his creatures." Perhaps this is what is meant also by the ὅτε κατώκισται (or κατώκιστο), "when the earth was peopled with living creatures," of the LXX.

1 JEHOVAH is King, he hath clothed himself with majesty ;  
 Jehovah hath clothed, he hath girded himself with  
 strength.

Yea, the world is established that it cannot be moved.

2 Thy throne is established of old ;

Thou art from everlasting.

3 The floods have lifted up, O Jehovah,

The floods have lifted up their voice,

The floods lift up their roaring.

1. IS KING. More exactly, "hath become King," as if by a solemn coronation (comp. the same expression of a new monarch ascending the throne, 2 Sam. xv. 10; 1 Kings i. 11; 2 Kings ix. 13). He has been King from everlasting, but now his kingdom is visibly set up, his power and his majesty fully displayed and acknowledged; as it is said in the Apocalypse of the final manifestation, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

HATH CLOTHED . . . HIMSELF. Comp. civ. 2; Isa. li. 9; Job xl. 10. In the second member of the verse the verb is rhythmically repeated, and the noun "strength" really belongs to both verbs. (So the LXX.) For the further description of this girding with strength, see Isa. lix. 17; lxiii. 1; Dan. vii. 9.

YEA, THE WORLD, etc. The effect of the divine rule and power, as in xevi. 10. The reference is apparently not merely to the creation of the world and its providential administration, but to these as representing in a figure the moral government of God. For the throne of God in ver. 2 denotes, as Calvin says, his righteous sway and government, and

the language of ver. 3 is to be understood figuratively as well as literally.

3. THE FLOODS. The word commonly signifies *streams, rivers*, but occasionally also is used of the sea in poetic parallelism, as in xxiv. 2; John ii. 3 [4]; Jer. xlvi. 7, 8.

HAVE LIFTED UP. The use of the past tense had led some commentators to see a reference to some historic event — some gathering of hostile powers, who are described under the figure of the sea and the waves roaring. But the change in the last clause of the verse to the present tense renders this doubtful. Hupfeld infers from the use of the word "floods" (comp. Hab. iii. 8), the epithet of "glorious," or "mighty" in next verse, which is used of waters only here and in Ex. xv. 10, and the "lifting up the voice," as in Hab. iii. 10 (comp. xxvii. 17, 18), that there is an allusion to the passage of the Red Sea.

THEIR ROARING; lit. "their blow," or "beating," said of the dashing of the surf in thunders upon the shore. The word occurs only here; in the next verse the plural "voices" is used here only of the sea, elsewhere always of the thunder. Hence some have sup-

4 More than the voices of many waters,  
The glorious <sup>a</sup> breakers of the sea,  
Jehovah on high is glorious.

5 Thy testimonies are very faithful.  
Holiness becometh thy house, O Jehovah, forever.

posed a comparison, "Louder than the thunders."

4. This verse is the answer to ver. 3, and may have been sung antiphonally. The construction is not very clear. For the different renderings see Critical Note.

GLORIOUS, or "mighty." An epithet of the waves in Ex. xv. 10, of God in Isa. xxxiii. 21.

JEHOVAH ON HIGH. Comp. xcii. 8 [9]; xxix. 10.

5. The transition is abrupt, from the

majesty of God as seen in his dominion in the world of nature, to his revelation of himself in his word. At the same time there is a connection between the two, as in xix. God who rules the world, he whose are the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, has given his testimonies to his people, a sure and faithful word, and has himself come to dwell among them, making his house and his people holy.

FOREVER; lit. "for length of days," as in xxxiii. 6.

<sup>a</sup> אֲהִירִים. According to the common accentuation, this adj., though standing before its noun, is not a predicate, but an attribute, "the glorious, or mighty breakers of the sea," and Hupfeld would defend this by xcii. 12, where, however, the case is not parallel, the participle, with the pron. and noun following, being so closely connected as to form as it were one word, בְּקַ' ע' מ', or where, at least, the latter word might be regarded as in appos. with the former. Perhaps, however, as it has been suggested that there מְהִירִים is a gloss, so in like manner here מִשְׁבְּרֵי קָם may have crept into the text. There is a similar ambiguity arising from the place of the adj. in Isa. xxviii. 21, ... זָר מְשִׁטְהוּ זָר מְשִׁטְהוּ, commonly rendered, as in E. V., "His strange work ... his strange act," although many there insist on retaining the predicate: "His work is strange ... his act is strange," etc. But in Isa. xxxiii. 21, there can be no ambiguity. The adj. (and it is the same adj. as here in the Psalm, אֲהִירִי) can clearly be only an attribute, not a predicate, "the glorious Jehovah," and this fully justifies a similar rendering here. So too, apparently, Isa. liii. 11 צַדִּיק עֲבָדִי, "My righteous servant." But instead of *Merca* with אֲהִירִים, or *Tarcha*, as Ben-Asher reads, Ben-Naphtali has *Dechî*, and according to this we may take both adjectives as qualifying מְהִירִים, and then repeat the prep. from the first clause before מ' ר'. "More than the voices of many mighty waters," etc. Or we may take the prep. בִּן, not as expressing comparison, but as causal, and then two renderings are open to us, either (a) "Because

of the voices of many waters, mighty are the breakers of the sea; Jehovah on high is mighty" [and this is supported by the LXX, except that perhaps they intended ἀπὸ φωνῶν ὑδάτων πολλῶν to be joined with the previous verse]; or (b) "By reason of the voices of many mighty waters, even the breakers of the sea, Jehovah is mighty"; i.e. these great phenomena of nature show forth his glory and his majesty.

There is yet another explanation of the construction possible. The Psalmist may have begun with a comparison, and then have broken it off in order to bring the second and third members into more forcible juxtaposition. Above the voices of many waters, — glorious are the breakers of the sea, Jehovah on high is glorious.

### PSALM XCIV.

By the LXX this is called "A lyric Psalm of David, for the fourth day of the week" (τετραῖδι σαββάτου). It is probably not a Psalm of David, but the latter part of the inscription accords with the Talmudic tradition (see introduction to Ps. xcii.).

The Psalm opens with an appeal to God to execute righteous vengeance on wicked rulers or judges who oppress and crush the helpless, whilst in their folly they dream that his long-suffering is but the supineness of indifference. It concludes with the expression of a calm confidence that God's righteousness will be finally manifested. The righteous, taught by God's fatherly discipline, and upheld by him, can wait for the end, when the wicked shall reap the reward of their wickedness, and shall be utterly destroyed.

The conviction thus expressed of the righteousness of God's government is similar to that in Ps. xcii., except that here this conviction is grounded more directly on personal experience.

The Psalm may be thus divided:

1. An introduction, consisting of an appeal to God (ver. 1, 2).
2. The reason for this appeal, namely, the insolence and oppression of the wicked (ver. 3-7).
3. The blindness and folly of such conduct, as a virtual contempt of God (ver. 8-11).
4. In contrast with this the blessedness of those who are taught of God, and who can therefore in their confidence possess their souls (ver. 12-15).
5. The strong personal conviction of Jehovah's righteousness, based upon past experience (ver. 16-19).

6. A conviction which extends also to the future, and by virtue of which the Psalmist sees righteous retribution already accomplished upon the wicked (ver. 20-23).

- 1 O JEHOVAH, thou God to whom vengeance belongeth,  
Thou God to whom vengeance belongeth, shine forth.<sup>a</sup>
- 2 Lift up thyself, thou Judge of the earth  
Render a reward to the proud.
- 3 How long shall the wicked, O Jehovah,  
How long shall the wicked triumph ?
- 4 They belch out, they speak arrogant things,  
All the workers of iniquity carry themselves proudly.<sup>b</sup>
- 5 Thy people, O Jehovah, they crush,  
And thine inheritance do they afflict.
- 6 They slay the widow and the stranger,  
And they murder the fatherless ;
- 7 And they say : “ Jah seeth not,  
Neither doth the God of Jacob consider.”
- 8 Consider, O ye brutish among the people !  
And ye fools, when will ye be wise ?

1. GOD TO WHOM, etc. ; lit. “ God of vengeance.” Comp. ix. 12 [13] ; Jer. li. 56. For the anadiplosis, see again ver. 3, 23, and xciii. 1, 3.

3. With this verse begins the complaint, the expostulation with God, and therefore clearly the first strophe. Delitzsch and others wrongly join this with the two preceding verses as forming part of the introduction. So far from that, it is quite possible, with the E.V., to regard ver. 4 as continuing the question of ver. 3, “ (How long) shall they pour forth,” etc.

4. THEY BELCH OUT, THEY SPEAK, two verbs having one noun as the object (as in xciii. 1) = “ they pour forth hard, or proud (xxx. 18 [19] ; 1 Sam. ii. 3) speeches.” The first verb is rendered “ they belch out ” in lix. 7.

5. CRUSH ; Prov. xxii. 22 ; Isa. iii. 5.

6. The LXX have transposed the

words “ fatherless ” and “ stranger,” and render the last “ proselyte ” (*προσήλυτον*). The widow and the fatherless are mentioned, as often, as particular instances of those whose misery ought to excite compassion, but whose defencelessness makes them the easy prey of the wicked. There is no abbreviated comparison, as Hengst. maintains, — “ Thy people who are as helpless as the widow,” etc. But the language shows that domestic tyrants, not foreign enemies, are aimed at.

7. JAH SEETH NOT. Comp. x. 11 ; lix. 7 [8]. Not that they deliberately utter such blasphemy, but their conduct amounts to this, it is a practical atheism. See on xiv. 1.

8. The utter folly of this denial of a divine providence, because judgment is not executed speedily. The argument which follows is from the perfections of the creature to those of the Creator.

- 9 He that planteth the ear, shall he not hear?  
 Or he that formeth the eye, shall he not see?  
 10 He that instructeth the nations, shall not he reprove,  
 (Even) he that teacheth man knowledge?  
 11 Jehovah knoweth the thoughts of man,  
 That they are vanity.  
 12 Blessed is the man whom thou instructest, O Jah,  
 And teachest out of thy law,

The very nature of God and of man convicts these fools of their folly. "Can anything," says Herder, "more to the point be urged, even in our time, against the tribe of philosophers who deny a purpose and design in nature? All that they allege of the dead abstraction which they term 'nature,' the heathen ascribed to their gods; and what the prophets say against the one, holds against the other."

AMONG THE PEOPLE, i.e. of Israel. "Gravius est autem vocare stultos in populo, quam simpliciter stultos; eo quod minus excusabilis sit talis amentia in filiis Abrahæ, de quibus dictum fuerat à Mose, Quis populus tam nobilis, etc. (Deut. iv. 7)."—*Calvin*.

10. In the English Bible this is broken up into two questions, and a clause is supplied in the second member, which does not exist in the Hebrew, "Shall not he know?" But this is incorrect. There is a change in the argument. Before, it was from the physical constitution of man; now it is from the moral government of the world. He who is the great educator of the race ("who nurtareth the heathen," Prayer-book version), who gives them all the knowledge they possess, has he not the right which even human teachers possess of chastening, correcting, reproving? He may not always exercise the right, but it is his. This, which I believe to be the true interpretation of the verse, is that of the LXX: 'Ο παιδεύων ἔθνη, οὐχ ἐλέγξει; ὁ διδάσκων ἄνθρωπον γνῶσιν; or there may be a change in the appeal, a breaking off of the question, as one he need not ask. The Psalmist was going

to say at the end of ver. 10, "Shall not he know?" finishing his question as the preceding verses, but instead of that he gives the answer directly in ver. 11, "He knoweth," etc. Hengst. remarks that the doctrine of an influence exercised by God upon the consciences of the heathen is of comparatively rare occurrence in the Old Testament, a fact to be explained by the very depraved condition of such of the heathen as were the near neighbors of the Israelites, and among whom few traces of such an influence could be seen. On this divine education see Rom. i. 20; ii. 14, 15.

11. So far from "not seeing," "not regarding," as these "brutish" persons fondly imagine, Jehovah reads their inmost thoughts and devices, as he reads the hearts of all men, even though for a time they are unpunished. The verse is quoted in 1 Cor. iii. 20, ὁ Κύριος γινώσκει τοὺς διαλογισμοὺς τῶν σοφῶν ὅτι εἰσὶν μάταιοι, which only deviates from the version of the LXX in the substitution of the special σοφῶν, as more suitable to the apostle's argument, for the general ἀνθρώπων.

VANITY; lit. "a breath," as in xxxix. 5, 6. The second clause of the verse is ambiguous. The pronoun "they," although masc., may refer to the noun "thoughts" (fem.), but perhaps rather to the collective "man." Probably the best rendering of this clause would be, "For they (i.e. men) are but a breath"; this vanity, weakness, and emptiness of men being alleged as a reason why God sees and understands their thoughts; they are finite, whereas he is infinite.

12. The Psalmist turns to comfort the



- 13 To give him rest from the days of evil,  
Till the pit be digged for the wicked.
- 14 For Jehovah will not thrust away his people,  
Neither will he forsake his inheritance.
- 15 For judgment must turn unto righteousness,  
And all the upright in heart shall follow it.
- 16 Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers?  
Who will set himself up for me against the workers of  
iniquity?
- 17 Unless<sup>c</sup> Jehovah had been my help,  
My soul had soon dwelt in silence.
- 18 (But) when I said, My foot hath slipped,  
Thy loving-kindness, O Jehovah, held me up.
- 19 In the multitude of my anxious thoughts within me,  
Thy comforts refreshed my soul.

individual sufferer. God who educates the heathen (ver. 10), educates also the Israelite, giving him a better instruction (comp. Deut. viii. 5; Job v. 17), inasmuch as it is that of a direct revelation.

13. TO GIVE HIM REST. This is the end of God's teaching, that his servant may wait in patience, unmoved by, safe FROM, THE DAYS OF EVIL (comp. xlix. 5 [6]), seeing the evil all round him lifting itself up, but seeing also the secret, mysterious retribution, slowly but surely, accomplishing itself. In this sense the "rest" is the rest of a calm, self-possessed spirit, as Isa. vii. 4; xxx. 15; xxxii. 17; lvii. 20, and "to give him" = "that thou mayest give him." Others interpret the "rest" of external rest, deliverance from sufferings (comp. Job iii. 13, 17); then "to give" would be = "so as to give," etc.

14. FOR. God will give peace to the man whom he teaches, *for* he is a partaker of the covenant, one of that PEOPLE and that INHERITANCE which he cannot forsake, and he cannot forsake them till righteousness ceases to be righteousness.

15. FOR JUDGMENT, etc., or "for judgment shall come back unto righteousness with all them that are upright

in its train," i.e. with the approval of all good men. Judgment cannot always be perverted, cannot always fail. It must appear in its true character at last as very righteousness. This, no doubt, was what Luther meant by his forcible rendering:

"Denn Recht muss doch Recht bleiben."  
SHALL FOLLOW IT; lit. "(shall be) after it," i.e. shall give in their adhesion to it, openly avow their attachment to it. For the phrase, see 1 Sam. xii. 14; 2 Sam. ii. 10; 1 Kings xiv. 8.

16-19. Application to himself, and record of his own experience.

AGAINST; lit. "with"; but we need not suppose that it = "to fight with," as Hupfeld explains. See note on lv. 18 [19].

SET HIMSELF UP, in battle, as in ii. 2; 2 Sam. xxxiii. 10, 12.

17. SILENCE, i.e. of the grave, or the unseen world, as in xxxi. 18; cxv. 17.

19. ANXIOUS THOUGHTS, or "perplexities"; lit. "divided or branching thoughts," whether doubts or cares. Kay, "busy thoughts." The word occurs, as here, with the *r* inserted, in cxxxix. 23, and the simpler form in Job iv. 13.

- 20 Can the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee,<sup>a</sup>  
Which frameth mischief by statute ?
- 21 They gather themselves in troops against the soul of the  
righteous,  
And condemn the innocent blood.
- 22 But Jehovah hath been a high tower for me,  
And my God the rock of my refuge.
- 23 And he hath requited them their own iniquity,  
And shall destroy them through their own wickedness :  
Jehovah our God shall destroy them.

20-23. This strophe, like the last, applies the general doctrine of the Psalm to the individual case, the personal security of the Psalmist, and the righteous retribution visited upon the evil-doers. But for "Jehovah *my* God," in ver. 22, we have in ver. 23, "Jehovah *our* God," as if to remind us that his personal welfare does not stand apart from, but is bound up with, that of the nation. Comp. ver. 14.

20. THE THRONE, or "judgment-seat." The word is purposely employed, as Calvin observes, to show that he is inveighing, not against common assassins or thieves, but against tyrants who, under a false pretext of justice, oppressed the church. The throne of the king, the seat of the judge, which is consecrated to God, they stain and defile with their crimes.

INIQUITY, or, perhaps, "destruction." It is scarcely possible to give the word an adequate rendering here. It occurs v. 9 [10] (" yawning gulf"), where see Critical Note ; xci. 3, where, as the latter of two nouns, it may be rendered as an adjective, "devouring."

HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH THEE. Cf. for the Hebrew expression v. 4 [5] ; Gen.

xiv. 3. "Judges and magistrates ought to exercise their authority as God's vicegerents, so that in this their unrighteousness they might seem to be claiming God himself as their ally. Comp. I. 16." — *Bunsen*.

BY STATUE. They claim to be acting according to law, seeking to hide their unrighteousness by a holy name. This seems, on the whole, the best rendering of the words, though others would render "against the law" (Symm. *κατὰ προστάγματος*).

21. GATHER THEMSELVES IN TROOPS, like bands of brigands. For the word see xxxi. 13 [14] ; xxxv. 15 ; lv. 18 [19.]

CONDEMN THE INNOCENT BLOOD, i.e. "condemn the innocent to death" ; cf. Matt. xxvii. 4. Delitzsch wrongly explains that because the blood is the life, the blood is the same as the person.

23. HATH REQUITED ; lit. "hath caused to return," as vii. 16 [17] ; liv. 8 [7]. The preterites here express, not so much what has already taken place, as the confidence of faith which looks upon that which shall be as if already accomplished. Hence the interchange with the futures which follow.

<sup>a</sup> הַיִּשְׁפִּיץ, imperat. but irregular ; it should be either הַיִּשְׁפִּיץָ, the full form, as in lxxx. 2 ; or הַיִּשְׁפֵּץ, the shorter form ; see Gesen. § 64, 1 c. It may, however, be the pret., as in l. 2. So the LXX, ἐπαρρησιάζασατο. And so Hengst., who refers to xciii., xcvi., xcix., as also beginning with the preterite.

<sup>b</sup> יִתְצַמְרוּ, only here, not the Hithp. of אָמַר, “they say to themselves, or among themselves”; but more probably, as Schultens, connected with the Arab *أَمَرَ*, to command, *تَأَمَّرَ*, to carry oneself as ruler (comp. *أَمِيرٌ*, *Emir*). In Heb. the root appears in אָמַר, a high branch, and אֲמַרֵּי, dweller in the mountains, cognate with יָמַר, the Hiphth. of which occurs Isa. lxi. 6, rightly rendered by Jerome, *superbietis*.

<sup>c</sup> לִבִּי. We must supply הָיָה, *nisi fuisset*, or *esset*, the apodosis being *propemodum*, or *cito* (see on ii. 12, note <sup>f</sup>) *occubisset*. As regards the construction, comp. exix. 92; cxxiv. 1–5; Isa. i. 9; and for the pret. with בְּמַעַט, lxxiii. 2; exix. 87 (with the fut. lxxxix. 15).

<sup>d</sup> הִתְחַבְּרָה, not Pual for הִתְחַבְּרָה, with substitution of *ō* for *ū*, for this would still leave unexplained the dropping of the Pathach, but Kal with transposed vowel for הִתְחַבְּרָה. Comp. הִתְחַבְּרָה (Gen. xliii. 29; Isa. xxx. 19) for הִתְחַבְּרָה, and הִתְחַבְּרָה (Job xx. 26) for הִתְחַבְּרָה. The same law holds, as Hupfeld observes, in such forms as הִתְחַבְּרָה for הִתְחַבְּרָה, Prov. i. 22, etc. The *ō* in הִתְחַבְּרָה points to a form הִתְחַבְּרָה, which ought, however, to be הִתְחַבְּרָה, as the root is intrans., and therefore must be pointed הִתְחַבְּרָה; but comp. הִתְחַבְּרָה and הִתְחַבְּרָה from הִתְחַבְּרָה. For the construction, comp. הִתְחַבְּרָה, v. 5.

## PSALM XCV.

THIS Psalm is one of a series, as has been already observed, intended for the temple worship, and possibly composed for some festal occasion. Both the joyfulness of its opening verses, and its general character, in which it resembles the eighty-first Psalm, would render it suitable for some of the great national feasts.

As to the date of its composition nothing certain can be said. The LXX call it a Psalm of David; and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in making a quotation from the Psalm, uses the expression “in David,” but this is evidently only equivalent to saying “in the Psalms.” In the Hebrew it has no inscription.

In Christian liturgies the Psalm has commonly been termed the Invitatory Psalm. We are all familiar with it, as used in the Morning Service of our church; and it has been sung in the Western churches from a very remote period before the Psalms of the Nocturn or Matins. (Palmer, *Orig. Liturg.* i. 221.)

“We may think of this Psalm, as we sing it in our daily worship, as prophetic of a better worship still, even of the perpetual adoration of that heavenly city, wherein the apostle saw no temple, ‘for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.’” — Housman, *Readings on the Psalms*, p. 198.

It consists of two very distinct parts :

I. The first is an invitation to a joyful public acknowledgment of God’s mercies (ver. 1–7).

II. The second (beginning with the last member of ver. 7 to the end) is a warning to the people against the unbelief and disobedience through which their fathers had perished in the wilderness.

- 1 O COME, let us sing joyfully unto Jehovah,  
Let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation ;
- 2 Let us go to meet his face with thanksgiving,  
With psalms let us shout aloud unto him.
- 3 For Jehovah is a great God,  
Yea, a great King above all gods.
- 4 (Even he) in whose hands are the deep places<sup>a</sup> of the earth :  
And the heights<sup>b</sup> of the mountains are his.
- 5 Whose is the sea, — and he made it,  
And his hands formed the dry land,

1–7. The character of the invitation here given, to worship God, not with penitence and brokenness of heart, but with loud thanksgiving, is the more remarkable, when we recollect in what a strain the latter part of the Psalm is written.

1. UNTO JEHOVAH. Augustine lays stress on this : “He invites to a great feast of joy, of joy not unto the world, but unto the Lord.” And in the next clause, where the Latin has *jubilemus*, he explains it of a joy which runs beyond all words.

ROCK OF OUR SALVATION, as in LXXXIX. 26 [27]. Comp. “Rock of my refuge,” xciv. 22.

2. GO TO MEET. Such is the proper and strict rendering of the word. See the same phrase xvii. 13 ; lxxxix. 14 [15]. The verb is used in the same sense as here, Micah vi. 6. In both

places the E. V. has “come before,” which does not sufficiently express the forwardness, the ready alacrity, which are really denoted by the verb.

WITH PSALMS. The LXX, ἐν ψαλμοῖς ἀλαλέσωμεν. The Syro-hex. adds “with the trumpet.”

3. A threefold reason is given why this worship should be offered with glad hearts and loud thanksgivings — that Jehovah is a King more glorious than all “who are called gods, and who are worshipped,” that he is the Creator of the world, that he is the watchful Shepherd of his own chosen people.

ABOVE ALL GODS : not the angels, but all the gods of the heathen. Comp. Ex. xviii. 11 ; xv. 11, etc. It cannot be inferred from this language that the Psalmist supposed the heathen deities to have any real power, or real existence (comp. xcvi. 5). He is merely contrast-

6 O come let us worship and bow down,  
Let us kneel before Jehovah our Maker.

7 For he is our God,  
And we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of  
his hand.

To-day oh that ye would hear his voice :

ing heathen objects of worship, clothed in the imagination of their worshippers with certain attributes, and the one true supreme object of worship, who *is* really all, and more than all, which the heathen think their gods to be. See more in the note on xcvi. 7.

6. O COME. Again the invitation to lowliest adoration and worship, called forth afresh by the remembrance of God's revelation to and covenant with Israel.

OUR MAKER, and ver. 7, OUR GOD, thus asserting the personal covenant relationship of God to his people (so Moses speaks of "the Rock who begat thee, the God who made thee," Deut. xxxii. 18); and here, as so often elsewhere, God's majesty as seen in creation is linked with his love as seen in redemption. See on xix. 7; xxiv. 1, 2.

7. PEOPLE OF HIS PASTURE, Hupfeld would correct, "people of his hand, and sheep of his pasture." But this is as dull as it is unnecessary. The subject of comparison and the figure are blended together. The last member of this verse belongs clearly to what follows. It may, however, be rendered (1) either as the expression of a wish (as in the text), 'Oh that,' etc.; lit. "if ye will hear . . . (then it shall be well with you)," the apodosis being understood; or (2), as in the LXX, Jerome, the E.V., and others, this clause may be the protasis, "if ye will hear his voice" (ver. 8 introducing the apodosis), "harden not your hearts." So also in Heb. iii. 7, the writer of the Epistle, as usual, following the LXX. (3) A third interpretation, however, is possible, which is that of Aben-Ezra, and others, according to which the first two members of ver. 7 are to be taken parenthetically, and the

last member joined with ver. 6: "Let us kneel before Jehovah . . . to-day if ye will hear his voice." In any case there is the same solemn strain of warning and exhortation breaking in upon the very joy and gladness of the temple worship, as we have already observed in lxxxi. 6 [7]. Psalms like these seem to have had a double purpose. They were not only designed to be the expression of public devotion, the utterance of a nation's supplications and thanksgivings, but they were intended also to teach, to warn, to exhort. They were sermons as well as liturgies. Hence, too, the prophetic character which marks them. The Psalmist, like every true preacher, comes as an ambassador from above, speaking not his own words, but the words which God has given him, the words which God himself has uttered. The warning here rests, as in lxxxviii., lxxxi., etc., on the example of their fathers in the desert.

TO-DAY, the present moment, as critical and decisive, the day of grace which may be lost; or the reference may be, and probably is, to some special circumstances under which the Psalm was composed. It "stands first," as Bleek observes, "with strong emphasis, in contrast to the whole past time during which they had shown themselves disobedient and rebellious against the divine voice, as, for instance, during the journey through the wilderness, alluded to in the following verses: 'to-day' therefore means 'now'; 'nunc tandem.'" "To-day" may, however, apply not only to a particular historical crisis, but (as Alford on Heb. iii. 7 remarks) to every occasion on which the Psalm was used in public worship. "Often as they were faithless, the 'to-day' sounded ever

- 8 "Harden not your heart as at Meribah,  
 As in the day of Massah [trial] in the wilderness,  
 9 When your fathers tried me,  
 Proved me, yea<sup>e</sup> saw my work.  
 10 Forty years (long) was I grieved with (that) generation<sup>d</sup>  
 (saying)  
 'It is a people that do err in (their) heart,  
 And they do not know my ways';

anew; for 'the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.'—*Theoluck.*

8. HARDEN NOT. Bleek asserts that this is the only place where to "harden the heart" is spoken of as *man's* act, elsewhere it is said to be God's act; but this is not correct. Man is said to harden his own heart, Ex. ix. 34; 1 Sam. vi. 6 (where the verb is כָּבַד in the Piel); Prov. xxviii. 14 (where the same verb, קָשָׁה, is used as here; Deut. xv. 7; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13 (where the verb אָבַד is in the Piel).

MERIBAH, "striving" or "provocation." MASSAH, "temptation" or "trial." From Ex. xvii. 1-7 it would appear that *both* names were given to the same locality. But according to Num. xx. 1-13, the names were given to two different places on different occasions. Comp. also Deut. xxxiii. 8, "thy Holy One whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah." The LXX in this Psalm only, give παραπικρασμός as the equivalent of "Meribah": elsewhere they have λουιδόρησις (Ex. xvii. 7); λουιδορία (Num. xx. 24); ἀντιλογία (Num. xx. 13; xxvii. 14; Deut. xxxii. 51; xxxiii. 8; Ps. lxxx. 8; cv. 32 [Heb. lxxxi. 7 [8]; cvi. [32]); the only places where they have preserved the proper name being Ezek. xlvi. 19; xlvi. 28 (see Alford on Heb. iii. 8).

IN THE WILDERNESS, of Sin, near Kadesh, where the second murmuring against Moses and Aaron for want of water took place (Num. xx. 1).

TRIED ME. In allusion to Massah, "trial," in ver. 8.

9. MY WORK. Whether miracles of

deliverance or acts of judgment, all that I did. See in Critical Note.

10. FORTY YEARS. These words in the quotation in Heb. iii. 9 are joined, as in the Syriac, with the preceding verse, and the word "wherefore" is inserted after them. This departs both from the Hebrew and the LXX. The alteration is evidently intentional, because the passage is afterwards quoted (iii. 17) as it stands in the Psalm.

WAS I GRIEVED. The word is a strong word, expressive of *loathing* and *disgust*.

A PEOPLE THAT DO ERR; lit. "a people of wanderers in heart." There may be, as Hupfeld suggests, an allusion to the *outward* wandering in the wilderness as the punishment of this *inner* wandering. The same word is used of the former (cvii. 4).

AND THEY DO NOT, etc. This is almost equivalent to "*for* they do not," etc. Their ignorance of the straight way of God, "the king's highway" (as Bunsen calls it), is the reason that they wander in crooked by-paths.

11. I SWARE. The reference is to Num. xiv. 21, etc., 28, etc.

THEY SHALL NOT; lit. "if they shall enter," this elliptical form of the oath being equivalent to a strong negative. Hence in the LXX, and Heb. iii. 11, etc., εἰ εἰσελεύσονται.

MY REST, strictly "place of settlement," as the abode of God (comp. cxxxii. 8, 14), but used also of the land of promise (Deut. xii. 9), as a place of *rest* after the wandering in the wilderness. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (iv. 6-9) argues, from the use of the

11 So that\* I swear in mine anger,  
They shall not enter my rest."

word "to-day" in ver. 7, that the language of the Psalm is applicable not merely to the times of the law, but also to the gospel dispensation; and from the reference to God's rest here, "in David" (i.e. in the Book of Psalms), that Canaan was not the true rest. Joshua did not bring the people into God's rest, he says, otherwise we should not find in a Psalm written so long after the settlement of the people in Canaan, a warning addressed to them not to sin

as their fathers, lest they also through unbelief should fail of God's rest. Hence, he argues, the rest must be still future, ἀπολείπεται ἔρα σαββατισμός. This, however, is not clear on the face of the Psalm, as the words "they shall not enter into my rest" seem to refer to the *past*, not the *present*, history of Israel. Hence Calvin remarks on the quotation in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "subtilius disputat quam ferant prophetæ verba."

<sup>a</sup> מְחַקְרֵי א' Symm., rightly, κατώτατα γῆς. But Aq. ἐξιχνιασμοί, and Jerome *fundamenta*. The LXX, probably reading, מְרַחֲקֵי, τα πέρατα.

<sup>b</sup> הַיְצִיפוֹת (from יָצָה, κάμννω, κοπιᾶν), according to its etymology, "the weariness that comes of hard labor," but not found in this sense. In Num. xxiii. 22, xxiv. 8, spoken of the buffalo, it can only mean *strength*; in Job xxii. 25, it is used of "silver as obtained by *toil* and *labor* from the mine." So Böttcher here would explain הַיְצִיפוֹת, "mines in the mountains," parallel with "deep places of the earth"; others, "treasures of the mountains as obtained by labor." Others, again, following the LXX, τὰ ὑψη τῶν ὀρέων, "the *heights* of the mountains," a meaning of the word which is supposed to spring from "the *effort* and *weariness* with which men climb to the top of mountains" (cacumina montium, quia defatigantur qui eo ascendunt), an explanation etymologically unsatisfactory. The choice lies between the first and the last of these meanings. The first is supported by the passage in Numbers; the last has the parallelism in its favor.

<sup>c</sup> אֲנִי רָפִי. This has been explained, (1) "Although they had seen all the wonders I had wrought in their behalf." (2) "Yea (not only did they prove me, but) they saw my judgments, felt my chastisements." (So Hupfeld, Ewald, and Bleek.) The objection to the former is, that אֲנִי does not elsewhere mean *although*; it is not necessary so to render it in Isa. xlix. 15, to which Delitzsch refers. On the other hand, "My *work*" is more naturally understood of God's great redemptive acts than of acts of punishment, although it occurs in the latter sense lxiv. 10; Isa. v. 12; Hab. i. 5.

<sup>d</sup> דָּוִד, without the article (LXX, τῆ γενέᾳ ἐκείνῃ), perhaps, as Delitzsch explains, "not *hac* but *tali* *generatione*," the purely ethical notion being predominant in the word. But the absence of the article

may be only poetical usage. The Targum has "with a generation in the wilderness."

\*  $\text{וְאַתָּה}$ , *so that*, as in Gen. xi. 7.

## PSALM XCVI.

THIS grand prophetic Psalm looks forward with joyful certainty to the setting up of a divine kingdom upon earth. But it is only indirectly Messianic. It connects the future blessings, not with the appearance of the Son of David, but with the coming of Jehovah. And it has already been pointed out (in a note on Psalm lxxii. 17) that there are in the Old Testament two distinct lines of prophecy, culminating in these two advents. Their convergence and ultimate unity are only seen in the light of New Testament fulfilment. The same hopes, however, gather about both, as may be seen, for instance, by a comparison of this Psalm with such a passage as Isa. xi. 1-9. Calvin, in his introduction to the Psalm, observes that it is "An exhortation to praise God, addressed not to the Jews only, but to all nations. Whence (he adds) we infer that the Psalm refers to the kingdom of Christ; for till he was revealed to the world, his name could not be called upon anywhere but in Judea."

The LXX has a double inscription:

(1)  $\text{\textcircled{O}}\tau\epsilon\ \delta\ \sigma\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\varsigma\ \psi\acute{\kappa}\omicron\delta\omicron\mu\acute{\epsilon}\iota\tau\omicron\ \mu\epsilon\tau\grave{\alpha}\ \tau\eta\nu\ \alpha\acute{\iota}\chi\mu\alpha\lambda\omega\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu$ , which is probably correct, as indicating that the Psalm was composed after the exile, and for the service of the second temple.

(2)  $\text{\textcircled{O}}\delta\eta\ \tau\omega\ \Delta\alpha\upsilon\acute{\iota}\delta$ , which seems to contradict the other, but was no doubt occasioned by the circumstance that this Psalm, together with portions of Psalm cv. and cvi., is given, with some variations (which will be found in the notes), by the author of the Book of Chronicles, as the great festal hymn which "David delivered into the hand of Asaph and his brethren to thank the Lord" on the day when the ark was brought into the sanctuary of Zion.

The Psalm consists of four strophes (of which the first three are perfectly regular, consisting of six lines each):

I. Jehovah is to be praised in all the world and at all times (ver. 1-3).

II. He alone is worthy to be praised, for all other objects of worship are nothing (ver. 4-6).

III. Let all the heathen confess this, and give him the honor due to his name (ver. 7-9).



IV. Let all the world hear the glad tidings that Jehovah is King, and even things without life share the common joy (ver. 10-13).

Supposing the Psalm to have been sung antiphonally, verses 1 and 2, 4 and 5, 7 and 8, may have been sung by two bands of Levites alternately, the whole choir taking up the concluding verses of each stanza, verses 3, 6, 9. Then in the last strophe, verses 10, 11, 12 would be sung antiphonally, the whole choir taking up the grand solemn close of verse 13, with fullest expression of voice and instrument.

- 1 O SING unto Jehovah a new song,  
Sing unto Jehovah, all the earth.
- 2 Sing unto Jehovah, bless his name,  
Publish his salvation from day to day.
- 3 Declare his glory among the nations,  
His wonders among all the peoples,
- 4 For great is Jehovah, and highly to be praised,  
He is to be feared above all gods ;
- 5 For all the gods of the peoples are idols,  
But Jehovah made the heavens.
- 6 Honor and majesty are before him,  
Strength and beauty <sup>a</sup> are in his sanctuary.
- 7 Give unto Jehovah, O families of peoples,  
Give unto Jehovah glory and strength ;

1. A NEW SONG. See on xxxiii. 3. The new song is not the Psalm itself, but one which shall be the fit expression of all the thoughts and hopes and triumphs of the new and glorious age which is about to dawn. It is the glad welcome given to the King when he enters his kingdom. Comp. with this verse Isa. xlii. 10; lx. 6; lxvi. 19.

2. PUBLISH, or, "tell the tidings of." See lxxviii. 11 [12]; xl. 9 [10]. LXX, *εὐαγγελίζεσθε*.

4. The manifestation of God's glory. Comp. cxlv. 3; xlviii. 1 [2].

ABOVE ALL GODS (as in xev. 3; see note on xcvii. 7). Here, as is plain from what follows, the heathen deities, which are IDOLS; lit. "nothings," a favorite word in Isaiah for idols, but occurring also as early as Lev. xix. 4; xxvi. 1.

See the strong assertions of their absolute nothingness in Isa. xli., xlv.

5. JEHOVAH MADE THE HEAVENS. So has he manifested his power and majesty as the Creator in the eyes of all the world; but the chief manifestation of his glory is in Israel, "in his sanctuary." Compare the same strain in xev. 3-7.

7-9. The families of the nations (see xxii. 27 [28]), themselves are called upon to take up the song in which Israel has made known to them the salvation of Jehovah. Comp. Zeph. iii. 9. These three verses are taken partly from xxix. 1, 2.

7, 8. GIVE. We go into God's courts, it has been truly remarked, to *give* rather than to *get*. This is the principle of all true prayer, ascription rather than petition.

- 8 Give unto Jehovah the glory due unto his name,  
Bring presents, and come into his courts,  
9 Bow yourselves before Jehovah in holy pomp,  
Tremble before him, all the earth.  
10 Say ye among the nations; Jehovah is King, —  
Yea the world is established that it cannot be moved,—  
He shall judge the peoples in uprightness.  
11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad,  
Let the sea thunder, and the fulness thereof;  
12 Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein.  
Then shall all the trees of the wood sing for joy

8. PRESENTS (the collective sing. for the plural), in allusion to the Oriental custom which required gifts to be brought by all who would be admitted to the presence of a king. Comp. xlv. 12 [13]; lxxviii. 29 [30]; lxxii. 10.

INTO HIS COURTS. In 1 Chron. xvi. 29, "before him," meaning the same thing. Comp. the parallelism above in ver. 6.

9. POMP, or "array"; but the word rather denotes *all* that lent solemnity and impressiveness to the service. See xxix. 2; 2 Kings viii. 22.

10. The glad tidings which the world is to hear. The world's largest hopes are to be fulfilled. A new era is to begin, a reign of righteousness and peace, a time so blessed that even the inanimate creation must be partakers of the joy. Comp. Isa. xxxv. 1; xlii. 10; xlv. 23; xlv. 8; xlix. 13; lv. 12. With the coming of Jehovah and the setting up of his kingdom all the broken harmonies of creation shall be restored. Not "the sons of God" only, but the whole creation is still looking forward to this great consummation (Rom. viii. 21).

Jehovah is King; lit. "hath become King"; hath taken to himself his great power and reigned. See xciii. 1; Rev. xi. 17. The LXX rightly, *ὁ κύριος ἐβασίλευσε*, with the addition in some copies of *ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου*, whence the Itala *Dominus regnavit a ligno*, on which Justin, Tertullian, Augustine, and others, lay great stress.

YEA THE WORLD, etc. This clause

is introduced somewhat abruptly, and quasi-parenthetically, from xciii. 1. It describes one of the elements in Jehovah's government; but is it to be understood in a physical or a moral sense? It may be that the fact that God has so established the *natural* order of the world is alleged as showing his power and his right as *Creator* to rule (so Rosenm.). Or the meaning may be that the *nations of the world* (the inhabited earth), shaken and torn by war and anarchy, are now safe and peaceful under Jehovah's righteous sway (so Delitzsch). Calvin has well combined the two senses: "Notatu vero dignum est quod subiecit de *stabilitate orbis*. Etsi enim scimus naturae ordinem ab initio divinitus fuisse positum, eundem semper solem, lunam, et stellas resplenduisse in caelo, iisdem alimentis quibus fideles sustentatos fuisse incredulos, et eundem traxisse spiritum vitalem; tenendum est omnia esse confusa, et horribilem ἀταξίαν instar diluvii mundum in tenebris demersum tenere quamdiu impietas hominum animos occupat: quia extra Deum quid stabile esse potest? Non immerito igitur docet hic locus stabiliri orbem ut amplius non nutet, ubi rediguntur homines sub manum Dei. Unde etiam discendum est, quamvis suum officium peragant singulae creaturae, nihil tamen esse in mundo ordinatum, donec regiam sedem sibi Deus figat regendis hominibus." He refers to Ps. xlvi. 5 [6]. It may be owing to the abruptness of this clause

13 Before Jehovah, for he cometh,  
 For he cometh to judge the earth;  
 He shall judge the world in righteousness,  
 And the peoples in his faithfulness.

that the chronicler has transposed some of the clauses in his adaptation of the Psalm. His arrangement (1 Chron. xvi. 30-33) is as follows: "Tremble before him all the earth, yea the world is established (that) it cannot be moved. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, and let them say among the nations, Jehovah is King. Let the sea thunder, and the fulness thereof. Let the field exult, and all that is therein. Then shall the trees of the wood shout for joy before Jehovah, for he cometh to judge the earth."

13. [This verse may have been sung antiphonally by the choir in some such way as is suggested in the introduction to the Psalm.] HE COMETH. The repetition is full of force and animation. The participle is used to express more vividly the coming of Jehovah, as if actually taking place before the eyes of the Psalmist. It is a coming to judgment, but a judgment which is to issue in salvation. This judgment in righteousness and faithfulness, and the peace which follows thereon, are beautifully portrayed in Isa. xi. 1-9.

הוֹרֵי יָגֵ' . Instead of this the chronicler has לִבּוֹ וְחַדְוָתוֹ בְּמִקְוָמוֹ , "Strength and joy are in his place," חַדְוָתוֹ being a late word formed from a verb which occurs in the Pentateuch, Ex. xviii. 9. Whether, as Delitzsch suggests, the chronicler put "in his place" instead of "in his sanctuary," because the temple was not yet built, seems very doubtful.

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## PSALM XCVII.

THE advent of Jehovah, and his righteous rule over the whole earth is the subject of this Psalm, as of the last. Here, however, it would seem as if some great display of God's righteousness, some signal deliverance of his people, had kindled afresh the hope that the day was at hand, yea, had already dawned, when he would take to himself his great power and reign.

"Jehovah is King." Such is the glad assurance with which the Psalm opens. He has come to take possession of his throne with all the awful majesty with which he appeared on Sinai. All nature is moved at his presence. The heavens have uttered their message, telling of his righteousness, and all the nations of the world have seen his glory. His empire must be universal. Already the idols and the worshippers of idols are ashamed; and Zion rejoices in the coming of

her King. He is near, very near. The first flush of the morning is already brightening the sky. They who love his appearing may look for him, in holy abhorrence of evil and in faithfulness of heart, waiting till they enter into the joy of their Lord. Such is briefly the purport of the Psalm.

“If the bringing in of an everlasting worship gives its distinctive coloring to the foregoing Psalm, the final casting out of evil is the keynote of this; if the thought of the Great King bringing salvation to his people is foremost in that, in this it is the trampling down of his enemies; there he comes ‘to diadem the right,’ here ‘to terminate the evil.’” — *Housman*, p. 203.

The coming of Jehovah as King and Judge is described almost in the same terms as the theophany in the eighteenth and fifteenth Psalms. The use of the past tenses in verses 4–8 and in particular the vivid language in verse 8 where Zion and the daughters of Judah rejoice in presence of Jehovah’s judgments, are most naturally explained as occasioned by some historical event, some great national deliverance or triumph of recent occurrence; such, for instance, as the overthrow of Babylon and the restoration of the theocracy (so Ewald).

The structure of the Psalm, like the last, consists of strophes of three verses.

I. In the first, the coming of Jehovah is portrayed as if actually present (ver. 1–3).

II. In the second, its effects are described on nature, and its purposes with reference to the world at large (ver. 4–6).

III. The third speaks of the different impression produced on the heathen and on Israel, and the exaltation of God above all earthly power as the final result (ver. 7–9).

IV. The fourth is an exhortation to the righteous, and also a promise full of consolation (ver. 10–12).

1 JEHOVAH is King: let the earth be glad,  
Let the multitude of the isles rejoice.

1. The strain of the preceding Psalm (xcvi. 10, 11), is here resumed. Comp. also Isa. xlii. 10–12; li. 5.

JEHOVAH IS KING. Augustine, who understands this directly of Christ’s advent, writes: “Ille qui stetit ante iudicem, ille qui alapas accepit, ille qui flagellatus est, ille qui consputus est, ille qui spinis coronatus est, ille qui col-

ophis caesus est, ille qui in ligno suspensus est, ille cui pendentia in ligno insultatum est, ille qui in cruce mortuus est, ille qui lancea percussus est, ille qui sepultus est, ipse resurrexit. *Dominus regnavit*. Sacvant quantum possunt regna; quid sunt factura Regi regnorum, Domino omnium regum, Creatori omnium saeculorum?”

- 2 Cloud and darkness are round about him,  
Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of his  
throne.
- 3 A fire goeth before him,  
And devoureth his adversaries round about him.
- 4 His lightnings gave shine unto the world,  
The earth saw, and trembled.
- 5 The mountains melted like wax at the presence of Jehovah,  
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
- 6 The heavens have declared his righteousness,  
And all the peoples have seen his glory.
- 7 Ashamed are all they that serve graven images,  
That boast themselves in idols :  
Bow down before him, all ye gods.

**MULTITUDE OF THE ISLES**; lit. "the many isles," or "many as they are." (Comp. Isa. lii. 15.) The word rendered "isles" is used strictly of the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean Sea (as in lxxii. 10), but perhaps here, as in the later chapters of Isaiah, in a wider sense, of heathen countries at large.

2. The coming of God is thus frequently described by later prophets and psalmist in images borrowed from the theophany on Sinai (Ex. xix. 9, 16; xx. 21; Deut. iv. 11; v. 23); as in xviii. 9 [10].

**THE FOUNDATION OF HIS THRONE**: comp. lxxxix. 14 [15].

3. **A FIRE**, as in l. 3. Comp. also Hab. iii. 5, and the whole description in that chapter, so solemn and so majestic, of God's coming to judgment.

4. **GAVE SHINE UNTO**. See on lxxvii. 18 [19], whence the first member of this verse is taken; with the second compare lxxvii. 16 [17].

5. **THE MOUNTAINS MELTED**; comp. Mic. i. 4, and Ps. lxxviii. 3.

**THE LORD OF THE WHOLE EARTH**. This name of God occurs first in Josh. iii. 11, 13, where the ark (at the passage of the Jordan) is called "the ark of Jehovah the Lord of the whole earth," as if emphatically then, when the people

were about to occupy their own land, to distinguish Jehovah their God from the merely local and national gods of the heathen. The name is found again in Mic. iv. 13; Zech. iv. 14; vi. 5.

6. **HAVE DECLARED HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS**. This is the end and purpose of God's coming (as in l. 6). He comes to judge; and the act of judgment is one which the whole world shall witness, as in lxxvii. 14 [15]; lxxix. 10; xeviii. 3. Comp. the language used of the great deliverance from Babylon, Isa. xxxv. 2; xl. 5; lii. 10; lxvi. 18.

7. This and the next verse describe the twofold result of the divine judgment — the impression produced on the heathen and on Israel, the confusion of all worshippers of idols, and the joy and exultation of the people of God.

**ASHAMED**, a word frequently employed with the same reference by the prophet Isaiah. It is a shame arising from the discovery of the utter vanity and nothingness of the objects of their trust. On this Augustine says: "Nonne factum est? Nonne confusi sunt? Nonne quotidie confunduntur? . . . Jam omnes populi gloriam Christi confitentur: erubescant qui adorant lapides. . . . Hanc gloriam ipsius cognoverunt populi; dimittunt templa, currunt ad ecclesias.

- 8 Zion heard and rejoiced,  
 And the daughters of Judah were glad,  
 Because of thy judgments, O Jehovah.
- 9 For THOU, Jehovah, art most high above all the earth,  
 Thou art greatly exalted above all gods.
- 10 O ye that love Jehovah, hate evil;  
 He keepeth the souls of his beloved,  
 He delivereth them from the hand of the wicked.

Adhuc quaerunt adorare sculptilia ?  
 Noluerunt deserere idola : deserti sunt  
 ab idolis."

ALL YE GODS. The LXX (*προσκυνησατε αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ*) and the Syr. both understand these to be angels. But this is contrary both to usage (see note on viii. 5) and to the context. The Chald. paraphrases : "all who worship idols." But doubtless heathen deities are meant. As all the worshippers are confounded, so must all the objects of their worship be overthrown, as Dagon was before the ark of the Lord ; all must yield before him who is the Lord of the whole earth. If this be the meaning, the line may be taken as a sarcastic, contemptuous challenge to the idols of the heathen. If so, we need not enter into the question whether angels or spiritual beings were the real objects of worship, idols being only their representatives. Augustine supposes a heathen excusing himself when charged with idol-worship, by saying that he does not worship the image, but "the invisible deity which presides over the image," and argues that this is a plain proof that the heathen worship not idols but demons, which is worse. He quotes in support of this view the language of St. Paul in 1 Cor. x. 19, 20 ; viii. 4. But, he continues, if the pagans say we worship good angels, not evil spirits, then the angels themselves forbid such worship : "Let them imitate the angels, and worship him who is worshipped by the angels" ; and then he cites the passage in the Latin version, *Adorate eum omnes angeli ejus*. Calvin here, as in the two preceding Psalms (xv. 3 ; xevi. 5), understands by "gods" both angels and

also those creatures of the human imagination, the projected images of their own lusts and fears, which men fall down and worship. "Quaquam proprie in angelos id competit, in quibus reuocet aliqua Deitatis particula, potest tamen improprie ad deos fictitios extendi, aesi dixisset : Quicquid habetur pro Deo, cedat et se submittat, ut emineat Deus unus." Delitzsch refers to the addition made by the LXX to the text of Dent. xxxii. 43, *καὶ προσκυνήσάτωσαν αὐτῷ πῦντες ἄγγελοι Θεοῦ*, which is quoted in Heb. i. 6, perhaps with a reference also to the Septuagint version of this Psalm, and applied to the worship which the angels shall give to the first-born of God when he comes again [of course, taking ἔταν πάλιν εἰσαγάγῃ to mean, "When he shall have brought in a second time into the world," etc.] to judge the world ; "where it is implied that it is Jesus in whom Jehovah's universal kingdom is gloriously perfected."

8. HEARD AND REJOICED : borrowed from xlvi. 11 [12], where see note, and the opposite to "the earth saw and trembled" (ver. 4). Although the coming of Jehovah has been portrayed in images full of awe and terror, yet here, as in the two preceding Psalms, it is described as a coming to be welcomed with jubilant gladness by his church. In the same spirit our Lord, when speaking of the signs of fear which shall be the precursors of his second coming, says, "When ye shall see these things begin to come to pass, then lift up your heads ; for your redemption draweth nigh."

10. The Psalm closes with a practical application, because the King and Judge is drawing near, a warning against the

- 11 Light is sown<sup>a</sup> for the righteous,  
 And joy for the upright in heart.  
 12 Rejoice in Jehovah, O ye righteous,  
 And give thanks to his holy name.

evil which is in the world, and an assurance of divine protection and blessing to those who "hate evil." Comp. xxxiv. 14-22; xlv. 7 [8]; cxxxix. 21, 22; 2 Cor. vi. 14-18.

11. LIGHT IS SOWN. The figure has been understood to mean that the prosperity of the righteous is future, just as seed is cast into the earth, and only after a time springs up and bears fruit. But it is far simpler to take the verb "sown"

in the sense of "scattered," "diffused." Milton uses the same figure of the dew: "Now Morn her rosy steps in th' Eastern clime

Advancing, sowed the earth with Orient pearl."

12. HOLY NAME; lit. "Holy memorial." The first member of the verse corresponds nearly with xxxii. 11 a; the second is exactly the same as xxx. 4 [5] b, where see note.

<sup>a</sup> זָרַע. The LXX, ἀνέτελε, hath sprung up, arisen, and so the other ancient versions, as if they read זָרַח, as in cxii. 4, but the change is unnecessary. In Prov. xiii. 9, "the light of the righteous rejoiceth," it has been proposed in like manner to read הַזָּרַח.

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## PSALM XCVIII.

THIS Psalm is little more than an echo of Psalm xcvi. Its subject is "the last great revelation, the final victory of God, when his salvation and his righteousness, the revelation of which he has promised to the house of Israel, shall be manifested both to his own people and to all the nations of the earth."

The inscription of the Psalm in the Hebrew is only the single word *Mizmor*, "Psalm" (whence probably the title "orphan Mizmor" in the Talmudic treatise Avodah Zara, 24 a). In the Syriac the inscription runs, "Of the Redemption of the people from Egypt." Both the beginning and end of the Psalm are taken from Psalm xcvi. The rest of it is drawn chiefly from the latter portion of Isaiah.

This Psalm follows the reading of the first lesson in the Evening Service. It was first inserted there in 1552, though it had not been sung among the Psalms of Vespers or Compline.

[A Psalm.]

- 1 SING unto Jehovah a new song,  
 For he hath done marvellous things;

1. The first two lines are taken from xcvi. 1; the last line, and ver. 2, 3, from Isa. lii. 10; lxiii. 5.

HATH GOTTEN HIM SALVATION, or, "the victory," as in E.V. Comp. xlv. 4 (and note); Isa. lix. 16; lxiii. 5. I

- His right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him salvation.
- 2 Jehovah hath made known his salvation,  
 Before the eyes of the nations hath he revealed his righteousness.
- 3 He hath remembered his loving-kindness and his faithfulness  
 to the house of Israel ;  
 All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
- 4 Make a loud noise to Jehovah, all the earth ;  
 Break forth and sing joyfully, and play, —
- 5 Play unto Jehovah with the harp,  
 With the harp and the voice of a psalm ;
- 6 With trumpets and the voice of the cornet,  
 Make a loud noise before Jehovah, the King.
- 7 Let the sea thunder, and the fulness thereof,  
 The world, and they that dwell therein.
- 8 Let the streams clap their hands ;  
 Together let the mountains sing for joy
- 9 Before Jehovah, for he cometh to judge the earth.  
 He shall judge the world with righteousness,  
 And the peoples with uprightness.

have preferred here the former rendering, because in the next verse the noun occurs from the same root, and there the rendering "salvation" is, I think, preferable to "victory."

2. BEFORE THE EYES, etc. ; language especially applied (as in Isaiah) to the great deliverance from Babylon. See xxvii. 6.

RIGHTEOUSNESS, parallel with "salvation," as so frequently in the latter portion of Isaiah. See note on lxxi. 15.

3. LOVING-KINDNESS . . . FAITHFULNESS, the two attributes expressive of God's *covenant relationship* to his people.

4. BREAK FORTH AND SING, as in Isa. lii. 9, though the more common

phrase is "break forth into singing" (Isa. xiv. 7 ; xlv. 23 ; xlix. 13 ; liv. 1).

5. VOICE OF A PSALM, as in Isa. li. 3.

6. TRUMPETS, "*Chatsotseroth* ; — here only in the Psalter. They were the straight trumpets (such as are seen on the Arch of Titus) used by the priests for giving signals (Num. x. 2-10 ; 1 Chron. xv. 24, 28, etc. The *shofar* was the ordinary curved trumpet, cornet, or horn." — *Kay*.)

7. Compare xevi. 11 and xxiv. 1.

8. CLAPP THEIR HANDS. The same phrase occurs Isa. lv. 12 ; elsewhere a different verb is used, as in xlvii. [2] ; 2 Kings xi. 12. On the next verse see xevi. 13.



## PSALM XCIX.

THIS is the last of the series of Royal Psalms, of Psalms which celebrate the coming of Jehovah as King. The first of the series is the ninety-third. This opens with the announcement that "Jehovah is King," passes on to tell that his throne has been from everlasting, that he made the world and that he rules it — rules the rage of the elements and the convulsions of political strife, of which that is the figure — and then concludes with one brief glance at his revelation of himself to his people, and the distinguishing glory of the house in which he deigns to dwell, "*Holiness* becometh thine house forever."

The ninety-fifth Psalm<sup>1</sup> ascribes glory to him as "a great King above all gods" (ver. 3). The ninety-sixth would have the glad tidings run far and wide that "Jehovah is King," that "he shall judge the people righteously" (ver. 13). The ninety-seventh opens "Jehovah is King," speaks of the glory of his advent, and of the joy with which it is welcomed by his people. The ninety-eighth calls upon all lands to break forth into loud shouts "before the King Jehovah," to go forth to meet him with glad acclaim, with the voice of harp and cornet and trumpet, as men go forth to meet a monarch who comes in state to take possession of the throne of his fathers. The ninety-ninth, like the ninety-third and the ninety-seventh, opens with the joyful announcement that "Jehovah is King," and then bids all men fall down and confess his greatness, and worship him who alone is *holy*. Both the first and the last of the series, the ninety-third and the ninety-ninth, celebrate the kingly majesty and the holiness, of Jehovah, and also the holiness of his worship.

All these Psalms, then, alike tell of the setting up of a divine kingdom upon earth. All alike anticipate the event with joy. One universal anthem bursts from the whole wide world to greet the advent of the righteous King. Not Zion only and the daughters of Judah are glad, but the dwellers in far-off islands and the ends of the earth. Even inanimate nature sympathizes with the joy; the sea thunders her welcome, the rivers clap their hands, the trees of the wood break forth into singing before the Lord. In all these Psalms alike the joy springs from the same source, from the thought that on this earth, where might has so long triumphed over right, a *righteous* King shall reign,

<sup>1</sup> The ninety-fourth Psalm seems out of place in the series; it does not, like the rest, speak of the reign of Jehovah; and the number seven, if we take the one hundredth Psalm as the closing Doxology, is complete without it.

a kingdom shall be set up which shall be a kingdom of *righteousness* and judgment and truth.

In this Psalm, not only the righteous sway of the King, but his awful holiness, forms the subject of praise, and the true character of his worshippers as consecrated priests, holy, set apart for his service, is illustrated by the example of holy men of old, like Moses, Aaron, and Samuel.

The two principal divisions of the Psalm are marked by the greater refrain with which each closes, "Exalt ye Jehovah our God," etc. (ver. 5, 9). But the thrice-repeated lesser refrain, "He is holy," more full, as at the close (in ver. 9), "Jehovah our God is holy," marks also a strophical division, and is, in the words of Delitzsch, "an earthly echo of the seraphic *Trisagion*" (comp. Isa. vi. 3). We have thus three strophes or Sanctuses, verses 1-3, 4-5, and 6-9, the first and second consisting each of six lines. In each of these Jehovah is acknowledged in his peculiar covenant relation to his people. In the first, He is "great in *Zion*" (ver. 2); in the second, he has "executed righteousness in *Jacob*" (ver. 4), and he is "Jehovah *our* God" (ver. 5); in the third, the great examples of this covenant relationship are cited from Israel's ancient history; and again God is twice claimed as "Jehovah *our* God" (ver. 8 and 9). In each there is the same exhortation to worship (ver. 3, 5, and 9), and in each the nature of the worship and the character of the worshippers is implied, because the character of God is in each exhibited, "he is holy." But in the third Sanctus this is brought out most fully. The priestly character of all true worship is declared. All who call upon Jehovah call upon him as his priests, all anointed with the same holy oil, all clothed in the same garments of holiness, "for Jehovah our God is holy."

Bengel (quoted by Delitzsch), recognizing this threefold partition of the Psalm, explains the structure somewhat differently. "The ninety-ninth Psalm," he says, "has three parts, in which the Lord is celebrated as he who is to come, as he who is, and as he who was, and each part is closed with the ascription of praise, he is holy." — (*Erklärte Offenb.*, S. 313.)

1 JEHOVAH is King, the peoples tremble ;

He sitteth throned upon the cherubim, the earth is moved.\*

1. IS KING; lit. "hath become King," an independent clause as a further description of the manner of God's kingly rule: he rules sitting throned, etc. It

and is, strictly speaking, not so much also suggests "not only the *identity* of

2 Jehovah in Zion is great,

And HE is exalted above all the peoples.

3 Let them give thanks unto thy great and fearful name :

He is holy.

4 And the King's strength loveth judgment ;

THOU hast established uprightness,

THOU hast executed judgment and righteousness in Jacob.

5 Exalt ye Jehovah our God,

And bow down at his holy footstool :

He is holy.

the heavenly King with the God who is worshipped in Zion, but also his *presence* in his temple."—*Moll.*

UPON THE CHERUBIM. See note on lxxx. 1 [2].

3. LET THEM GIVE THANKS, or the words may be taken as the utterance of the Psalmist's hope that God's "great and fearful name" (Deut. x. 17) that is known in Israel shall be glorified in all the world: "they shall give thanks," etc. But the optative form of expression accords best with the exhortation in ver. 5, 9.

HE IS HOLY. This might be rendered. "It is holy," i.e. the name of God, mentioned just before. The meaning is the same in either case; for God's name "is God himself in his revealed holiness," as Delitzsch observes. I have preferred the more immediately personal rendering, because it is obviously required in the repetition of the same words afterwards, ver. 5, 9.

4. AND THE KING'S STRENGTH, etc. This rendered as an independent clause is awkward, though it is so rendered by most of the ancient versions. But the Chald., Aben-Ezra, Delitzsch, and others take the two last words of this member of the verse as a relative clause, and render: "And the strength of a King, who loveth judgment, thou hast established in uprightness." Others carry on the construction from the last verse, taking the words "he (or it) is holy," as parenthetical, thus: "They shall praise thy great and fearful name (it is

holy), and the might of the King who (or which) loveth righteousness." It must be confessed that but for the words of the refrain, which it is awkward to take thus parenthetically, the sense and the construction are better preserved by this rendering. Certainly the use of the conj. "and" at the beginning of this verse is far more natural on either of these views than on the other. At present it is otiose, supposing ver. 4 to begin a fresh sentence. It is possible, I think, that the words "he is holy" did not stand at the end of ver. 3 in the original Psalm, and that they were subsequently introduced in order to complete the *Ter Sanctus*. The correspondence between the two greater refrains, the natural introduction of the words there, and their abruptness here, all render such a supposition at least not wholly improbable.

THE KING'S STRENGTH; the same King who is mentioned ver. 1, Jehovah. His might is no arbitrary power, like that of earthly tyrants, but a judgment-loving might. His power only expresses itself in righteousness. He has "established uprightness" as the great eternal law of his government, the inner principle of his sway, and he has manifested it in all his acts: "He has executed judgment and righteousness in Jacob."

5. FOOTSTOOL: properly, the lower part or step of the throne (as Isa. lxvi. 1; Ezek. xliii. 7) put for the throne itself. In cxxxii. 7 it is spoken, apparently, of the sanctuary, "His dwellings, or tabernacles," being in the parallelism. So

- 6 Moses and Aaron among his priests,  
 And Samuel among them that call upon his name —  
 They called upon Jehovah, and HE answered them.
- 7 In the pillar of a cloud he spake unto them ;  
 They kept his testimonies and the statute he gave them.
- 8 Jehovah, our God, THOU didst answer them,  
 A forgiving God wast thou to them ;  
 And (yet) taking vengeance of their doings.

the sanctuary is called "the place of my feet" (Isa. lx. 13). In 1 Chron. xxviii. 2 it is used of the ark of the covenant; in Lam. ii. 1 of the holy city (or, perhaps, the temple); in Isa. lxvi. 1 (comp. Matt. v. 35) of the whole earth. Here it seems doubtful whether the earthly or the heavenly sanctuary is meant.

6. The apparent abruptness of the transition in this verse — which, however, is very natural in lyric poetry — to the examples of Moses and Aaron and Samuel has led to a variety of explanations. Rosenm. proposes to join this with ver. 4, the refrain in ver. 5 being regarded as parenthetical; and takes this verse as containing a fresh instance of God's goodness in hearing the prayers of his people. Delitzsch sees in it an appeal to the great men of old, and their experience as to the "absolute life and kingly rule of Jehovah." No explanation that I have seen satisfies me. I have already hinted, in the introduction to the Psalm, at what I believe to be the train of thought. The great subject of the Psalmist's praise is the *holiness* of God. It is a *holy* God whom he calls upon all men to worship. It is "a holy footstool," "a holy mountain," before which they bow down; it is therefore a holy worship which they must render. Such was the worship of his saints of old; and then likewise Jehovah manifested his holiness both in "forgiving" and in "taking vengeance" (ver. 8).

MOSES . . . AMONG HIS PRIESTS. The priestly office was exercised by Moses in the sprinkling of the blood of the covenant (Ex. xxiv. 6-8), and again in the whole ritual for the consecration of

Aaron and his sons (Lev. viii.), as well as in the service of the sanctuary, before that consecration took place (Ex. xl. 22-27). So likewise he "called upon the Lord" as "a priest," in intercession for his people (Ex. xvii. 11, 12; xxxii. 30-32 (comp. Ps. cvi. 23); Num. xii. 13). Samuel also, though not here classed with the priests, but mentioned as a great example of prayer, not only like Moses discharged priestly functions, but also like Moses interceded for the people. We find him at Ramah offering sacrifices in the high place, and his independent priestly position so recognized by the people, that they would not partake of the sacrifice till he had blessed it (1 Sam. ix. 12, 13). We find him on the occasion of a battle offering a whole burnt-offering unto Jehovah (1 Sam. vii. 9), at the same time that he sternly rebukes Saul for presuming to do the same thing (1 Sam. xiii. 11-13). For the efficacy of his prayers and intercessions — on which, and not on sacrifices, the stress is here laid — see the instances in 1 Sam. vii. 8, 9; xii. 16-18. Comp. Eccles. xlv. 16, 17.

7. IN THE PILLAR OF A CLOUD. Strictly this applies only to Moses, or at the most only to Moses and Aaron; see Num. xii. 5.

THEY KEPT HIS TESTIMONIES; an evidence of the holiness of those who called on Jehovah, and whom he answered. This latter clause might be disposed in two lines, thus:

"They kept his testimonies,  
 And he gave them a statute (statutes)."  
 This verse would then, like all the others in this strophe, consist of three lines.

8. WAST THOU, or "didst thou prove

9 Exalt ye Jehovah our God,  
 And bow down before his holy mountain ;  
 For Jehovah our God is holy.

thyself to be," LXX, *εὐίλατος ἐγίνου αὐτοῖς*. Comp. Ezek. xxxiv. 7.

TAKING VENGEANCE. As it is clear that this cannot refer to all the three great examples cited above, certainly not to Samuel, the pronouns in this

verse (and perhaps, as Calvin and others think, in ver. 7) must refer to the people at large, who, though not mentioned, are in the Psalmist's thoughts, as he goes back to their ancient history.

<sup>א</sup> מִיָּזָה. The verb occurs only here instead of the more usual מִיָּזָה. In most of the ancient versions it is rendered, as well as מִיָּזָה in the previous member, as an optative. The LXX have *ὀργιζέσθωσαν . . . σαλευθήτω*; Jerome, *commoveantur . . . concutiatur*. But Meudelss., Hupfeld, and Delitzsch render the verbs as presents, which appears to me to be preferable. The two verbs describe the effects which immediately and necessarily follow from the inauguration and establishment of Jehovah's kingdom. For the sequence of tenses, cf. xlv. 7.

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## PSALM C.

IF we are right in regarding Psalms xciii.—xcix. as forming one continuous series, one great prophetic oratorio, whose title is "Jehovah is King," and through which there runs the same great idea, this Psalm may be regarded as the doxology which closes the strain. We find lingering in it notes of the same great harmony. It breathes the same gladness; it is filled with the same hope, that all nations shall bow down before Jehovah, and confess that he is God.

"This last Jubilate," says Delitzsch, "is the echo of the first — that, namely, which occurs in the first half of Psalm xcv. There we find all the thoughts which recur here. There it is said (ver. 7), 'He is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.' And in verse 2, 'Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving; let us sing joyfully to him with Psalms.'"

"Among the Psalms of triumph and thanksgiving this stands pre-eminent, as rising to the highest point of joy and grandeur. No local restrictions, no national exclusiveness, can find place in the contemplation of God as the common Creator and Father of man; hence it is

that no hymn or psalm in any subsequent age has found a readier response than this first appeal to the whole world to unite in worshipping Jehovah on the ground of common sonship and humanity." — *The Psalms Chronologically Arranged*, p. 321.

[A Psalm for the Thank-Offering.<sup>a</sup>]

- 1 SHOUT aloud unto Jehovah, all the earth.
- 2 Serve ye Jehovah with gladness,  
Come before his presence with a song of joy,
- 3 Know ye that Jehovah, he is God :  
He hath made us and we are his,<sup>b</sup>  
We are his people and the sheep of his pasture.
- 4 O enter into his gates with thanksgiving,  
Into his courts with praise :  
Give thanks unto him, bless his name.

1. SHOUT ALOUD; used of the welcome given to a king who enters his capital, or takes possession of the throne, as in *xviii. 4, 6; lxvi. 1.*

ALL THE EARTH. As in all the preceding Psalms, *xciii.–xcix.*, so here, the hope of the Psalmist goes far beyond the narrow limits of his own people and country. The blessing of Abraham is become the heritage of the Gentiles. The whole world is to acknowledge Jehovah, and to rejoice before him. So Augustine: "Et tamen hanc vocem audivit universa terra. Jam jubilat Domino universa terra, et quae adhuc non jubilat jubilabit. Pertendens enim benedictio incipiente Ecclesia ab Jerusalem per omnes gentes, impietatem ubique prosternit, pietatem ubique construit. Et mixti sunt boni malis; et mali per omnem terram, et boni per omnem terram. In malis murmurat omnis terra; in bonis jubilat omnis terra."

2. SERVE YE. *Comp. ii. 11*; where, however, in accordance with the warlike character ascribed to the monarch, it is added "with fear," instead of "with joy" as here. "Libera servitus est apud Dominum," remarks Augustine, "libera servitus; ubi non necessitas, sed caritas, servit."

3. KNOW YE, i.e. learn by experience, as Theodoret explains, *δι' αὐτῶν μάθετε τῶν πραγμάτων.*

HATH MADE US; i.e. not merely "hath created us," but hath made us what we are, viz. his people. *Comp. 1 Sam. xii. 6*: "It is Jehovah that made (E.V. advanced) Moses and Aaron." See also *Dent. xxxii. 6, 15; Ps. xcv. 6.* And so Israel is called "the work (lit. *making*) of Jehovah" (*Isa. xxix. 23; lx. 21.*)

WE ARE HIS. For the justification of this rendering see Critical Note, and *comp. xcv. 7.* Dr. Kay, observing that Psalms *xciii.–c.* are full of parallelisms to *Isa. xl.–lxvi.*, points out that this reading (that of the K<sup>r</sup>i) is supported by *Isa. xliii. 1*: "And now saith the Lord *that created thee, O Jacob, and formed thee, O Israel,* fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by my name; *mine art thou.*"

4. The knowledge that Jehovah has chosen Israel to be his inheritance and the sheep of his pasture is not to tend to the exclusion of others from the same privileges. On the contrary, all nations are to flow to Jerusalem, and worship in the temple. What in *Isa. ii. 2, 3* appears in the form of prediction, is here invitation, as in *Isa. ii. 5.* "His temple is

5 For Jehovah is good, his loving-kindness is everlasting ;  
And his faithfulness (endureth) unto all generations.

open to all. They may enter in ; and when they enter may expect great things ; 'For Jehovah is gracious, and his loving-kindness and truth never fail,' according to the repeated expression of the Halle-  
lujah Psalms and Psalms of Thanksgiving."—*Delitzsch*.  
5. GOOD, i.e. "gracious," "kind," as in xxv. 8 ; xxxiv. 8 [9].

<sup>a</sup> לְהוֹדָה. The expression is used apparently in a liturgical sense (like the analogous titles of xxxviii., lxx., xcii.), to denote that the Psalm was to be sung during the offering of thank-offerings. Compare וְזָבַח ת', cvii. 22 ; cxv. 17, which is also termed simply הוֹדָה, lvi. 13 ; 2 Chron. xxix. 31.

<sup>b</sup> וְיִלֵּא א'. So the K'thibh ; the sense being, as it is commonly explained, "He hath made us (chosen us to be his people), and not we ourselves" ; i.e. it was not of merit on our part, but of his grace. So the LXX, αὐτὸς ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς, καὶ οὐχ ἡμεῖς, the Vulg., and the Syr. And the Midrash (Bereshith Rabba, c. 100, *ad init.*) finds in this confession the opposite to Pharaoh's boast, "I have made myself," Ezek. xxix. 3 (where, however, the rendering probably is as in E. V., "I have made it (the Nile) for myself"). But it is very doubtful if such a meaning would be thus expressed in Hebrew. Hence Symm. (who adopts the K'thibh) gives a different explanation, αὐτὸς ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς οὐκ ὄντας, and similarly Rashi.

But the K'ri, וְיִלֵּי, has the support of the Chald., Jerome, and Saadia ; is found in nineteen mss. of De R. and nine of Kenn. ; yields the best sense ; is more in accordance with the parallel passage, cxv. 7, and has been adopted by the ablest modern critics, Ewald, Hupfeld, Delitzsch, etc. The last mentions that the Masora reckons fifteen passages in which לֵא is written, and לֵי ought to be read : Ex. xxi. 8 ; Lev. xi. 21 ; xxv. 30 ; 1 Sam. ii. 3 ; 2 Sam. xvi. 18 ; xix. 7 ; Isa. ix. 2 ; xlix. 5 ; lxiii. 9 ; Ps. c. 3 ; Job vi. 21 ; xiii. 15 ; Prov. xix. 7 ; xxvi. 2.

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## PSALM CI.

THIS Psalm has been styled "the godly purposes and resolves of a king." It might also be described as "Speculum Regis," a mirror for kings and all that are in authority. It opens with the joyful contemplation of God's mercy and justice as kingly virtues, in their measure and degree to be manifested in earthly kings. It then records the

king's pious resolve to keep his own heart and life unspotted, and to remove from him all that might lead him astray. Yet scarcely has he uttered the resolve, when, reflecting on all that such a resolve implies, he breaks forth in the earnest cry that God himself would come to him and take up his dwelling with him, giving him grace to walk in "a perfect way." Thus having consecrated himself and his house, he declares further how he will provide for the purity of his court. With jealous care he will exclude those who are the bane of king's houses — the slanderer, the proud, the deceitful, the liar. None but the faithful; none but those who, like himself, walk in a perfect (i.e. blameless) way, shall be admitted to places of honor and trust about his person. Finally, the work of zealous reformation shall extend to his capital, the city of Jehovah, and to the utmost borders of the land, that he may see realized under his sway the great ideal, "Ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a *holy nation*."

All this falls in admirably with the early part of David's reign, and the words are just what we might expect from one who came to the throne with a heart so true to his God. If the words "When wilt thou come unto me?" may be taken to express, as seems most natural, David's desire to see the ark at length fixed in the tabernacle which he had prepared for it on Zion, the Psalm must have been written whilst the ark was still in the house of Obed-edom (2 Sam. vi. 10, 11). "Zion was already David's royal seat, and the tabernacle of Jehovah was there; but all had not yet been accomplished that was necessary for the proper ordering and administration of the kingdom. The new state had still to be organized, and the great officers of state and of the household to be chosen, men upon whose character so much always depends, and especially in despotic monarchies like those of the ancient world. David himself was standing at the threshold of the most critical period of his life, and, fully aware of the greatness of his responsibilities, did not feel himself as yet equal to the task which devolved upon him, to the burden which he was henceforth to bear. Still, at this first period of his reign in Jerusalem, in the flush of victory, in the full splendor of his newly-acquired dominion over the whole of Israel, at a time when lesser princes would so easily have been dazzled by the deceitful sunshine of prosperity, or would have been terrified at the responsibility, David is only the more earnest in praising Jehovah and calling to mind his attributes, in striving to purify his own heart, and to form wise measures for the conduct of a strong and righteous rule, and in the resolution to keep far from him all that would bring a reproach upon himself or a stain upon his court. For the very sanctity



of that city which had just been chosen as the dwelling-place of Jehovah required that nothing unholy should be tolerated therein. One who begins his reign with thoughts and resolutions such as these may well look for a happy termination of it, and nothing shows us more clearly the true nobleness of David's soul than this short Psalm. It is the spontaneous, inartificial expression of feelings long restrained; feelings and purposes, however, which form in themselves a whole, and which therefore naturally, and without effort, appear as a whole in the Psalm, and give it the unity which it possesses."<sup>1</sup>

[A Psalm of David.]

1 OF loving-kindness and judgment will I sing,

Unto thee, O Jehovah, will I sing psalms.

2 I will behave myself wisely<sup>a</sup> in a perfect way.

When<sup>b</sup> wilt thou come unto me?—

I will walk with a perfect heart within my house.

1. **LOVING-KINDNESS AND JUDGMENT.** These can only be the theme of praise as *divine* attributes. But it is as a king who would frame his own rule and his kingdom after the divine pattern that David makes these attributes the burden of his song. He meditates on the mercy and the righteousness of God, that he may learn the lesson of that mercy and righteousness himself. He meditates on them till his heart glows with the thought of their surpassing excellence, as seen in the divine government, and with the earnest desire that the same kingly virtues may be transferred into his own life and reign. See note on lxxxv. 10.

SING PSALMS, or perhaps, rather, "play," i.e. upon the harp or other musical instruments. "Quum dicit, *Tibi, Jehovah, psallam*," says Calvin, "Dei beneficio se agnoscit ad tam praeclarum et honorificum munus esse destinatum; quia superbae temeritatis fuisset ultro se ingerere. Non abs re autem regias virtutes duabus his partibus complectitur, clementia et iudicio; quia sicuti praeceptum regis munus est suum cuique jus reddere, ita sollicitus erga

suos amor et humanitas in eo requiritur. Nec abs re dicit Solomo; Clementia stabiliri solium (Prov. xvi. 12)."

2. **I WILL BEHAVE MYSELF WISELY** IN, or, "I will give heed to" (see Critical Note). The expression shows his sense of his own responsibility. The possession of absolute power too often dazzles and blinds men. An Eastern despot might have cast off all restraint, or, at least, might have allowed himself large license in the indulgence of his passions or his follies, almost without scandal or hatred. The nobler, therefore, is this resolve.

WHEN WILT THOU COME. It would be possible to render: "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way when thou comest unto me"; but the question is far more expressive. It bursts forth from the heart, moved and stirred to its inmost centre, as it thinks of all the height and depth of that resolve to "walk in a perfect way." How shall a frail son of man keep his integrity? The task is too great for his own strength, honest and sincere as the resolution is, and therefore he cries, "When wilt thou

<sup>1</sup> The passage in inverted commas is taken in substance from Ewald.

- 3 I will not set any vile thing before mine eyes;  
 I hate the sin of unfaithfulness<sup>c</sup>;  
 It shall not cleave unto me.
- 4 A froward heart shall depart from me;  
 A wicked person I will not know.
- 5 Whoso privily slandereth<sup>d</sup> his neighbor,  
 Him will I destroy.
- 6 Whoso hath a high look and proud heart,  
 Him I will not suffer.

come unto me"? — come to be my abiding guest — come not only to dwell in Zion, in thy tabernacle, but with me thy servant, in my house and in my heart (comp. John xiv. 23), giving me the strength and the grace that I need? The expression is no doubt remarkable as occurring in the Old Testament; though if it be understood as referring to the removal of the ark to Zion (see introduction to the Psalm), it would be but a claiming of the promise in Ex. xx. 24; "In all places where I record my name *I will come unto thee*, and bless thee."

WITH A PERFECT HEART; lit. "in the perfectness, or integrity, of my heart." So "a perfect way" might be rendered "the way of integrity."

3. SET BEFORE MINE EYES, i.e. as an example to imitate. According to Calvin, he speaks in the previous verse of the manner in which he will regulate his private life; in this, of his duties as a king.

VILE THING; lit. "thing of villany." The noun is that which is wrongly rendered in the A.V. of the historical books, "Belial," as if it were a proper name. It is really a compound noun meaning "that which profiteth not." Comp. Dent. xv. 9. See on Ps. xli. 8.

THE SIN OF UNFAITHFULNESS; lit. "the doing of turnings aside" (if we take the noun as an abstract), or "the doing of them that turn aside," i.e. I hate to act as they do (if we take the word as an adjective). The alliteration of the sibilants in the three words is

noticeable. See more in the Critical Note. All such deviations from truth, from integrity, from that divine law by which he rules himself, shall not "cleave" to him. Temptations to such a course may beset him. The whisper might come: policy requires this course; craft must be met by craft; power is given to be used; kings are above law; and the like. But he refuses to listen to the whisper of the serpent; and when it would fasten its fangs in him, he shakes it off.

4. First David proves himself, laying down the rule for his own guidance; then he determines what his court and household shall be. In this verse he repudiates generally "the froward heart" and "the wicked person." In the following he enters more into detail.

A WICKED PERSON, or "wickedness"; but the former accords better with "the froward heart" (comp. Prov. xi. 20) in the parallelism.

5. The secret slanderer, seeking to ingratiate himself into his prince's favor by pulling down others, and the haughty, over-bearing noble (ver. 6), would be no uncommon characters in any court, least of all an Oriental court. Such persons would David destroy. Thus he exercised the kingly virtue of "judgment" (ver. 1). "As a private individual he could never have ventured on such a measure; but when he was placed on the throne, he received from God's hand the sword with which he was to punish wrongdoing."

6. A PROUD HEART; lit. "whoso is

7 Mine eyes are upon the faithful in the land,

That they may dwell with me.

Whoso walketh in a perfect way,

He shall minister unto me.

8 He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house.

He that speaketh lies shall not be established in my sight.

9 Every morning will I destroy the wicked of the land.

That I may cut off all workers of iniquity from the city  
of Jehovah.

wide of heart," i.e. as puffed up and blown out with pride (comp. Prov. xxi. 4; xxviii. 25). Elsewhere the phrase, "a wide heart," occurs in a very different sense. It is said of Solomon that God gave him "a wide heart," i.e. comprehensiveness, a large grasp, the power not only of gathering facts, but the power of seeing their mutual relation, — breadth of sympathy, and breadth of understanding. In cxix. 32 and Isa. lx. 5 the phrase denotes a feeling of liberty and of joy. In this last sense, the expression "my heart is dilated" occurs constantly in the "Arabian Nights." Comp. 2 Cor. vi. 11: 'Ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν πεπλάτυνται (where see Stanley's note).

I WILL NOT SUFFER, or "I cannot away with," Isa. i. 13; Jer. xlv. 22.

7. MINE EYES ARE UPON. Comp. xxxii. 8; xxxiv. 15 [16]; lxvi. 7. His ministers shall be chosen, not for high birth, or gifts of fortune, or talents, or accomplishments, or flattering lips, or supple compliance, but for incorruptible fidelity; the word "faithful" implying that faithfulness to God is the basis of such fidelity to their king.

WHOSO WALKETH IN A PERFECT WAY, i.e. with evident reference to ver. 2, "whoever has laid down for himself the same rule of integrity, is actuated by the same purity of motive as I myself am."

8. WORKETH DECEIT, as in lii. 2 [4].

BE ESTABLISHED, or "abide," "continue"; comp. cii. 28 [29].

9. EVERY MORNING. Fast as the evil springs under shelter of the darkness, it shall be destroyed with the returning light. This is the common explanation, but I believe that the allusion, beyond all question, is to the Oriental custom of holding courts of law in the early morning. (See the same allusion in Jer. xxi. 12, "Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled," etc.; Zeph. iii. 5, "Morning by morning doth he bring his judgment to light." See also 2 Sam. xv. 2, and comp. Luke xxii. 66; John xviii. 23.) Day by day will he exercise his work of righteous judgment, purging out all ungodliness from the holy city. His zeal is like the zeal of Phineas, a zeal for God and for his honor. He will have a pure state, a pure city, as the writer of the one hundred and fourth Psalm hopes to see a pure earth (civ. 35), without spot or stain of sin. It is like the dream which fascinated the Roman poet of an *Astraea redux*. It is a hope which finds its accomplishment in the apocalyptic vision, in that new Jerusalem into which "there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" (Rev. xxi. 27).

<sup>a</sup> אֲשֶׁר־בְּיָמֶיךָ. See Critical Note on xli. 1 [2]. According to Hupfeld with prep. (as here, and Dan. ix. 13, with אֶל, and elsewhere with בְּלִי. לְ), it can only have the meaning of *to regard*. But in Dan. i. 4 we have the Hiph. part. followed by אֶל, apparently in the other sense of

*behaving wisely*, and hence the rendering of the E. V., "I will behave myself wisely," may be defended. Delitzsch explains the verb by the noun מְשִׁיבֵי־לַיְלָה in xxxii. 1, xlvi. 8, as expressing "poetic meditation," *will dichtend ehren*.

<sup>b</sup> מְהֵרָה. The rendering given in the text is the most obvious. It is that of the LXX, Πότε ἤξεις πρὸς μέ; and has been adopted by the E. V. It would be possible, however, (1) to take מְהֵרָה, not as an interrogative, but as a conjunction, *when, as often as*; compare the similar usage in Arab. and Syr., and that of other interrogative words, as for instance מִי, xxv. 12, xxxiv. 13. (2) מְהֵרָה may be 3d fem., referring to הָרָהּ or הָמָרָה (so Maurer), "may it come to me," i.e. become my possession. But to speak of "a way," or even of "perfectness" — taking הָמָרָה as a neut. noun (see on xv. 2, note <sup>a</sup>) — as "coming" to a person, is a strange expression, to which the words "within my house" in the next line form no real parallel.

<sup>c</sup> מְשִׁיבָה, inf. constr. for מְשִׁיבָה, as in Gen. xxxi. 28; 1. 20; Prov. xxi. 3; comp. מְשִׁיבָה, Gen. xlvi. 11.

מְשִׁיבָה. It seems most natural to take this as an abstract = מְשִׁיבָה, Hos. v. 2 (see note on xl. 5), after the analogy of מְשִׁיבָה, xix. 14. The verb almost requires this; lit. "the doing of apostasies or faithlessnesses." Ewald admits that this is the simplest construction, but thinks that the passage in Hosea is against it, as well as the sing. מְשִׁיבָה. Hence he renders, "the doing of the false," i.e. so to act as the false do, taking מְשִׁיבָה as an adjective.

<sup>d</sup> מְשִׁיבָה (K'thîbh), Part. Po., with the connecting vowel of the old stat. constr. (Ges., § 93. 2; Ewald, § 211 *b*). According to Hupfeld the K'ti is Piel for מְשִׁיבָה, like מְשִׁיבָה, lxii. 4; but may be only the shortened form of the Poel with Kametz Chatúph instead of Cholem, in which case it will be read *m'loshni*.

## PSALM CII.

THIS Psalm must have been written by one of the exiles in Babylon, probably toward the close of the captivity, when the hope of a return seemed no longer doubtful. In mournful strains he describes his bitter lot. Sorrow and pain had been very busy with him. His very heart was smitten within him, as the grass is withered in the hot eye of the sun. He was alone, with no friend to comfort him; his

enemies turned his misery into a proverb; his life was drawing to a close under the heavy wrath of God.

But when he has time to look away from his sorrow, a prospect so bright and so glorious opens before him, that in the thought of it all else is swallowed up and forgotten. Zion's deliverance is at hand. Her God has not forsaken her. The grounds on which his hope rests are broad and manifold; for Jehovah is the everlasting King (ver. 12); the time fixed in his counsels is come (ver. 13); the hearts of her children are moved with a more passionate longing for her restoration (ver. 14); the prayer of his suffering people has prevailed, the sighing of the prisoner has entered into his ears (ver. 17, 19, 20). A new nation shall be born in Zion, and other nations and kingdoms shall be gathered into her to praise Jehovah (ver. 18, 21, 22).

Once again, as for a moment, the sadness of the exile and the sufferer prevails. His life is ebbing away, his heart and his flesh fail. Shall he be permitted to look upon that glory with the thought of which he has been comforting himself, the vision of which has been passing before his eyes? "O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days!" is the natural and touching petition which breaks from his lips, as he fears lest his eyes should be closed in death before that glory appears. And then suddenly, as if every cloud of apprehension were dispelled, he triumphs in the thought that there is One who changeth not; that though the solid frame of the universe itself should crumble into dissolution, yet he is the same "yesterday, to-day, and forever," the one hope and stay of his children now and in all generations to come.

On the Messianic character of the Psalm, and the quotation made from it in the Epistle to the Hebrews, see the remarks at the end on verses 25-27. It is strange that this quotation should have been passed over without any notice, not only by commentators like De Wette and Hupfeld, but even by Calvin, Tholuck, and Hengstenberg.

This Psalm is clearly individual, not national; and must have been intended for private rather than liturgical use, as the inscription seems designed to inform us. This inscription is peculiar: it stands quite alone among the titles prefixed to the Psalms; for it describes the character of the Psalm, and marks the circumstances under which it should be used. In all other instances the inscriptions are either musical or historical.

Besides the prologue (ver. 1, 2), and the epilogue, (ver. 23-28), the Psalm consists of two main divisions, the complaint (ver. 3-11), and the consolation (ver. 12-22).

[A Prayer of the Afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and before Jehovah poureth out his complaint.]

- 1 O JEHOVAH, hear my prayer,  
And let my cry come unto thee.
- 2 Hide not thy face from me ;  
In the day when I am in distress incline thine ear unto me,  
In the day that I call answer me speedily.
- 3 For my days are consumed in smoke,  
And my bones are burnt up as a firebrand.
- 4 My heart is smitten <sup>a</sup> like grass and withered,  
For I have forgotten to eat my bread.
- 5 Because of the voice of my groaning,  
My bone cleaveth to my flesh.
- 6 I am like a pelican of the wilderness,  
I am become like an owl of the ruins.
- 7 I have watched, and have been <sup>b</sup>  
Like a lonely bird on the house-top.

1, 2. The opening words are such as are found in other Psalms : comp. xviii. 6 [7] ; xxxix. 12 [13] ; xxvii. 9 ("hide not thy face") ; lix. 16 [17] ("in the day when I was in distress"), and xviii. 6 [7] ; xxxi. 2 [3] ("incline thine ear unto me") ; lvi. 9 [10] ("in the day when I call") ; lxix. 17 [18] ; exliii. 7 ("answer me speedily"). But all these are forms of expression which would easily pass into the common language of prayer.

2. This verse admits of a different arrangement of its clauses :  
Hide not, etc. . . . in the day of my distress,  
Incline, etc. . . . in the day that I call ;  
Answer me speedily.  
So Hupfeld.

3. IN SMOKE, as in xxxvii. 20. There is no need to adopt the reading of some mss., "as smoke" ; nor again is it necessary to render in the next clause, "as with a firebrand" (Hupfeld). The bones are burned (see on lxix. 3) as the brand is when placed on the fire. Comp. xxii. 15 [16] ; xxxi. 10 [11] ; xxxii. 3.

4. SMITTEN, as by a sun-stroke. Cf. cxxi. 6 ; Hos. ix. 16 ; Jonah iv. 8.

I HAVE FORGOTTEN, in the sorrow of my heart, as in cvii. 18 ; Job xxxiii. 20 ; 1 Sam. i. 7, 8 ; xx. 34 ; 1 Kings xxi. 4 ; Dan. vi. 18 [19]. So too in Homer, *Il.* xxiv. 129.

5. MY BONE. The Hebrew has the singular, and the E. V. retains the singular in Job xix. 20, but the sing. may, perhaps, be collective, for the plural.

TO MY FLESH. More naturally in Lam. iv. 8, "my bones cleave to my skin" ; the expression denoting extreme emaciation. In Job xix. 20, however, it is, "my bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh," which may refer to a state of weakness and relaxation brought on by severe pain, in which the bones have lost their power of motion.

6. A PELICAN . . . AN OWL. Both are mentioned Lev. xi. 17, 18, and the former as inhabiting the wilderness, Zeph. ii. 14 ; Isa. xxxiv. 11. The LXX have *πελεκάν* and *νυκτικόραξ*. The owl is called in Arabic, "mother of the ruins."

7. I HAVE WATCHED, sleep having

- 8 All the day long have mine enemies reproached me,  
They that are mad against me<sup>c</sup> have made their oaths  
by me.
- 9 For I have eaten ashes like bread ;  
And mingled my drink with weeping ;
- 10 Because of thine indignation and thy wrath,  
For thou hast taken me up and cast me away.
- 11 My days are like a shadow that declineth,  
And I am withered like grass.
- 12 But THOU, O Jehovah, sittest throned forever,  
And thy memorial is to all generations.

been driven away by sorrow. With the next clause of the verse may be compared Virg. *Aen.* iv. 462 :

“Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo

Visa queri, et longas in fletum ducere voces.”

And *Georg.* i. 403 :

“de culmine summo

Nequicquam seros exereet noctua cantus.”

Ovid also has :

“In adverso nocturnus culmine bubo.”

8. MADE THEIR OATHS BY ME, i.e. when they curse, choose me as an example of misery, and imprecate upon themselves or others my misfortunes — say, “God do to me, to thee, as he has done to this man.” Comp. *Isa.* lxxv. 15 ; *Jer.* xxix. 22.

9. ASHES LIKE BREAD, *Lam.* iii. 16. Comp. *Ps.* xlii. 3 [4], “my tears are my food,” lxxx. 5 [6].

10. “The acknowledgment is the same as in xc. 7-9. It is sin which has thus provoked God’s displeasure ; the two nouns, ‘indignation’ and ‘wrath,’ are in the Hebrew the strongest which the language possesses.” — *Delitzsch*.

THOU HAST TAKEN ME UP, etc. God’s wrath has seized and whirled him aloft, only to cast him, as worthless, away. So in *Isa.* xxii. 18, “He will toss thee like a ball into a large country.” Comp. *Job* xxvii. 21 ; xxx. 22 ; *Isa.* lxiv. 6 ; *Ezek.* iii. 14. Others explain, “only to

dash him the more forcibly to the ground” ; but the verb properly means to cast away, as in li. 11 [13] ; *Job* xviii. 7.

11. THAT DECLINETH. The word is used properly of the day at its close (as in *Judges* xix. 9, or the sun as setting, and so here transferred to the evening shadows (comp. *cix.* 23), which would strictly be said to lengthen. The figure describes the near approach of death.

12. BUT THOU. This is the great consolatory thought by which he rises above his sorrow. He, the individual, may perish, but Zion’s hopes rest on her eternal King. And yet this might seem, as Calvin remarks, a far-fetched consolation. What is it to us that God changeth not, that he sitteth King forever, if meanwhile our own condition is so frail and feeble that we cannot continue for a moment in one stay ? His unchangeable peace and blessedness do but make our life seem the more complete mockery. But the Psalmist recalls God’s promises to his church especially that great covenant promise, “I will dwell in the midst of you” (*Ex.* xxv. 8). Resting on this, he feels sure that God’s children, however miserable their state, shall have their share in that heavenly glory wherein God dwelleth. Because God changes not, his promise and covenant change not, and therefore we may ever lift our eyes to his throne in heaven, from which he will surely stretch forth his hand to us.

- 13 THOU wilt arise (and) have compassion upon Zion,  
 For it is time to have pity upon her,<sup>d</sup>  
 For the set time is come.
- 14 For thy servants find pleasure in her stones,  
 And have pity upon her dust.
- 15 And the nations shall fear the name of Jehovah,  
 And all the kings of the earth thy glory,
- 16 Because Jehovah hath built Zion :  
 He hath appeared in his glory ;
- 17 He hath turned to the prayer of the poor-destitute,  
 And hath not despised their prayer.
- 18 This shall be written for the generation to come,  
 And a people new-created shall praise Jah.

SITTEST THRONED, as in ix. 7 [8] ;  
 xxix. 10.

THY MEMORIAL, as in Ex. iii. 15.  
 Some mss. read " thy throne " ; which,  
 however, may have come from the par-  
 allel passage (Lam. v. 19).

13. Because God is eternal, therefore  
 he will have compassion on Zion. Or  
 we may connect this verse with the fol-  
 lowing: THOU, Jehovah, the covenant  
 God and our Father, wilt rebuild the  
 walls of Zion ; for even we her children  
 love her very dust.

HAVE PITY UPON ; lit. " be gracious  
 unto," or as the E.V. " favor."

THE SET TIME. See on lxxv. 2. It  
 is not necessary to understand this def-  
 initely of the seventy years prophesied  
 by Jeremiah, xxv. 11, 12 ; xxix. 10. It  
 is rather the time when her warfare is  
 accomplished.

14. STONES . . . DUST. It is strange  
 that Luther and others should have un-  
 derstood these of the materials for build-  
 ing the new city. They evidently denote  
 the ruins of the old (Neh. iii. 34 [E.V.  
 iv. 2] ; iv. 4 [E.V. iv. 10]). It is not  
 less strange that Hengst. should assert  
 that we have here only a *figure* repre-  
 senting the low and ruinous condition  
 of Zion, because in the Psalm there are  
 no traces of the destruction of Jerusalem.

HAVE PITY UPON HER DUST. Zion

was not only dear to them in her glory,  
 when the splendor of her temple riveted  
 every eye ; but her very dust is sacred,  
 her very ruins are dear. " Quamvis  
 subversum sit templum, et deformis  
 tantum vastitas illuc appareat, fideles  
 tamen, in ejus amore manere defixos, in  
 putridis lapidibus et corrupto caemento  
 agnoscere Dei gloriam."—*Calvin*. And  
 then he applies all this to the spiritual  
 Zion, the church, bidding us remember  
 that the more mournful her desolations,  
 the less should we cease to love her ; yea,  
 rather, the more earnestly should our  
 sighs and prayers go up on her behalf.

15. The effect produced on the heathen  
 world by the manifestation of God's  
 glory, as seen in the redemption and  
 restoration of his people, which is not  
 only the accomplishment of a sovereign  
 purpose, but vouchsafed in answer to  
 prayer.

17. POOR-DESTITUTE. I have retained  
 this rendering of the Prayer-book version  
 because the word expresses utter naked-  
 ness and destitution. It only occurs  
 here and Jer. xvii. 6.

18. SHALL BE WRITTEN. The only  
 place in the Psalms where the memory  
 of great events is said to be preserved in  
 writing : elsewhere (as in xxii. 30 [31] ;  
 xlv. 1 [2] ; lxxviii. 2 [3]) it is left to  
 oral transmission.



- 19 For he hath looked down from his holy height,  
 From heaven hath Jehovah beheld the earth,  
 20 To hear the sighing of the prisoner,  
 To set at liberty those that are doomed unto death,  
 21 That men may declare the name of Jehovah in Zion,  
 And his praise in Jerusalem,  
 22 When the peoples are gathered together,  
 And the kingdoms to serve Jehovah.  
 23 He hath brought down my strength<sup>e</sup> in the way,  
 He hath shortened my days.  
 24 I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my  
 days ;  
 Thy years are to all generations.

A PEOPLE NEW-CREATED, or "a people to be created," as in xxii. 31 [32], "a people that shall be born." There is, as Calvin remarks, an implied antithesis between the new creation of the people and their present destruction. "The return from the captivity was like a second birth." It was a *παλιγγενεσία*. See the quotation from Cicero in the note on lxxxvii. 5. "The passage strikingly teaches that even when the church seems dead it can be created anew when God wills. Let us never therefore despair, but rest assured that he who created a world out of nothing, can also bring his church out of the darkness of death."

19. HE HATH LOOKED. Comp. Deut. xxvi. 15.

20. DOOMED UNTO DEATH. Hebrew "sons of death." See on lxxix. 11.

22. On this gathering of the nations in Jerusalem comp. xxii. 27 [28]; lxxviii. 32 [33]; Isa. xlv. 14. It is a fulfilment of the prophecy in Gen. xlix. 10.

18-22 express again in a somewhat different form what has already been said in verses 13-17. Thus, "thou wilt arise," etc., ver. 13, answers to ver. 19, each describing the first movement of the divine compassion. Again, ver. 17, like ver. 20, ascribes God's merciful interference to the prayer of his people.

Ver. 15, like verses 21, 22, speaks of the effect to be produced on the world at large.

23. Again he returns to the contrast between his own weakness and the brevity of human life, on the one hand, and the eternity and unchangeableness of God on the other (see above, ver. 11, 12), finding in this list his perfect satisfaction and rest.

IN THE WAY, i.e. in the journey of life. Those who suppose the Psalm to express the feelings rather of the nations at large than of the individual, see here an allusion to the journey through the wilderness, as in Ex. xviii. 8; Num. xvii. 12, 13 [27, 28]; xx. 14.

24. The abrupt transition in this verse is full of pathetic beauty. The prayer that his life may not be prematurely cut short seems to spring in this instance not merely from a natural clinging to life (as in Hezekiah's case, Isa. xxxviii. 10, 11), but from the intense desire to see God's glory manifested in Israel's restoration. Then, having uttered that prayer, without waiting for the answer, he magnifies God's eternity and unchangeableness. He finds in these his strength in weakness; he feels that he can rest on the everlasting arms. He draws his highest consolation from the thought, that though he himself may

- 25 Of old thou hast laid the foundation of the earth,  
 And the heavens are the work of thy hands:
- 26 They shall perish, but thou remainest,  
 Yea, all of them shall wax old as a garment,  
 As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be  
 changed.
- 27 But THOU art the same,  
 And thy years shall not come to an end.

perish, cut off in the midst of his days; though the heavens and the earth may be changed, and wax old as a garment; yet he who created them is ever the same, that his purposes cannot be frustrated, that his church, the children of his servants, shall abide, the witness and the monument of his love.

25. The *creation* of the world implies its transitoriness. That which had a beginning shall have an end. He alone who created all cannot change. Comp. Isa. li. 6; liv. 10. Elsewhere the order of nature is spoken of as unchanging, as in cxlviii. 6. Comp. Gen. viii. 22. And such expressions occur as "the everlasting mountains," "the everlasting heavens"; but as *compared with God* all that is most abiding has upon it the impress of decay and death. On the other hand, there is nothing here which contradicts the promise made elsewhere of "new heavens and a new earth" (2 Peter iii. 13).

27. THOU ART THE SAME; lit. "thou art he." Comp. the same form of expression, Isa. xli. 4; xlvi. 4; Job. iii. 19. Or, in a different sense, as in Deut. xxxii. 39, "I am he," i.e. I am God, I am Jehovah, the only true God; comp. Isa. xliii. 10, 13; xlvi. 12; lii. 6; and see Neh. ix. 6, "Thou art he, Jehovah alone," etc.

28. CONTINUE; lit. "dwell," i.e. in the land, as in xxxvii. 29; lxix. 36 [37], where the full expression occurs.

25-27 are quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 10-12) as addressed to Christ, and form a part of the writer's proof from the Old Testament that he, as the Son of God, is higher than the

angels. The quotation stands between two others, one from the forty-fifth, the other from the one hundred and tenth Psalm, bearing on the same argument. But these are both of them Messianic Psalms, and the principle on which the quotation rests is sufficiently obvious. It is by no means so easy to understand why the words of this Psalm should have been quoted, as it does not seem at first sight to be a Messianic Psalm. It may be observed, however, (1) that it is in this sense Messianic, that it looks forward to Israel's redemption from captivity, and the future glory of Zion; (2) that, as has been observed in the note on Ps. lxxii., and in the General Introduction, Vol. i. p. 44, there are two great lines of Messianic hope running through the Psalms, the one human, the other divine; the one of which the reign of the Son of David, the other of which the advent of Jehovah, is the great end and object. Here the Psalmist is occupied with the latter, ~~the~~ appearing of Jehovah in his glory. (3) This identification of the Jesus of the New Testament with the Jehovah of the Old is what we find elsewhere; comp. John xii. 41 with Isa. vi. (Isaiah sees the glory of Jehovah; St. John tells us it was the glory of Christ), and John xix. 37, "they shall look on him whom they pierced," which in Zech. xii. 10 is language used directly of Jehovah. The difference between these quotations in St. John and the one in the Epistle to the Hebrews is, that *the argument* in the latter *requires* that the Messianic character of the Psalm should be conceded. (4) Not only the revelation, the *appearing*

28 The children of thy servants shall continue,  
And their seed shall be established before thee.

of Jehovah in Zion, but also the creation as the person here spoken of; and on this of the world (ver. 25) would point to last ground, especially, the quotation in the Great Mediator, the Eternal Word, the Epistle to the Hebrews seems to rest.

<sup>a</sup> הַיִּזְבָּה, incorrect orthography for הַיִּזְבָּה, as in Hos. ix. 16. See on xlv. note <sup>1</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> נִצְּוֹתָהּ. If the reading is correct, it is clear that the accent (Athnach) is misplaced. Olsh. ingeniously conjectures נִצְּוֹתָהּ (comp. lv. 18). Instead of בִּזְרוּר many mss. of Kenn. and De R. have נִזְרוּר, *wandering*, as the Syr. also renders (the Chald. gives both), but contrary to the Masora on Isa. xiv. 31; Hos. viii. 9.

<sup>c</sup> מְהַלְלֵי. Po. part. pass. (occurring also Eccl. ii. 2), with the objective suffix. Comp. for a similar constr. נִזְנָחֵי, cix. 3; but the part. lends itself more readily to this kind of construction, as the suffix may be regarded, in a measure, as possessive; comp. קָמְרֵי, xviii. 40.

<sup>d</sup> לְהַנְיָהּ, Inf. Kal. The not unusual expanded form of this verb, as for instance in Isa. xxx. 18, with Segol, instead of Chirik or Pathach.

<sup>e</sup> כָּתוּר. The K'ri is כָּתוּר, which in this instance seems preferable, as more in accordance with the parallelism; but if we retain the K'thibh we may render either (1) "he hath brought down," or "humbled," or "afflicted with his strength, he hath shortened," etc.; or (2) "his strength hath humbled, it hath," etc.

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PSALM CIII.

THIS beautiful Psalm is the outpouring of a full heart in thanksgiving to Jehovah for his grace and compassion, both as experienced by the Psalmist in his own life, and also as manifested to his nation in their history. It celebrates especially God's mercy in the forgiveness of sin, and that tender pity, as of a human father, wherewith he remembers the frailty, and stoops to the weakness of his children. It is a hymn of which the text and motto are to be found in that revelation of himself which God gave to Moses when he proclaimed himself as "Jehovah, tenderly compassionate and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" (Ex. xxxiv. 6).

Nothing certain can be said as to the author and date of the Psalm,

though various conjectures have been hazarded. The Hebrew title gives it to David, the Syriac still more definitely assigns it to his old age. Rosenmüller supposes it to have been written after his sin in the matter of Uriah, a supposition which appears to me to be wholly without foundation. De Wette places the Psalm near the end of the exile, on the ground that the poet celebrates so largely God's grace and long-suffering, manifested to his people in spite of their sins and their idolatry. Not one word, however, hints at idolatry as the sin of which they had been guilty, nor is there a word to connect the Psalm with the exile.

The argument built on the supposed later (Aramaic) forms which this Psalm has in common with Psalms cxvi., cxxiv., cxxix., cxxxix., is not absolutely conclusive for a post-exile date, for the same forms occur in 2 Kings iv. 1-7. Still, such forms do not occur in David's time, or in Psalms in the earlier books ascribed to him, and they must fairly be regarded either as marking a dialectic variation (see Critical Note on ver. 3), or a time when Aramaic influence had begun to make itself felt. Ewald, who thinks that this and the next Psalm were written by the same author, regards both as temple Psalms, composed after the exile, the first praising Jehovah as the Redeemer of his people in the various circumstances of their history, the second praising him as the Creator and Ruler of the world.

There is little, however, to connect the two Psalms, except that both begin and end with the same self-exhortation, "Bless Jehovah, O my soul."

Others, again, attempt to connect this with the preceding Psalm. So Rieger observes: "To feel sin and death, and with this feeling to wrestle for grace and reconciliation, and to seek after the kingdom of God and his righteousness, is the subject of the one hundred and second Psalm; to feel sin and death, and then to have received reconciliation and the Spirit which quickeneth, and so to praise God, and in faith and patience to join oneself to all God's saints, is the subject of the one hundred and third Psalm." Delitzsch, who quotes this with approbation, takes the same view.

The Psalm consists of three parts :

I. A prelude, in a strain of trustful gladness, in which the Psalmist seeks to stir up gratitude within him, by the review of God's mercies to him as an individual (ver. 1-5).

II. The body of the poem, in a more reflective tone, full of a quiet, tender, pathetic, even melancholy beauty, in which, after a brief allusion to the facts of the national history, the great covenant relationship of

God to his people forms the prominent ground of hope amid human sins and transitoriness (ver. 6-18).

III. A triumphant conclusion. Joy in the remembrance of God's goodness to himself and his people predominates over every other feeling. Such a joy must utter itself in praise. Praise seems its natural employment, and therefore the natural employment of all other creatures, which it summons to a holy sympathy and fellowship with itself (ver. 19-22).

[(A Psalm) of David.]

- 1 BLESS Jehovah, O my soul,  
And all that is within me (bless) his holy name.
- 2 Bless Jehovah, O my soul,  
And forget not all his benefits ;
- 3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquity,<sup>a</sup>  
Who healeth all thy diseases,
- 4 Who redeemeth thy life from the pit,  
Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies,

1. ALL THAT IS WITHIN ME; not as opposed to outward or mere lip service, but expressing the desire to enlist every thought, faculty, power, the heart with all its affections, the will, the conscience, the reason, in a word the whole spiritual being, all in man that is best and highest, in the same heavenly service.

2. FORGET NOT. This touches the secret spring of so much ingratitude; — forgetfulness, the want of re-collection, or gathering together again of all the varied threads of mercy. Comp. Deut. vi. 12; viii. 11, 14. "Si oblivisceris, tacebis."

3. FORGIVETH, the first and greatest of all the divine benefits to the soul burdened with a sense of guilt and defilement; therefore also that which calls first for acknowledgment. "God's benefits will not be before our eyes, unless our sins be also before our eyes." — *Augustine*.

DISEASES or "sicknesses," primarily, at least, of body, as in Deut. xxix. 21; 2 Chron. xxi. 19; and this agrees with what follows; though possibly the

maladies of the soul may be included. "Even when sin is forgiven," says Augustine, "thou still carriest about with thee an infirm body. . . . Death is not yet swallowed up in victory, this corruptible hath not yet put on incorruption; still the soul herself is shaken by passions and temptations. . . . [But] thy sicknesses shall all be healed, doubt it not. They are great, thou wilt say; but the Physician is greater. To an Omnipotent Physician no sickness is incurable; only suffer thyself to be healed, thrust not away his hand, he knoweth what he doeth. . . . A human physician is mistaken sometimes! why? Because he did not make that which he undertakes to heal. God made thy body. God made thy soul; he knoweth how to re-create that which he created; he knoweth how to reform that which he formed; only be thou still under the hands of the Physician . . . suffer thou his hands, O soul that blesseth him, forgetting not all his benefits; for he healeth all thy sicknesses."

4. FROM THE PIT (see on xvi. 10);

- 5 Who satisfieth thy mouth<sup>b</sup> with good (things),  
So that thy youth reneweth itself<sup>c</sup> as the eagle.
- 6 Jehovah executeth righteousness  
And judgment for all that are oppressed.
- 7 He made known his ways unto Moses,  
His acts unto the children of Israel.
- 8 Jehovah is full of compassion and gracious,  
Long-suffering and plenteous in loving-kindness.
- 9 He will not alway be contending,  
Neither keepeth he (his anger) forever.

including death, the grave, Hades. The Targum renders, "from Gehenna."

CROWNETH. The love of God not only delivers from sin, disease, and death. He makes his children kings, and weaves their crown out of his own glorious attributes of loving-kindness and tender mercies.

5. SATISFIETH. Giving himself to us as the bread of life; as Athanasius says: *Τῶν πνευματικῶν ἡμᾶς ἐνέπλησεν ἀγαθῶν, ἐαυτὸν ἡμῶν ἔτρον ὕψτα ζωῆς ἐπιδοῦς.* And Augustine, observing that every creature has its own good: "Seek thine own good, O soul. *None is good but one, that is God.* The highest good, this is thy good. What, then, can he want who hath the highest good? . . . God is this good. What kind of good who can say? Behold we cannot say; and yet we are not permitted to be silent."

AS THE EAGLE, i.e. so that in strength and vigor thou art like the eagle. The rendering of the E.V., "so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's," is grammatically justifiable, but very unnecessarily makes the Psalmist responsible for the fable of the eagle's renewing its youth (See at end of Critical Notes). Neither this passage nor Isa. xl. 31 countenances any such fable. There is an allusion no doubt, to the yearly moulting of the feathers of the eagle and other birds, the eagle being selected as the liveliest image of strength and vigor. The Prayer-book version gives the sense rightly: "Making thee young and lusty as an eagle."

6. He passes from his own experience to that of the church at large: God's mercies to the individual are only a part of that vast circle of mercy which embraces all Israel. The connection is thus traced by Sanchez in his paraphrase: "Thou hast shown mercy to me, thou hast on various occasions executed judgment on those who have persecuted and oppressed me, and others of thy people. These are thy ways which thou didst show to Moses, and to thy people in the wilderness.—The Book of Deuteronomy from the fourth to the tenth chapter, and again from the twenty-seventh to the thirty-first, teaches nothing else but this, that Jehovah is full of compassion and long-suffering." *Los Salmos*, tomo ii. p. 34.

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUDGMENT. The words are in the plural, which therefore must either be used intensively for the singular (see note on lxviii. 35), or perhaps rather to denote *the several acts* in which Jehovah had displayed his righteousness.

ALL THAT ARE OPPRESSED; the church of God being a suffering church.

7. HIS WAYS, in allusion to the prayer of Moses (Ex. xxxiii. 13): "If I have found grace in thy sight, make known to me thy way, and let me know thee."

8. The verse is taken from Ex. xxxiv. 6. Comp. lxxxvi. 5, 15; cxl. 4; cxlv. 8; Joel ii. 13; Neh. ix. 17, 31; 2 Chron. xxv. 9.

9. Compare Isa. lvii. 16, "For not forever will I contend, and not perpet-

- 10 Not according to our sins hath he dealt with us,  
 And not according to our iniquities hath he requited us ;  
 11 For as high as the heaven is above the earth,  
 So great <sup>a</sup> is his loving-kindness upon them that fear him.  
 12 As far as the east is from the west,  
 So far hath he removed our transgressions from us.  
 13 Like as a father hath compassion on (his) children,  
 So Jehovah hath compassion on them that fear him.  
 14 For HE knoweth our frame,  
 He remembereth <sup>e</sup> that we are dust.  
 15 As for frail man, his days are as grass,  
 As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.  
 16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone,  
 And the place thereof knoweth it no more.  
 17 But the loving-kindness of Jehovah is from everlasting to  
 everlasting upon them that fear him,  
 And his righteousness unto children's children ;

ually will I be angry ; for the spirit would fail before me, and the souls that I have made."

KEEPETH. See the same absolute use of the verb, Lev. xix. 18, "Thou shalt not keep (i.e. cherish any grudge) against the children of thy people"; Nah. i. 2; and of the synonymous word (*shâmar*) Jer. iii. 5, 12. Calvin compares the French phrases *il lui garde, il me l'a gardé*.

11. The expressions in xxxvi. 5 [6]; lvii. 10 [11], are similar. God's love is like himself, infinite. It cannot be measured by all the measures of the universe.

12. REMOVED OUR TRANSGRESSIONS. The forgiveness of sin (as in ver. 3) is the great proof of God's love. "The expression describes, in language which might be that of the New Test., the effects of justifying grace."—*Delitzsch*. Comp. Mic. vii. 19, "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea"; Isa. xxxviii. 17, "Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back."

14-16. Man's weakness and transito-

riness is itself an appeal to God's fatherly compassion. Compare Gen. viii. 21, and see the same ground taken in Ps. xxxix. 5 [6], 13 [14]; lxxviii. 39; Job vii. 7.

14. OUR FRAME; lit. "our *fashioning*," as in Gen. ii. 7, "And he *fashioned* (formed) man of the dust," etc.; or as a potter moulds and fashions the clay (Isa. xxix. 16; xlv. 9, 11; Job x. 8).

15. Compare, for the figures in this and the next verse, xxxvii. 2, 10, 36; xc. 5, 6; Isa. xl. 6-8; li. 12; Job xiv. 2; and for the phrase, "the place thereof knoweth it no more" (Job vii. 10).

17. The same contrast between man's transitoriness and God's unchangeableness which occurs in Psalm xc. For the third time God's mercy and loving-kindness is said to be upon "them that fear him," comp. ver. 11, 13, as if to remind us that there is a love within a love, a love which they only know who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, who fear him and walk in his ways, as well as a love which "maketh the sun to shine, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust." In the next verse there

- 18 To such as keep his covenant,  
 And to those that remember his precepts to do them.
- 19 Jehovah hath established his throne in the heavens,  
 And his kingdom ruleth over all.
- 20 O bless Jehovah, ye his angels,  
 That are mighty in strength, that execute his word,  
 Harkening<sup>f</sup> to the voice of his word.
- 21 Bless Jehovah, all ye his hosts,  
 Ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.
- 22 Bless Jehovah, all ye his works,  
 In all places of his dominion.  
 Bless Jehovah, O my soul.

is the same limitation, "To such as keep his covenant," and to those who not only know but "do" his will. The blessings of the covenant are no inalienable right; *mancipio nulli datur*; children's children can only inherit its blessings by cleaving to it. Comp. Ex. xx. 6; xxiv. 7; Dent. vii. 9.

FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING. "Ab aeterno, ob praedestinationem; in aeternum, ob beatificationem; altera principium, altera finem nesciens."—*S. Bernard.*

19. The concluding portion of the Psalm extols the greatness and majesty of him who has thus stooped in pity to his children. The Psalmist had begun by calling upon his own soul to bless Jehovah for his goodness; he had associated with himself, as partakers in that goodness, all who feared the Lord. Now he concludes by calling on the angels in heaven and all creation, inanimate as well as animate, to ascribe blessing and

honor and power to him who sitteth upon the throne. Lastly, from all that vast congregation of worshippers praising God, he turns to himself, that his voice may not be wanting in the mighty anthem, "Bless thou Jehovah, O my soul."

20. MIGHTY IN STRENGTH, or "strong warriors" (see note on lii. 1), as afterwards "all his hosts," by which not the stars but the angels are meant, as is plain from the parallelism, "ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure." Compare the *λειτουργοὶὰ πνεύματα* of Heb. i. 14. See also Ps. civ. 4; Dan. vii. 10.

22. ALL HIS WORKS. In the same way in P's. cxlviii. first the angels and then the whole creation is called upon to praise God. On the closing words, "Bless Jehovah, O my soul," J. H. Michaelis observes "Magnum *πᾶθος* habet hic Psalmi finis, in quo Psalmista per epanalepsin ad animam suam revertitur."

<sup>a</sup> תְּהַלְלֵי אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה . . . יְהוָה יְהוָה. These forms of the fem. suffix, *êchi* in the sing., and *ây'chi* in the plural, are commonly regarded as later Aramaic forms. In the Psalter they occur, it is true, only in the later Psalms, as in cxvi. 7, 19 (where in ver. 12 occurs also the pure Chaldee masc. suffix, יְהוָה), cxxxv. 9; cxxxvii. 6. But they are rather to be regarded as instances of a return to the original fuller form of the 2d pers. fem. (corresponding to the original form אַתְּ, afterwards shortened into



תָּא, a return due, perhaps, to Aramaic influence. It is, however, remarkable that these same forms are found (in the K'thîbh) in a passage in the history of Elisha, 2 Kings iv. 1-7, a fact which certainly seems to suggest a dialectic, i.e. North Palestinian variation. The only other passage in which (according to Delitzsch) this form of suffix occurs is Jer. xi. 15.

<sup>b</sup> תָּאֲרִיבָהּ. It is difficult to determine the meaning of the word here. In xxxii. 9 I have adopted the rendering *trapping, harness*. Hupfeld contends for a similar meaning here: he takes it to denote the whole *apparatus* of external means by which life is maintained, all, whether in the way of ornament or use, which is to a man what trappings are to a horse; all that he may be said, figuratively, to *put on* (תָּאֲרִיבָהּ), just as men are said, for instance, to put on strength, pride, etc. Hengstenberg also renders the word *ornament* or *beauty*, but supposes it to be used, like the word *glory* elsewhere, for *the soul*, and tries to obviate the objection to this, viz. that the soul is addressed in ver. 1, by saying that in what precedes, the idea of the whole person has imperceptibly taken the place of the soul. Maurer and Köster keep to the same rendering, viz. *ornament*, but think that *the body* is meant, spoken of by anticipation as restored to youth and beauty.

Of the older interpreters, the Syr. has *thy body*, the LXX, *desire* (ἐπιθυμίαν), the Chald., *old age* (either as connecting the word with תָּא, *time*, or as parallel to *youth* in the next member), and this last is followed by De Wette and by Gesen. in his Lex., though in his Thesaur. he prefers the more general sense of *aetas*, and thinks that youth rather than old age is meant. Finally, there is the interpretation of Aben-Ezra, Kimchi. and others, who here, as in xxxii. 9 (see Critical Note there), give the sense *mouth*. lit. *check*: [just as Cicero uses *bucca* in the same general way, *quicquid in buccam venerit scribito*, "whatever comes into your head"]. There are thus, in short, three meanings assigned to the word: (1) *that which is put on, ornament, beauty*, etc., according to which the rendering would be, "Who satisfieth all *that thou hast about thee*; the awkwardness of this it is impossible not to feel; (2) *time* (whether *youth* or *old age*), a rendering to which Hupfeld would incline, if it were allowable to set aside usage, and to go back to the root תָּא, *aetas*; (3) *mouth*, for which may be alleged the interpretation of the older versions in xxxii. 9, and the Arabic cognate. This last, which in xxxii. 9 has Ewald's support (though here he has "deinen *Muth*"), is perhaps, on the whole, simplest, though I give it with some hesitation.

<sup>c</sup> תָּאֲרִיבָהּ: 3 fem. sing. with plural noun, according to the well-known

rule, Gesen. § 146, 3. There is no reason to render this verb as a passive. The proper reflexive meaning is far more lifelike and expressive.

<sup>d</sup> גָּבַר with עָל, in the same sense, cxvii. 2. Elsewhere the phrase has a different meaning, Gen. xlix. 26; 2 Sam. xi. 23. Hence Hupfeld would here read גָּבַהּ.

<sup>e</sup> זָבַח, strictly a passive *influxus*, but according to Gesen. § 50, Obs. 2 = *influxum (menti) habens*.

<sup>f</sup> לְשֹׁמֵר; gerundial = *obediendo*.

The fable of the eagle's renewing its youth has received different embellishments. The version of Saadia, given by Kimchi, is as follows: The eagle mounts aloft into heaven till he comes near to the seat of central fire in the sun, when, scorched by the heat, he casts himself down into the sea. Thence he emerges again with new vigor and fresh plumage, till at last, in his hundredth year, he perishes in the waves. Augustine's story is more elaborate, and far less poetical. According to him, when the eagle grows old, the upper curved portion of the beak becomes so enlarged, that the bird is unable to open its mouth to seize its prey. It would die of hunger, therefore, did it not dash this part of its beak against a rock till the troublesome excrescence is got rid of. Then it can devour its food as before, vigor is restored to its body, splendor to its plumage, it can soar aloft; a kind of resurrection has taken place. Thus it renews its youth. And then, wonderful to say, having told this story gravely, he makes Christ the rock, adding "in Christ thy youth shall be renewed as the eagle's."

## PSALM CIV.

THE general argument of this divine ode of creation has been well expressed by Calvin. "This Psalm," he says "differs from the last, in that it neither treats of God's special mercies bestowed on his church, nor lifts us to the hope of a heavenly life; but painting for us, in the frame of the world and the order of nature, the living image of God's wisdom, power, and goodness, exhorts us to praise him, because in this our frail mortal life he manifests himself to us as a Father." It is a bright and living picture of God's creative power, pouring life and gladness throughout the universe.

There are several points in the Psalmist's treatment of his subject which deserve especial notice.

1. First there is here, what is not to be found to the same extent, if at all, in any other ancient poetry, the distinct recognition of the absolute dependence of the universe, as created, upon the Creator: "He is before all things, and by him all things subsist." This truth is throughout implied. It forms the very basis and, so to speak, main thread of the poem.

2. Secondly, the great work of creation is here regarded not as a thing of the past merely; the universe is not a machine once set a-going, and then left to its fate, or to inexorable laws. The Great Worker is ever working.<sup>1</sup> "The world and all things owe their past origin and their present form to the continuous operation" of God. Creation ever repeats itself; death is succeeded by life. He who made, renews the face of the earth. It is the same profound view of the relation of the Cosmos to the Creator which St. Paul exhibits in his speech on Mars' Hill. He, too, is careful not to separate the past from the present. "God, who *made* (past, *ὁ ποιήσας*) the world," did not then leave the work of his fingers; the streaming forth of his omnipotence and his love was not checked or stayed; on the contrary, every part of his creation rests at every moment on his hands; "he *giveth* (present *δίδούς*) to all life and breath and all things" (Acts xvii. 25).

3. Thirdly, in its main outline the poem follows the story of creation contained in the first chapter of Genesis. There manifestly is the source whence the Psalmist drew. Meditating on that sublime description, itself a poem, he finds in it his subject and his inspiration. And yet the Psalm is not a mere copy of the original. Breathing the same lofty spirit, it has a force and an originality of its own. In some respects the Psalm, even more strikingly than the early record, exhibits the infinite greatness, the order, the life of the universe. "It is remarkable," says a Spanish commentator, "how the lyric verse, while losing nothing of its freedom and fire (*bizarria ed entusiasmo*), contrives at the same time to preserve all the force and simplicity of the picture of nature presented to us in Genesis."<sup>2</sup> But the creation of Genesis is a creation of the past; the creation of the Psalm is a creation of the present. The one portrays the beginning of the eternal order, the other its perpetual, living spectacle. Hence, too, the ode has far more animation than the record. The latter is a picture of still life; the former is crowded with figures full of stir and movement. How vivid

<sup>1</sup> See the excellent remarks on the importance of this view of nature in reference to miracles, in the Rev. D. J. Vaughan's valuable work, *Christian Evidences and the Bible*, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> Sanchez, *Los Salmos*, ii. 36.

are the images which it calls up, — the wild ass roaming the sands of the wilderness, stooping to slake his thirst at the stream which God has provided; the birds building their nests, and breaking forth into song in the trees which fringe the margin of the torrent-beds; the wild goats bounding from rock to rock, and finding their home in the inaccessible crags; the young lions filling the forest by night with their roar, and “seeking from God their prey”; and the sea with the same plenitude of life, its depths peopled with huge monsters and swarming myriads of lesser fish, and its surface studded with sails, the image of the enterprise, the traffic, the commerce of the world; and lastly, in fine contrast with this merely animal activity of creatures led by their appetites, the even tenor, the calm, unobtrusive dignity of man’s daily life of labor; take all these together, and we have a picture which for truth and depth of coloring, for animation, tenderness, beauty, has never been surpassed.

It is not surprising that this great hymn of creation should have called forth the warmest expressions of admiration from those who have studied it, and that they should have vied with one another in praising it as a masterpiece which has rarely been exceeded. One writer<sup>1</sup> “prefers it to all the lyric poetry of the Greeks and Romans.” Another<sup>2</sup> declares that “in Hebrew poetry there is little that can compare with it in precision of outline, and in the delicacy of its transitions, as well as in its warm sympathy with nature, and in the beauty of its images.” A third<sup>3</sup> says, “the Psalm is delightful, sweet, and instructive, as teaching us the soundest views of nature (la mas sana fisica), and the best method of pursuing the study of it, viz. by admiring with one eye the works of God, and with the other God himself, their Creator and Preserver.” The great naturalist, A. Von Humboldt, writes: “It might almost be said that one single Psalm represents the image of the whole Cosmos. . . . We are astonished to find in a lyrical poem of such limited compass the whole universe — the heavens and earth — sketched with a few bold touches. The contrast of the labor of man with the animal life of nature, and the image of omnipresent, invisible power, renewing the earth at will, or sweeping it of inhabitants, is a grand and solemn poetical creation.” — *Cosmos*, Vol. ii. part i. (p. 413, Bohn’s edition). “With what an eye of gladness,” says Herder, “does the poet survey the earth! It is a green mountain of Jehovah, which he lifted above the waters; a paradise which he established for the dwelling-place of so many living creatures above the seas. The series

<sup>1</sup> Amyraldus.

<sup>2</sup> Hupfeld.

<sup>3</sup> Sanchez.

of pictures which the poet here displays is, in fact, the natural history of the earth."

The Psalm is without any strophical division; but its main outline, as has been said, follows the first chapter of Genesis. The poet begins with the light, and the heaven with its cloud and storms, (ver. 2-4), corresponding to the works of the first and second days, Gen. i. 3-8. Then he passes to the earth, first describing its original chaotic state, and the separation of earth and water by the voice of God (ver. 5-9), in accordance with Gen. i. 9, 10 (first portion of the third day's work); and then the varied adornment of the earth as the dwelling-place of living creatures, in a strain which goes far beyond the narrative in Gen. i. 11, 12. The mention of the heavenly bodies follows (ver. 19-23) (fourth day's work), but with a more direct reference to the life of men and animals than in Gen. i. 14-18. Then, after a short exclamation of admiring gratitude (ver. 24), the poet, who has already woven into his verse so happily some portion of the creative wonders of the fifth and sixth days, the birds and beasts and creeping things and man. Gen. i. 20-26, turns back again (ver. 25, 26) to speak of the sea and its life, Gen. i. 21. Finally, after expressing, in vivid phrase, the absolute dependence of all this vast and manifold creation upon its Maker (ver. 27-30), he longs to see the bright original restored, to find himself and all God's creatures parts of the mighty harmony, that a new sabbath of creation may dawn, a rest of God, in which he shall rejoice in his works and they in him, and the world become a temple filled with the anthem of praise (ver. 31-35).

1 BLESS Jehovah, O my soul!

O Jehovah my God, thou art very great,

Thou art clothed with honor and majesty.

2 Thou coverest thyself with light as with a robe,

Thou spreadest out the heavens like a curtain.

1. CLOTHED, comp. xciii. 1.

2. THOU COVEREST THYSELF; lit. "covering thyself" (and in the next member "spreading out"), if we connect these participial clauses with what precedes, or "covering himself" if we join them with what follows. This participial construction (of which we have further instances in ver. 10, 13, 14; ciii. 3-5; see also Isa. xlv. 24, 25; xlv. 7; Jer. x. 12; Amos iv. 13) gives a present force

to God's creative action — teaches us to regard it not merely as a thing of the past, but as still operative. The fifth verse, on the other hand, opening with a past tense, takes us back to the original creation of all things.

WITH LIGHT. This is the first day. At the creation God said, "Let there be light." Here, where the creation is an ever-continued work, he *apparels* himself with light. The final revelation tells

3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters,  
 Who maketh the clouds his chariot,  
 Who walketh upon the wings of the wind ;

us that "God is light," 1 John i. 5; comp. John i. 4-9. "In comparing the light to a robe," says Calvin, "he signifies that though God is invisible, yet his glory is manifest. If we speak of his essential being, it is true that he dwelleth in light inaccessible; but inasmuch as he irradiates the whole world with his glory, this is a robe wherein he in some measure appears to us as visible, who in himself had been hidden. . . . It is folly to seek God in his own naked majesty; . . . let us turn our eyes to that most beautiful frame of the world in which he would be seen by us, that we may not pry with idle curiosity into the mystery of his nature." And Herder asks, "Is there in the universe a created thing more worthy to be the robe of Jehovah, whose very being is such that he dwelleth in darkness?"

**SPREADEST OUT THE HEAVENS.** The same figure as in Isa. xl. 22 (comp. xlii. 5; xlv. 24). This describes briefly the work of the second day (Gen. i. 6-8). The heavens are the firmament, the expanse (as the Hebrew word literally means) which is spread out to separate the waters. And in the waters above God lays, as it were, the floor of his palace.

**LIKE A CURTAIN,** i.e. the curtain of a tent, "ac si diceret regium esse tentorium." "Because the Hebrews conceived of heaven as a temple and palace of God, that sacred azure was at once the floor of his, the roof of our, abode. Yet methinks the dwellers in tents ever loved best the figure of the heavenly tent. They represent God as daily spreading it out, and fastening it at the extremity of the horizon to the pillars of heaven, the mountains. It is to them a tent of safety, of rest, of a fatherly hospitality in which God lives with his creatures."

—*Herder.* Both Athanasius and Augustine observe, that in the use of this figure the Psalmist designs to mark not merely the form of the heaven, but the

ease with which God works. "For easy as it is," says the former, "for a man to stretch out a skin, so easy it is for God to create the heaven which did not exist before." Augustine: "What infinite labor and toil and difficulty and continued effort it costs to spread out one little room; there is no effort of this kind in the works of God. Thou art not to think that God spread out the heaven as thou spreadest out the roof of thy house; but as easy as it is for thee to spread out a single skin, so easy was it for God to spread out that vast heaven. . . . Nay, God did not spread out the heaven as thou spreadest out the skin. For let a skin, wrinkled or folded, be placed before thee, and command it to be unfolded and stretched out; spread it out by thy word. 'I cannot,' thou wilt reply. See then how far thou comest short of the ease with which God worketh."

**3. WHO LAYETH THE BEAMS.** The figures, as Calvin remarks, are all designed to teach the same truth, viz. that we are not to pierce heaven in order to discover God, because he meets us in his word and presents everywhere living pictures to our eyes. We must not suppose that anything was added to him by the creation of the world; it is for our sakes that he puts on this garment.

**HIS CHAMBERS;** lit. "upper chambers," *ὑπερφῶα*, built on the flat roof of the Eastern houses. For the literal use of the word, see, for instance, 2 Kings iv. 10; for the figurative, as here, Jer. xxii. 13, 14, and comp. Amos ix. 6. Clericus cites from Ennius, "coenacula maxima coeli"; and from Plautus, *Amph.* iii. 1-3, where Jupiter says of himself, "in superiore qui habito coenaculo."

**IN THE WATERS,** i.e. the waters above the firmament (Gen. i. 7). It is impossible not to admire the boldness of the figure.

**WALKETH UPON THE WINGS.** Δεΐ-

- 4 Who maketh his messengers winds,  
 His ministers a flaming fire,<sup>a</sup>  
 5 He established the earth upon the foundations thereof,  
 That it should not be moved forever and ever.

κνυσιν ὡς οὐδὲ ἡ τῶν ἀνέμων φορὰ εἰκῆ φέρεται, ἀλλ' αὐτός ἐστιν ὥσπερ τις ἡνίοχος αὐτῶν γινόμενος, διὰ τὸ ταῖς αὐτῶν ἐπιβαίνειν πτέρυξιν. — *Athanasius.*

4. Some of the ablest of the recent commentators have rendered this verse: Who maketh the winds his messengers,

The flaming fire his ministers;  
 and but for the order of the words, and the plural predicate in the second member, I should have no hesitation in preferring this rendering. It would seem to be the natural sense of the words, and that which harmonizes best with the context. God has his palace in heaven, he makes the clouds his chariot, the winds and the lightning his avant-couriers and his train. But first, the plural predicate is awkward. We ought to have either "flames of fire his ministers," or "the flaming fire his minister." Hupfeld indeed attempts to account for the plural predicate, "ministers," by saying that it is an accommodation to the plural predicate "messengers" in the first member. It is more likely, perhaps, that as by the flaming fire the lightnings are meant, the subject itself is conceived of as plural. And next, the greater difficulty remains of the inversion, on this explanation, of the order of the words. The natural order in Hebrew, as in English, is verb, object, predicate, and no instance has, as yet, been alleged in which the predicate stands after the verb before the object. I have therefore, though reluctantly, given up the interpretation which the context seems to demand, in obedience to the grammatical requirements of the passage. Unless the grammatical difficulty can be removed, we must render "He maketh his messengers winds," etc., i.e. "He clothes his messengers with the might, the swiftness, the all-pervading subtilty of wind and fire." See the remarks of the Bishop of St.

David's in the Critical Note. This is far better than to explain [as in first edition] that God's messengers (or angels) are the secret agents who assume the forms of wind and lightning, in order to accomplish his will, that what we see working around us are not blind forces of nature, but beings to whom natural objects are a veil concealing their operation. This view, which I now believe to be quite untenable and without support in Scripture, has been illustrated with great beauty of language by Dr. Newman in his Sermon on the Feast of St. Michael: "But how do the wind and water, earth and fire move? Now, here Scripture interposes, and seems to tell us that all this wonderful harmony is the work of angels. Those events which we ascribe to chance, as the weather, or to nature, as the seasons, are duties done to that God who maketh his angels to be winds, and his ministers a flame of fire. . . . Thus, whenever we look abroad, we are reminded of those most gracious and holy beings, the servants of the Holiest, who deign to minister to the heirs of salvation. Every breath of air, and ray of light and heat, every beautiful prospect, is, as it were, the skirts of their garments, the waving of the robes of those whose faces see God in heaven." On the rendering of the verse by the LXX, and the quotation in the Epistle to the Hebrews, i. 7, more will be found in the Critical Note. Calvin observes that we are not bound in this and similar instances to regard the application of a passage in the New Testament as settling the question of its meaning where it occurs in the Old.

5. The work of the third day in its two great divisions: first, the separation of the land and water (ver. 5-9); next, the clothing of the earth with grass, herbs, and trees (ver. 10-18). The poet, however, ranges beyond the first creation,

6 Thou coveredst it<sup>b</sup> with the deep as with a garment ;

Above the mountains did the waters stand.<sup>c</sup>

7 At thy rebuke they fled,

At the voice of thy thunder they were scattered, —

8 The mountains rose, the valleys sank, —

To the place which thou hadst established for them.

and peoples the earth with the living creatures of the fifth day. It is not a picture of still life, like that in Genesis, but a living, moving, animated scene.

HE ESTABLISHED. God's order is itself the surst prop.

UPON THE FOUNDATIONS THEREOF. Comp. Job xxxviii. 4-6; Prov. viii. 29. On the other hand, in Job xxvi. 7, God is said to "hang the earth upon nothing." Mendelssohn gets rid of the figure here by rendering "Thou hast established the earth in herself"; but it must be a dull mind which needs thus to be guarded against misapprehension. Yet it is curious to see how these obvious figures have been strained, and a hard, literal, prosaic sense given to what is manifestly poetry. This was one of the passages which, according to Father Sanchez, was most strongly relied upon in the controversy with Galileo.

6-8. These verses hang together in construction, and are a poetical expansion of Gen. i. 9.

6. The original chaos is described, not according to the heathen notion, as a confused mass, earth and water mingled together, but the earth as already formed, yet completely enveloped in the water, *ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ δι' ὕδατος* (2 Pet. ii. 5). This vast, swelling, tumultuous sea hears the "rebuke" of God, and sinks to its appointed place; the earth appears, emerges from her watery covering, and shows her surface diversified with mountain and valley. So Milton:

"The earth was formed, but in the womb as yet  
Of waters, embryo immature involved,  
Appeared not: over all the face of earth  
Main ocean flowed."

7. Comp. lxxvii. 17-19. AT THY REBUKE; comp. xviii. 15 [16]; lxxvi. 6 [7]; Isa. i. 2, and Matt. viii. 26.

8. (THE) MOUNTAINS ROSE, i.e. they seemed to rise as the waters subsided. Comp. Ovid, *Met.* i. 43:

"Jussit et extendi campos, subsidere valles,

Fronde tegi sylvas, lapidosos surgere montes";

and 244,

"Flumina subsidunt, montes exire videntur,

Surgit humus, crescent loca, decrescentibus undis."

And Milton:

"Immediately the mountains huge appear

Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave

Into the clouds, their tops ascend the sky;  
So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low  
Down sunk a hollow bottom, broad and deep,

Capacious bed of waters," etc.

*Paradise Lost*, book vii.

There is, however, some doubt as to the construction of the clauses of this verse. I should see no objection to that which the LXX and Jerome have adopted, according to which the two clauses are immediately connected (*ἀναβαίνουσιν ὄρη καὶ καταβαίνουσι πεδία εἰς τόπον ὃν ἐθεμελίωσας αὐτοῖς*, Ascendent montes, et descendent campi ad locum quem fundasti eis), but that the subject of the next verse is evidently again that of ver. 6, the waters. Ewald and Hupfeld, whom I have followed, take the first member as parenthetical, and connect the second with the previous verse, "At the voice of thy thunder the waters fled to the place," etc.; and there may be a reference to Gen. i. 9, "Let the waters be gathered into one place." Delitzsch says this reference is undeniable, but his own rendering, "the mountains rose, (the water) sank down into the valleys," is as im-



- 9 Thou hast set them a bound that they cannot pass,  
That they turn not again to cover the earth ;
- 10 Who sendest forth springs along the torrent-beds,  
They flow between the mountains,
- 11 They give drink to all the beasts of the field,  
The wild asses quench their thirst.
- 12 Above them the fowls of the heaven have their habitation,  
They sing among the branches.

probable as it is artificial and unnecessary. The rendering of the Chald., "They (i.e. the waters) go up to the mountains, they sink down into the valleys," which has been followed by our translators both in the Bible and in the Prayer-book version (the margin gives the rendering I have adopted), is grammatically admissible, and has a certain picturesque force, carrying on, as it does, the image of the preceding verse—the rush and confusion of the waters fleeing at the rebuke of God. It has also the advantage of retaining the same subject throughout ver. 6–9. And further it is supported by the very similar construction in cvii. 26. On the other hand, the figure is, perhaps, somewhat strained, and it does not harmonize so well with ver. 6, or with the narrative in Genesis. The words of the first member occur again cvii. 26, where, as Ewald remarks, they are strictly in place; whereas here he thinks they may have been no part of the original poem.

9. A BOUND separating the sea from the land, as in Job xxxviii. 8–11. See for a wider view, extending still further this separation of the elements, xxvi. 8–10; Prov. viii. 27, 29, and comp. Ps. cxlviii. 6. Delitzsch says it might almost seem as if the poet who wrote these words did not suppose the flood to be universal, but it is far more probable that he is not thinking of the flood, but only of the everlasting order first established at the creation, and afterwards confirmed in the covenant made with Noah (Gen. ix. 9–16).

10. The loving care, the tender sympathy with which God, clothing the earth with beauty, provides at the same time

for the wants of all his creatures. Even the wild ass which shuns the approach of man, and the birds of heaven, which have no keeper, are not left unprovided for.

WHO SENDEST FORTH. The article with the participle carries on the construction, Jehovah being the great subject throughout the Psalm.

THE TORRENT-BEDS. The word (*nachal*) denotes both the torrent and the valley through which it flows, corresponding to the Arab *Wady*. Ewald and Hupfeld render, "Who sendeth forth springs into brooks." The latter argues (1) that the word never means *the valley* only, without the stream, and (2) that the subject of the next clause, "They flow," etc., cannot be *the springs*, but must be *the streams*. But in answer to (1) it may be said, that the torrent-bed is not here supposed to exist apart from the torrent, but rather to be produced by the action of the torrent; and in answer to (2), that the general subject of "water" is easily supplied from the preceding clause, as the LXX have seen.

11. QUENCH THEIR THIRST; literally "break their thirst," a phrase which occurs only here. Comp. the Latin *frangere sitim*; and the Welsh, "a dorant eu syched."

12. ABOVE THEM, OR, "beside them." The banks of the streams and the valleys would first be clothed with trees, and there the foliage would be most luxuriant.

THE FOWLS OF THE HEAVEN, a frequent expression in Genesis, as in i. 30; ii. 19, etc.

SING AMONG; lit. "give voice from."

13. God waters the earth not only by the fountains and torrents, but by the rain. Comp. Gen. ii. 5 and 10.

- 13 He watereth the mountains from his chambers ;  
 The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy work.
- 14 He maketh grass to grow for the cattle,  
 And green herb for the service of man ;  
 That he may bring forth bread from the earth,
- 15 And that wine may make<sup>d</sup> glad the heart of man,  
 And that oil may cause (his) face to shine,  
 And that bread may strengthen man's heart.

HE WATERETH ; lit. "He giveth drink to," the same word is in ver. 11. The MOUNTAINS are mentioned not only because on them the clouds rest, from them the streams descend, but because Palestine was a mountain-land. Comp. Deut. xi. 11, "a land of mountains and of valleys, of the rain of heaven it drinketh water" (unlike Egypt, which was watered by the Nile). Thus doubly watered, from above and from beneath (comp. Gen. xlix. 25), the earth brings forth grass for the cattle, and its various fruits, corn and wine and oil, for the use of men — for the cattle what they need, for man more than he needs — that which makes his heart glad and his countenance bright.

HIS CHAMBERS the clouds, as in ver. 3, where they are built on the waters.

THE FRUIT OF THY WORK, i.e. apparently the rain, as seems to be required both by the parallelism and by the expression "the earth is satisfied," for with the "mountains" in the first clause, "the earth" can hardly stand here by meton. for "the dwellers on the earth," viz. cattle and men. The rain may, perhaps, be called "the fruit of God's work," as the result of his operation, as elsewhere it is called "the brook of God" (lxxv. 9, 10).

14. GRASS . . . GREEN HERB. Comp. Gen. i. 11, 29, 30 ; iii. 18, 19 ; Ex. x. 12 ; the latter comprising not vegetables only, but corn, etc.

FOR THE SERVICE OF MAN. This seems the most natural interpretation, corresponding to "for the cattle," in the first member, and may be supported by the use of the word in 1 Chron. xxvi. 30.

Others render, "for the labor of man" (as the same word in ver. 23), with which they connect the next clause, "that he (i.e. man by his labor in cultivating the earth) may bring forth bread from it." But it is an objection to this, that the whole passage speaks of God's works and gifts, and there is nothing in it to suggest man's co-operation.

THAT HE MAY BRING FORTH, or, perhaps, "in that he brings forth," for the construction is somewhat loose, and it can hardly be said that *purpose* is clearly marked. If we adopt the latter rendering, then ver. 15 must be taken as an independent statement. See Critical Note.

BREAD in this verse seems to be used in its most general signification to denote all by which man is nourished. In the next verse it is mentioned in its proper sense, together with wine and oil, as the three most important products of the soil, the three essential elements of an Eastern banquet, the object being to set forth the *bounty* of God's provision for man. He furnishes no scanty table ; he gives with no niggard hand.

15. From the satisfying of the earth by the precious rain, the poet's thoughts turn to the satisfying of man by the earth. Not that man is the main subject, but rather the herbs and the trees ; only he passes for a moment from them to their chief uses, viz. for man, and for fowls, and for beasts.

AND THAT OIL, etc. ; lit. "And to cause (or, that he may cause) his face to shine with oil," the face being mentioned rather than the head which was anointed, because the radiance of joy is seen in

- 16 The trees of Jehovah are satisfied,  
 The cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted ;
- 17 Where the birds make their nests :  
 As for the stork, the cypresses are her house.
- 18 The high mountains are for the wild goats ;  
 The steep precipices are a refuge for the conies.
- 19 He hath made the moon for seasons ;  
 The sun knoweth his going down :
- 20 Thou makest darkness — and it is ° night,  
 Wherein all the beasts of the forest do move.

the face. The construction of the verse is doubtful. See Critical Note.

STRENGTHEN MAN'S HEART, Gen. xviii. 5 ; Judges xix. 5. Comp. Ps. cv. 16.

16. THE TREES OF JEHOVAH, so called as planted, not by human hand, but by God himself (as in the next member), trees of the forest and the mountain, in opposition to those which come under human cultivation, such as the vine and the olive, which are implied in ver. 15. See note on xxxvi. 6.

ARE SATISFIED, i.e. with the rain, as in ver. 13.

17. These trees have their use ; they are a home and a shelter for the birds — probably the larger birds are specially intended, as the stork is named, the smaller tribes of singing-birds having already been mentioned, ver. 12.

THE STORK. The word means in Hebrew, "the pious, or affectionate bird," called in Babrius, *Fab.* xiii., *πτηνῶν εὐσεβέστατον ζῶων*, and by Petronius, 55, 6, *pietaticultrix*.

18. THE HIGH MOUNTAINS AND PRECIPICES or "cliffs" are mentioned, because they, like the trees, are a *shelter* for the wild animals. God provides food, and God provides shelter for his creatures.

CONIES. I have left the word as in the E.V., though incorrect. The creature meant is the *hyrax Syriacus*. See Knobel on Lev. xi. 5, and Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*.

19. Transition to the work of the fourth day ; but still so contrived as to

introduce another picture of life upon the earth, and the contrast between the life of the night and the life of the day.

THE MOON, mentioned first, because to the Hebrew mind the night naturally preceded the day, as throughout Gen. i., "And there was evening and there was morning." Hence we have first the night-scene (ver. 20, 21), and then the day-scene (ver. 22, 23).

FOR SEASONS, as in Gen. i. 14. Others would render in both passages, "for festivals" comp. Sir. xliii. 7, ἀπὸ σελήνης σημεῖων ἑορτῆς, but there is no reason so to restrict it. See note on lxxv. 2 ("set time"), and comp. Lev. xxiii. 4.

KNOWETH HIS GOING DOWN. Comp. Job xxxviii. 12 ; Jer. viii. 7. This mention of the sunset prepares the way for the night-picture which follows.

20–23. Even the night has its busy life ; the beasts of prey are abroad, and they, too, wait upon the providence of God. The whole picture is finely conceived, and the contrast is perfect between the restless movement and roaring of the wild beasts, and man's calm life of labor, continued in the quiet light of day from morning till evening. All the other creatures wait upon God, in simple dependence upon him ; man must *labor*, as well as gather what God gives him, if he would be satisfied with good.

20. DO MOVE. The word is strictly used of the movements of reptiles and fishes. In Gen. i. 21, and in Ps. lxxix. 34 [35] the verb, and in ver. 25 of this

- 21 The young lions roar after their prey,  
And seek their food from God :
- 22 The sun ariseth, — they get them away,  
And lay them down in their dens.
- 23 Man goeth forth to his work,  
And to his labor until the evening.
- 24 How manifold are thy works, O Jehovah ;  
In wisdom hast thou made them all :  
The earth is full of thy riches.
- 25 Yonder is the sea, great and broad,  
Wherein are things moving without number,  
Beasts both small and great.
- 26 There go the ships,  
(And there) leviathan whom thou hast formed to  
take his pastime therein.

Psalm the noun, "things moving," are used of creatures in the sea. In Gen. i. 24, 25, the noun denotes things *creeping* upon the earth. Here, as applied to the beasts of the forest, the word may have been chosen to express their *stealthy* movements in pursuit of their prey, or it may be used of any kind of motion, as it is in Gen. vii. 21, "all flesh that moved upon the earth"; see also Gen. ix. 2.

24. Having thus come to man, the crown of all creation, and so touched, as it were, by anticipation, on the work of the sixth day, the Psalmist pauses to review with grateful wonder the multitude of God's works, and the wisdom which is manifest in creation. Athanasius beautifully remarks on the sense of rest and refreshment which is produced by this change of strain, the Psalmist passing from the narration of God's works of providence to praise and glorify him who is the Creator of all: *τὸν περὶ τῆς προνοίας διεξεληθὼν λόγον ἐπὶ ἕμνον τοῦ κρίσαντος τὸν λόγον μετέβαλεν, διὰ πάντων ὡσπερ διὰ τούτου τὴν ἀκοήν.*

RICHES; lit. "possessions." Others giving a different meaning to the root render "creatures."

25. Then he remembers that there is one vast field of creative wonders of which as yet he has said nothing. The sea, too, has its life, a life in its depths of things small and great, a life of the coral insect as well as of the whale, and also a life on its surface, where "go the ships" carrying the thoughts and the passions, the skill and the enterprise of human hearts. The way in which the sea is mentioned indicates a writer not living on the coast. It is visible, perhaps, but at a distance. Its monsters are not familiar objects, but are vaguely described as "leviathan."

BROAD; lit. "wide of two hands," i.e. "on both sides," and so in all directions, a phrase used elsewhere of a land or country, as Gen. xxxiv. 21; Judges xviii. 10; Isa. xxii. 18.

26. LEVIATHAN; not here as in lxxiv. 14; Job xi. 25 [E.V. xli. 1], "the crocodile," but a general term for all "sea-monsters."

THEREIN, i.e. in the sea, the pronoun referring to the more remote noun. It is strange that Ewald should render "whom thou hast made to play with him," and appeal to Job xl. 29 [E.V. xli. 5], as supporting the rendering.

- 27 All of them wait upon thee,  
That thou mayest give them their food in its season.
- 28 That thou givest them, they gather ;  
Thou openest thine hand, they are satisfied with good ;
- 29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled ;  
Thou takest away their breath, they die,  
And turn again to their dust.
- 30 Thou sendest forth thy breath, they are created,  
And thou renewest the face of the ground.
- 31 Let the glory of Jehovah be forever !  
Let Jehovah rejoice in his works !

The Jewish tradition does indeed make Leviathan the plaything of the Almighty; but there is nothing of the kind in Scripture.

27, 28. In allusion, probably, to Gen. i. 29, 30.

27. **WAIT UPON THEE.** The verb (which is more usual in Aramaic) occurs in the same sense and with the same construction (cxlv. 15).

**IN ITS SEASON.** Or the suffix may refer distributively to the animal (not to the food): "to each in his season," "at the fitting time," "in due season" as the E. V. renders.

28. **GATHER.** The word denotes properly "to pick up objects from the ground," as stones, flowers, ears of corn, grapes, wood, etc.; here, provender. There is no allusion (as Hengst.) to the gathering of the manna.

29, 30. God is not only the liberal and provident householder, the gracious father of a family. He is the fountain of life to his creatures. Comp. xxxvi. 8, 9 [9, 10].

29. **THOU HIDEST THY FACE;** a phrase elsewhere used to express God's wrath or displeasure; here, in a physical sense, the withdrawal of his care.

**TROUBLED.** See the same expression xxx. 7 [8], and comp. Job xxiii. 15.

**THOU TAKEST AWAY,** or perhaps rather "thou withdrawest," "drawest in," correlative to "sendest forth," ver. 30. Comp. cxlvi. 4 with Job xxiv. 14.

**THEY DIE;** lit. "breathe out their life," *exhalare animam, exspirare*, the same word as in Gen. vi. 17; vii. 21, though there is no need to assume any allusion to the deluge.

**TURN AGAIN TO THEIR DUST,** as in Gen. iii. 19; Job xxxiv. 15.

30. The reference can hardly be (as Hupfeld) to Gen. ii. 7, where the in-breathing of life is confined exclusively to the creation of man, but rather to i. 2, where the Spirit of God is the great vivifying agent in all creation.

**THOU SENDEST FORTH.** Comp. Acts xvii. 25. **THY BREATH.** The same word in Hebrew may be rendered "breath" or "spirit." As the reference is here only to physical life, I have retained the former, especially as the same word is employed in the previous verse, where there can be no doubt as to the meaning. Comp. Job xxxiii. 4; xxxiv. 14, 15; Eccl. xii. 7, with Ps. cxlvi. 4. God is called "the God of the spirits of all flesh," Num. xvi. 22; xxvii. 16; Heb. xii. 9, and he "in whom we live, and move, and have our being," Acts xvii. 28.

**THOU RENEWEST,** life ever succeeding death, and all life being, as it were, a new creation.

"States fall, arts fade, but Nature does not die."

31. The Psalm closes with the prayer that the glory of that God who has thus manifested his glory in creation may endure forever, and that he who looked

- 32 Who looketh on the earth, and it trembleth,  
 When he toucheth the mountains, they smoke.
- 33 Let me sing to Jehovah, as long as I live,  
 Let me play unto my God, while I have any being.
- 34 Let my meditation be sweet unto him ;  
 As for me, I will rejoice in Jehovah.
- 35 Let sinners be consumed out of the earth,  
 And let the wicked be no more.  
 Bless Jehovah, O my soul!  
 Hallelujah.<sup>f</sup>

with loving approbation upon his works when they were first created, pronouncing all "very good," may ever rejoice in them; for he is a God awful in his majesty, one whose look makes the earth tremble, one whose touch consumes the mountains, one who could in a moment blot out the creation he has made.

33. The same words occur in cxlvi. 2. And as the Psalmist utters the devout wish that God may rejoice in his works, so he utters the wish for himself that he may ever rejoice in God, that his thoughts and words may find acceptance with him. This is the truest, highest harmony of creation; God finding pleasure in his creatures, his reasonable creatures finding their joy in him. But this harmony has been rudely broken; the sweet notes of the vast instrument of the universe are "jangled out of tune." Sin is the discord of the world. Sin has changed the order (*κόσμος*) into disorder. Hence the prophetic hope (ver. 35) that sinners

shall be consumed, that the wicked shall be no more, and thus the earth shall be purified, the harmony be restored, and God once more, as at the first, pronounce his creation "very good." In the prospect of such a consummation, the poet calls upon his own soul, and upon all around him, to bless and praise Jehovah.

35. HALLELUJAH, or "Praise ye Jah." I have had considerable difficulty in deciding which mode of rendering to adopt. Something is lost by not translating uniformly "Praise ye Jah," especially in Psalms where the verb occurs several times with a different object. On the other hand, Hallelujah is almost like the titles of some of the Psalms, and like Amen, has become current in our language. The Talmud and Midrash observe that this is the first Hallelujah in the Psalter, and that the way in which it is connected with the prospect of the final overthrow of the wicked is remarkable and full of meaning.

<sup>a</sup> The LXX render the verse: *ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα, καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ πῖρ φλέγον (πυρὸς φλόγα* in the Cod. Alex., which is followed in Heb. i. 7, where the passage is quoted), making the first nouns objects, and the second predicates. This is no doubt supported by the construction in the previous verse, where the same order is observed: "Who maketh the clouds his chariot." As regards the English translation it may be remarked, that the two words *ἀγγέλους* and *πνεύματα* being both ambiguous, it is just as correct to render *messengers* and *winds*, as to render *angels* and *spirits*; and the whole

passage shows that *winds*, not *spirits*, is the proper meaning of *πνεύματα* here. But as has been already remarked in the note on ver. 4, most of the modern commentators abandon the rendering of the LXX, and invert the order of the object and predicate, "Who maketh the winds his messengers, the flaming fire his ministers." The plural predicate in the second member, as I have said, is to my mind a stumbling-block in the way of this otherwise natural interpretation. Hoffmann, who has discussed the passage carefully (*Schriftb.* I. 325), urges this difficulty, and contends, moreover, that עֲשֶׂה, followed by a double accus., means not to make a thing to be something else, but to exhibit a thing as something else (*etwas als etwas herstellen*). So in Gen. vi. 14 the meaning is not "thou shalt make the ark, already constructed, into cells or compartments," but thou shalt construct it as (of) a number of compartments. So again, "male and female created he them" (Gen. i. 27), i.e. *as* male and female; and he "made the altar of planks of acacia wood" (Ex. xxxviii. 1), is, says Hoffmann, not essentially different. [Here, however, the second noun is not so much a predicate, describing the form or manner in which the thing appears, as the material out of which it is made.] He renders therefore, "making his messengers as winds, his ministers as a flaming fire," so that the passage does not describe the purpose to which God applies winds and fire, but the form which he gives to those whom he, riding upon the clouds, makes use of to announce his presence, and to execute his will. And such is the traditional Jewish view; as, for instance, in *Shemoth Rabba*, § 25, fol. 123. 3. "Deus dicitur Deus Zebaoth, quia cum angelis suis facit quaecunque vult. Quando vult, facit ipsos sedentes (Judges vi. 11). Aliquando facit ipsos stantes (Isa. vi. 2). Aliquando facit similes mulieribus (Zech. v. 9). Aliquando viris (Gen. xviii. 2). Aliquando facit ipsos spiritus (why not *ventos*?) (Ps. civ. 4). Aliquando ignem, Ib." Delitzsch partially adopts this view, but takes the second accus., that is, the predicate, as denoting *the material out of which* a thing is made (as in Ex. xxxviii. 1). Accordingly he renders, "Who maketh his messengers of winds, his servants of flaming fire," which he says may either mean that God makes wind and fire of service to him for special missions (comp. cxlviii. 8), or that God gives to his angels wind and fire as means whereby they may work, forms in which they may clothe themselves in order to execute his will in the world. But the former of these meanings comes to the same thing exactly as the rendering, "Who maketh winds his messengers," etc. The real difficulty, however, lies in the order of the words. Could a Hebrew writer have placed the verb first, then the predicate, and then the object?

I have seen no proof that he could ; in the only passage which Delitzsch quotes, Amos iv. 13, there is no reason whatever for supposing an inversion of the usual order.

The Bishop of St. David's has kindly allowed me to make use of the remarks which he has sent me on this passage. After observing that he can recall no instance of such an inversion of the natural order of words in a sentence, he continues : “ *A priori*, I should have thought it incredible that the language should have been left in such a state as to make it immaterial as to the sense whether you wrote ‘ Who maketh the clouds his chariot,’ or, ‘ Who maketh his chariot the clouds,’ and that the reader should have to infer the author's meaning not from the order of his words, but from extrinsic considerations, such as those which you have discussed. I cannot help thinking that more attention should have been paid to this question, and that it should have taken precedence of every other ; because if in this respect the rule of Hebrew syntax was the same as our own, the only remaining doubt would be in what sense we are to understand the words, ‘ He maketh his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire,’ which would then be the only possible rendering. And in itself it would give a very good sense as meaning : ‘ He endows his messengers with the might of the winds, his ministers with the all-pervading subtilty of fire’ — or as any one might paraphrase it better. But it would be only the irresistible compulsion of a grammatical necessity that would induce me to adopt this rendering ; because, however satisfactory in itself, it appears to me quite foreign to the context. The Psalmist is evidently speaking of God's doings in the visible creation, not of the secret agency by which he accomplishes his ends. It was, therefore, very much to the purpose to say that wind and fire are his servants and do his pleasure ; but not at all to say that he has unseen servants who act as wind and fire.” The passages quoted in the first edition of this work (Gen. i. 27 ; Ex. xxv. 39), in which the predicate stands first, are not to the point, because there the predicate stands *before* the verb.

<sup>b</sup> כִּסְּתֶהוּ, abbr. for כִּסְּתֵהוּ. The masc. suffix may refer to אֲרָץ, according to Delitzsch, by attraction, as in Isa. ix. 18 ; lxvi. 8. Others, in order to avoid the sudden change of gender in אֲרָץ, render “ As for the deep (nom. absol.), as a garment thou coverest it ” (i.e. placest it as a covering over the earth). But thus the verb “ to cover ” appears without an object, and כִּסְּתֶהוּ, moreover, is generally like אֲרָץ, fem., except in Job xxviii. 14 ; Jonah ii. 6. In other cases where it occurs with a masc. verb, the verb precedes, and this proves nothing as to gender ; when the verb precedes all fem. nouns may be construed with a masc. verb.



° **נַעֲמְרוּ**. The imperf. (after the perf. or pluperf.) as describing the then condition of things (relative preterite, as Hupfeld calls it), and so again in the next verse, instead of historic tenses with **ו** consec.

<sup>d</sup> The construction presents much difficulty. If we connect this verse with the last clause of the preceding, then we have the inf. with **לְ** twice followed by the fut., this change of construction from the infin. to the fut. being in accordance with a well-known principle of the language. Then the rendering will be as in the text.

Ewald gives to **בְּן** in ver. 15 the comparative meaning *more than*, and takes the inf. with **לְ** as gerundial merely: "Bringing bread out of the earth, Wine to gladden man's heart, More than oil making his face to shine, Bread to strengthen man's heart"; but this, though it seems to be the most obvious construction of the words, places in too subordinate a position what must have been designed to be prominent; *oil* and *wine* are commonly joined together as principal products of the soil of Palestine (Judges ix. 9-13; Deut. xii. 17; Jer. xxxi. 12, etc.).

Hupfeld takes ver. 15 as unconnected in construction with the preceding: "And wine maketh glad the heart of man, Whilst oil makes his face to shine (lit. "whilst he maketh his face to shine with oil"), and bread strengthens man's heart."

° **הַיָּשָׁר . . . וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ**. The apocopated forms are used as marking protasis and apodosis: "(When) thou makest darkness, (then) it is night"; or the first may be pret. (as in xviii. 12), and the second denote purpose, object, etc. (as in xlix. 10).

<sup>f</sup> The Hallelujah is written differently in different mss., sometimes **הַלְלֵי־יְהוָה**, at others **הַלְלֵי יְהוָה**, without the *Makkef*, or again **הַלְלֵי־יְהוָה**, one word, but always, unless by mistake, with the *He mappic*. When it appears as one word, **יְהוָה** is not regarded as strictly the divine name, but only as strengthening the meaning of **הַלְלֵי**, as in the reading **בְּמַרְחֲבֵיהָ**, cxviii. 5.—Geiger, *Urschrift u. Uebers. der Bibel*, S. 275.

## PSALM CV.

THIS Psalm, like the seventy-eighth and the one hundred and sixth, has for its theme the early history of Israel, and God's wonders wrought on behalf of the nation; but it differs from both those Psalms in the *intention* with which it pursues this theme. The seventy-eighth Psalm is didactic; its object is to teach a lesson; it recalls the past, as convey-

ing instruction and warning for the present. The one hundred and sixth Psalm is a Psalm of penitential confession. The history of the past appears in it only as a history of Israel's sin. In this Psalm, on the other hand, the mighty acts of Jehovah for his people from the first dawn of their national existence are recounted as a fitting subject for thankfulness, and as a ground for future obedience. Those interpositions of God are especially dwelt upon which have a reference to the fulfilment of his promise, which exhibit most clearly his faithfulness to his covenant. Hence the series begins with the covenant made with Abraham, tracing all the steps in its fulfilment to the occupation of the Promised Land. This is commenced, as the theme of the Psalm, in ver. 8-11.

Hengstenberg has inferred, from the length at which the history of Joseph and the plagues in Egypt are dwelt upon, that the design of the Psalmist was to encourage the exiles in the Babylonish captivity, which by Psalmists and prophets is so often compared with the bondage of the nation in Egypt. But although this is evidently one of the later Psalms, and, like the two which follow (both of which contain allusions to the exile), may have been written after the return from the captivity, still there is nothing in its language to justify the view which Hengstenberg takes. There is no hint of any comparison or contrast between those two great periods of national exile, and, in particular, the very slight allusion to the circumstances of the *deliverance* from Egypt — nothing being said either of the passover or of the passage of the Red Sea — is unfavorable to the supposition that any such contrast is implied.

The first fifteen verses are found in 1 Chron. xvi. 8-22 (with some slight variations), as the first portion of the festal song which, on the day when the ark of God was brought to its resting-place on Zion, was delivered by David into the hands of Asaph and his brethren, "to give thanks unto Jehovah." The second part of that song consists of Psalm xvi., the first verse of Psalm cvii., and the forty-seventh and forty-eighth verses of Psalm cvi. The last of these is the doxology which closes the fourth book, and was evidently a late addition. It seems, therefore, impossible to doubt that the song in the Chronicles is a combination from other sources. It is a striking proof how little a question like this, which is purely a critical question, can be fairly perverted into a question of orthodoxy, that whilst Hitzig holds the Psalm in Chronicles to be the original, Delitzsch maintains that it is a compilation, though he observes that the writer of the book may not have compiled it himself, but have found it in its present shape in the

Midrash of the Book of the Kings, which was his principal authority, and the source of his materials.

Like the last Psalm, this closes with a Hallelujah. It is the first of a number of Psalms beginning with the word הודו (*Hodu*), "Give thanks" (cv., cvii., cviii., cxxxvi.), which Delitzsch styles "Hodu-Psalms," or *Confitemini*, just as those that begin with Hallelujah may be called Hallelujah Psalms, cvi., cxi.-cxiii., cxvii., cxxxv., cxlvi.-cl.

- 1 O GIVE thanks to Jehovah, call upon his name,  
Make known among the peoples his doings.
- 2 Sing unto him, play unto him ;  
Meditate of all his wondrous works.
- 3 Make your boast of his holy name,  
Let the heart of them rejoice that seek Jehovah.
- 4 Inquire ye after Jehovah and his strength ;  
Seek his face evermore.
- 5 Remember his wondrous works that he hath done,  
His tokens, and the judgments of his mouth,
- 6 O ye seed of Abraham his servant,  
Ye children of Jacob, his chosen.
- 7 He, Jehovah, is our God ;  
His judgments are in all the earth.

1-6. The greatness of God's love, as manifested to his people in their history, calls for the fullest acknowledgment. The Psalmist would have Israel sound forth his praises among all nations. They are not to sit down in idle satisfaction with their own privileges. His "doings" (ver. 1), his "wondrous works" (ver. 3, 5), his "tokens," "the judgments of his mouth" (ver. 5), "his holy name" (ver. 3), as the revelation of his character and attributes, — all these are to form the subject of loud thanksgiving, — all these are to become, through Israel, the heritage of the world.

1. Taken word for word from Isa. xii. 4.

5. TOKENS . . . JUDGMENTS; the miracles in Egypt are chiefly meant, as these are chiefly dwelt upon afterwards.

6. SEED OF ABRAHAM: in 1 Chron. xvi. 13, "seed of Israel." HIS CHOSEN, plural, referring to the people, not to

Jacob. It is on this ground, because they are Abraham's seed, because they are God's chosen, because they are Jacob's children, heirs of the covenant and the promises, that they are bound beyond all others to "remember" what God has done for them. On the other hand, God, who made the covenant with their fathers, "remembers" it (ver. 8), "for his part will surely keep and perform" it.

7. The Psalmist begins himself that praise of God to which he has exhorted his people. And first he extols "the covenant," "the word" (or promise), the "oath" by which God had bound himself to the patriarchs, and which he "remembered," i.e. fulfilled, when he brought them into the land of Canaan.

OUR GOD, by covenant, but also, as follows in the next hemistich, Judge and Ruler of all nations.

- 8 He hath remembered his covenant forever,  
 The word which he confirmed to a thousand generations ;  
 9 (The covenant) which he made with Abraham,  
 And the oath which he swore unto Isaac,  
 10 And he established it unto Jacob for a statute,  
 Unto Israel for an everlasting covenant,  
 11 Saying, "Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan,  
 The line of your inheritance."  
 12 When they were <sup>a</sup> (but) a small number,  
 Very few, and sojourners therein ;  
 13 And they went to and fro from nation to nation,  
 From (one) kingdom to another people ;  
 14 He suffered no man to oppress them,  
 And reprov'd kings for their sakes, (saying,)  
 15 "Touch not mine anointed ones,  
 And to my prophets do no harm."

8. **HE HATH REMEMBERED**: in 1 Chron. xvi. 15, "remember ye."

**CONFIRMED**: for this, the original meaning of the word, see Ex. xviii. 23, "If thou wilt do this thing, then shall God confirm thee, and thou shalt be able to stand." Num. xxvii. 19, "confirm," or "set him, before thine eyes." In both these passages the word is joined with the same verb which occurs in ver. 10 of this Psalm, "establish"; lit. "make to stand."

**TO A THOUSAND GENERATIONS**: from Dent. vii. 9.

9. The verb **MADE** (lit. "cut," as in *icere foedus*) seems to require that the relative should refer to "covenant" in the first hemistich, rather than to "word" in the second, of ver. 8. But the phrase to "make (lit. "cut") a word" occurs in Hag. ii. 5, and therefore the relative may refer to the nearer noun.

**UNTO ISAAC**, in allusion to Gen. xxvi. 3, where God says to Isaac, "To thee and to thy seed will I give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swear unto Abraham thy father"; comp. Gen. xxii. 16.

11. **THE LINE**, i.e. an inheritance

measured out by line, as in lxxviii. 55; see note on xvi. 6.

12-15. The divine protection by which the small beginnings of the nation were shielded.

12. **A SMALL NUMBER**; lit. "men of number," as in Gen. xxxiv. 30; see also Deut. iv. 27; xxvi. 5; Jer. xlv. 28. So Horace says, "Nos numerus sumus."

**VERY FEW**; lit. "as (it were) a little," or "as little as possible," ὕσον ὀλίγον. Comp. Prov. x. 20.

13. **NATION . . . PEOPLE**. "The former denotes the mass as bound together by a common origin, language, country, descent; the latter as united under one government." — *Delitzsch*.

14. **HE SUFFERED**, as in Ex. xxxii. 10. **KINGS**, viz. of the Egyptians (Gen. xii.), and of the Philistines (Gen. xx., xxvi.).

15. **TOUCH NOT**, with allusion, perhaps, to Gen. xxvi. 11.

**MINE ANOINTED**, i.e. specially set apart and consecrated. The poet uses, as Rosenm. observes, the language of his own time, not that of the patriarchs, who were never anointed. But inasmuch as in David's time priests and

- 16 And he called for a famine upon the land ;  
 He brake the whole staff of bread.
- 17 He sent before them a man ;  
 Joseph was sold for a slave.
- 18 They afflicted his feet with fetters ;  
 He was laid in iron (chains),

prophets were anointed (1 Kings xix. 16), when he would say that the patriarchs are priests of the true God, and therefore to be regarded as sacred, he gives them the epithet "anointed," as in the next hemistich "prophets," a name which God bestows upon Abraham (Gen. xx. 7), when he says to Abimelech, "And now give the man back his wife, for he is a prophet; and if he pray for thee, thou shalt live."

MY PROPHETS. A good instance of the wide signification of this word. It is derived from a root signifying to *boil*, to *bubble up*. The prophet is one in whose soul there rises a spring, a rushing stream of divine inspiration. In the later language he not only receives the divine word, but he is made the *utterer of it*, the organ of its communication to others. But in the earlier instances, as in that of Abraham, his official character does not distinctly appear, though doubtless, like Noah, he was "a preacher of righteousness," and taught his own family (and through them ultimately the whole world) the way of the Lord. See Gen. xviii. 19. Here the prophet means little more than one to whom God speaks, one with whom he holds converse, whether by word or vision or dream or inner voice. (Comp. Num. xii. 6-8.) We approach nearest to what is meant by styling the patriarchs prophets when we read such passages as Gen. xviii. 17: "And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" or again, the pleading of Abraham for Sodom, in ver. 23-33 of the same chapter. It is, indeed, as pleading with God in *intercession* that Abraham is termed a "prophet" in Gen. xx. 7. The title is thus very similar to that of the "Friend of God" (Isa. xli. 8; 2 Chron. xx. 7; Jas. ii. 23).

16. From this point, as far as ver. 38, the history of the nation in Egypt is followed, with a recognition of the divine hand fashioning it at every step, and at every step accomplishing the fulfilment of the promise.

16-22. First, the preliminary steps in the history of Joseph. The famine in Canaan was no chance occurrence; God called for it. (Comp. 2 Kings viii. 1; Amos v. 8; Hag. i. 11.) Joseph's position in Egypt was no accident; God had sent him thither; so he himself traces the hand of God (Gen. xlv. 5; 1. 20).

STAFF OF BREAD. The figure occurs first in Lev. xxvi. 26; comp. Isa. iii. 1. The same figure is suggested in civ. 15, "bread that strengtheneth (stayeth) man's heart."

18. This is a much harsher picture of Joseph's imprisonment than that given in Gen. xxxix. 20-23; xl. 4. But it may refer to the earlier stage of the imprisonment, before he had won the confidence of his gaoler, or it may be tinged with the coloring of poetry.

WITH FETTERS. Hebrew "with the fetter." The word occurs only here and cxlix. 8.

HE WAS LAID IN IRON. I have here followed the paraphrase of the E. V. In the margin, however, the literal rendering of the Hebrew is correctly given: "his soul came into iron," ("his soul," merely a periphrasis of the person = "he," as in lvii. 4 [5]; xciv. 17), i. e. he was a prisoner, bound with chains. So the Syr. and the LXX *σίδηρον διήλαθεν ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ*. Jerome, "in ferrum venit anima ejus." The more picturesque but incorrect rendering of the Prayer-book version, "the iron entered into his soul," follows the Vulg., "ferrum pertransiit animam ejus." (The Chald. led the way in this interpretation, and it has

- 19 Until the time that his word came,  
The saying of Jehovah tried him.
- 20 The king sent and loosed him,  
The ruler of the peoples, and let him go free.
- 21 He made him lord over his house,  
And ruler over all his substance,
- 22 To bind his princes at his will,  
And to teach his elders wisdom.

been recently adopted by Moll.) The force of the expression has made it stereotyped in our language. It is a striking instance of the supremacy of the Prayer-book version. Probably not one reader in a hundred of those who are familiar with that version ever thinks of any other translation of the verse, or is aware that the Bible version is different.

19. HIS WORD. This may be (1) "the word of *Joseph*," i.e. either (a) his interpretation of the dreams of the king's officers in the prison, which finally led to his own liberation, Gen. xli. 12 (so Rosnm., DeWette, Hupfeld); or (b) the word revealed to him in dreams of his own future exaltation, Gen. xlii. 9 (Aben-Ezra); or (2) "the word of *Jehovah*," viz. that which first foretold, and then fulfilled the promise of, his exaltation; or (3) "his cause," i.e. his trial, in which case the verb must be rendered "came on," i.e. for hearing; an interpretation which seems, at least, very doubtful. If we adopt (1), then the meaning is, Joseph lay in prison till his interpretation of the dreams came to pass.

CAME, i.e. was fulfilled, a word used in the same way of the fulfilment of prophecies, Judges xiii. 12, 17 ("come to pass," E.V.); 1 Sam. ix. 6; Jer. xvii. 15. Delitzsch, who understands the "word" here mentioned as the word of God, illustrates the passage by reference to cvii. 20; just as there God "sends" his word, so here, his word "comes"; it came first as an angel of promise, and then as an angel of fulfilment.

THE SAYING (utterance, promise) OF JEHOVAH. LXX, τὸ λόγιον τοῦ Κυρίου, different from the WORD in the previous

verse. This seems most naturally to be understood, not of God's interpretation of the dream (as Hupfeld and others), but of God's promise of future exaltation conveyed to him in his dreams. The divine utterance (*'imrah*) has ascribed to it a living effectual power, as in exix. 50. It proved him by testing his faith during the years of suffering and imprisonment which intervened between the promise and its fulfilment.

20. With what follows, comp. Gen. xli. 14, 39, 40, 44.

22. TO BIND. The earliest instance of the use of the word in a sense approaching to that which it had later, in the phrase "binding and loosing." It denotes here generally the exercise of control. "The capability of binding is to be regarded as an evidence of authority; a power of compelling obedience, or in default thereof, of inflicting punishment." —Phillips.

Hengstenberg thinks that the figure was occasioned by a reference to ver. 18; his soul, once bound, now binds princes. He illustrates the meaning by Gen. xli. 44, "without thee shall no man move his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt"; and ver. 40, "thou shalt be over my house, and all my people shall kiss thy mouth."

AT HIS WILL; lit. "in, according to, his soul" (see on xvii. 9), equivalent to "according unto thy word," (Gen. xli. 40).

TO TEACH . . . WISDOM; not to be pressed of literal instruction in the art of politics, but merely expressing in poetical form what is said in Gen. xli. 38, 39.

- 23 Israel also came into Egypt,  
 And Jacob was a sojourner in the land of Ham.
- 24 And he caused his people to be fruitful exceedingly,  
 And he made them stronger than their adversaries.
- 25 He turned their heart to hate his people,  
 To deal subtly with his servants,
- 26 He sent Moses his servant,  
 Aaron whom he had chosen.
- 27 They did his signs among them,  
 And tokens in the land of Ham.
- 28 He sent darkness and made it dark,—  
 And they rebelled not against his words.

23. LAND OF HAM, as in lxxviii. 51.

24. Comp. Ex. i. 7; Deut. xxvi. 5. What follows to ver. 38 is a *résumé* of the history as given in the first twelve chapters of Exodus, and especially of the plagues. The fifth and sixth plagues, however, are omitted altogether, and the plague of darkness is placed first; in other respects the order of Exodus is observed. That in lxxviii. 44, etc. is different.

25. HE TURNED. This direct ascription of the hostility on the part of the Egyptians to God as its author gave early offence. Hence the Chald. and Arab. render, "their heart was turned." Grotius and others would soften the expression as meaning only that God suffered this hostility, arising from the increase of the people. But the difficulty is exactly of the same kind as when it is said that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, or as we find in Isa. vi. 9, 10; Mark iv. 12; John xii. 39, 40; Rom. xi. 8. See notes on li. 4; lx. 3.

TO DEAL SUBTLY; the same word as in Gen. xxxvii. 18 (where E.V. "they conspired against"). Comp. Ex. i. 10, "Come and let us deal wisely with them"; the reference is to the putting to death the male children.

26. WHOM HE HAD CHOSEN, viz. as his priest.

27. AMONG THEM, the Egyptians. Comp. lxxviii. 43; Ex. x. 2, "My signs

which I have done (lit. set, placed) among them."

DID HIS SIGNS; lit. "set the words of his signs"; comp. lxxv. 3 [4] (where see note), cxlv. 5, perhaps as facts that speak aloud (Delitzsch), or as announced beforehand, so that they were, in fact, prophetic words (Hupfeld), Ex. iv. 28, 30.

28. The ninth plague (Ex. x. 21-29) mentioned first,—why, it is difficult to see. Hengst. thinks because "darkness is an image of the divine wrath," and "the Egyptians were in this sense covered with darkness from the first to the last plague." But this is far-fetched. The variation in the order of the plagues from the narrative in Exodus may be paralleled by the variation in the order of the commandments as quoted by our Lord in Matt. xix. 18, 19; Mark x. 19; Luke xviii. 20,—passages in which the order and enumeration differ from one another as well as from the original in Ex. xx.

MADE IT DARK; causative, as in cxxxix. 12; Amos v. 8; but the intransitive rendering, "and it was dark," is also defensible; see Jer. xiii. 16.

AND THEY REBELLED NOT, i.e. Moses and Aaron, who, and not the Egyptians, must here be the subject. From not seeing this, the LXX omitted the negative, *καὶ παρῆκρναν τοὺς λόγους αὐτοῦ* (and so also the Syr., Arab., and Ethiop.), whence in the Prayer-book version, "and

- 29 He turned their waters into blood,  
And made their fish to die.
- 30 Their land swarmed with frogs  
In the chambers of their kings.
- 31 He spake the word, and there came flies,  
Gnats in all their border.
- 32 He gave them hail for rain,  
Flaming fire in their land.
- 33 He smote also their vines and their fig-trees,  
And brake the trees of their border.
- 34 He spake the word, and the locusts came,  
And grasshoppers without number,
- 35 And devoured all the green herb in their land,  
And devoured the fruit of their ground.
- 36 And he smote all the first-born in their land,  
The beginning of all their strength.
- 37 And he brought them forth with silver and gold,  
And there was none among their tribes that stumbled.
- 38 Egypt was glad when they went forth,  
For their terror had fallen upon them.

they were not obedient unto his word." The Vulg. retains the negative, but puts the verb in the singular, "Et non exacerbavit sermones suos." The obedience of Moses and Aaron to the divine command may here be made prominent, with reference to the unwillingness of Moses in the first instance, and also to the subsequent disobedience of both (Num. xx. 24; xxvii. 14).

29. The first plague (Ex. vii. 14-25); in the next verse, the second (Ex. viii. 1-14 [vii. 26-viii. 11]).

31. The fourth plague, that of flies, (Ex. viii. 20-24 [16-20]); and the third, that of gnats, or mosquitoes (E. V. "lice"), Ex. viii. 16-19 [12-15].

32, 33. From the third plague he passes to the seventh (Ex. ix. 13-35).

34, 35. The eighth plague (Ex. x. 1-20), where only one kind of locust is mentioned (*'arbeh*). Here we have also *yelek*, "grasshopper" (a species of locust,

winged, Nah. iii. 16, and hairy, Jer. li. 27), as in lxxviii. 46, *châsil*, "caterpillar," in the parallelism; see Knobel on Lev. xi. 22.

36. The fifth and sixth plagues are omitted, and the series closed with the last, in language borrowed from lxxviii. 51.

37. WITH SILVER AND GOLD; Ex. xii. 35.

THAT STUMBLER. See the same phrase, as descriptive of vigor, Isa. v. 27, "none shall be weary or stumble among them"; and for the general sense comp. Ex. xiii. 18.

38. WAS GLAD (Ex. xii. 31-33). THEIR TERROR (Ex. xv. 14-16; Deut. xi. 25).

39-41. Three of the principal miracles in the wilderness, which sum up the period between the departure from Egypt and the entrance into the Promised Land. But it is remarkable that the great mir-



- 39 He spread a cloud for a covering,  
And fire to lighten the night.
- 40 They asked and he brought quails,  
And satisfied them with the bread of heaven.
- 41 He opened the rock and the waters flowed ;  
They went in the dry places like a river.
- 42 For he remembered his holy word ;  
(He remembered) Abraham his servant ;
- 43 And he brought forth his people with gladness,  
His chosen with a song of joy.
- 44 And he gave them the lands of the nations,  
And they took possession of the labor of the peoples ;
- 45 That they might keep his statutes,  
And observe his laws.

## Hallelujah.

acle of the passage of the Red Sea, a favorite theme with poets and prophets, is not even alluded to.

39. SPREAD A CLOUD ; not, as in Ex. xiv. 19, as a protection against their enemies, but rather over their heads, as a protection against the burning sun. See the use of the same verb, Ex. xl. 19, of the tabernacle ; Joel ii. 2, of a cloud ; and comp. Isa. iv. 5, 6.

LIGHTEN. See note on lxxvii. 19 [20].

40. See on lxxviii. 24, 27.

THEY ASKED. The verb is in the sing., referring to the people.

41. ROCK. The word is *tsur*, and therefore the miracle at Horeb is intended ; see on lxxviii. 15.

42-45. Conclusion ; giving, first the reasons why God had thus dealt with Israel, viz. his own promise, and the faith of his servant Abraham, as in ver. 8, 9 ; next, the result in their history,

that by virtue of this covenant they had taken possession of the land of Canaan ; lastly, the great purpose designed by all that marvellous guidance, "That they might keep his statutes, and observe his laws."

43. WITH GLADNESS, alluding, probably, to the song of triumph after the overthrow of Pharaoh and his captains in the Red Sea. Comp. Isa. xxxv. 10 ; "And the redeemed of Jehovah shall return and come to Zion with a song of joy, and everlasting gladness shall be on their head," etc.

44. LABOR ; not only cultivated lands, but cities, treasures, etc.

45. THAT THEY MIGHT KEEP. This was God's purpose, that Israel should be a holy nation in the midst of other nations, a priesthood representing the world, and claiming it for God as his world.

\* בְּהִיוּתָם. There is some difficulty as to the construction in this and the two next verses. In 1 Chron. xvi. 19 this verse is joined with what goes before, the suffix being changed to that of the 2d pers., "when ye were," and so the Chald. and Syr. here. Delitzsch finds the protasis here, and the apodosis in ver. 14. He takes ver. 13 as a part

of the protasis, according to the common rule, that a sentence beginning with the infinitive recurs to the use of the finite verb: "When they were few, and sojourners, and went to and fro, etc. . . . (then) he suffered no man to harm them." Ewald connects both ver. 12 and ver. 13 with what precedes. Hupfeld thinks that ver. 12 is loosely subjoined to what precedes, but makes of ver. 13 and ver. 14 independent sentences: "they went from nation to nation," . . . "he suffered no man," etc.

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### PSALM CVI.

THIS is the first of a series of Hallelujah Psalms; Psalms of which the word "hallelujah" is, as it were, the inscription (cvi., cxi.-cxiii., cxvii., cxxxv., cxlvi.-cl.). As in the last Psalm, so here, the history of Israel is recapitulated. In that it was turned into a thanksgiving; in this it forms the burden of a confession. There God's mighty acts for his people were celebrated with joy; here his people's sin is humbly and sorrowfully acknowledged. Nothing is more remarkable in these great historical Psalms than the utter absence of any word or sentiment tending to feed the national vanity. All the glory of Israel's history is confessed to be due, not to her heroes, her priests, her prophets, but to God; all the failures which are written upon that history, all discomfitures, losses, reverses, the sword, famine, exile, are recognized as the righteous chastisement which the sin of the nation has provoked. This is the strain of such Psalms as the seventy-eighth, the one hundred and fifth, the one hundred and sixth. This is invariably the tone assumed by all the divinely-instructed teachers of the people, by the prophets in their great sermons, by the poets in their contributions to the national liturgy. There is no other poetry in the world of a popular and national kind so full of patriotic sentiment, and yet at the same time marked by so complete an abstinence from all those themes which are commonly found in poetry written for the people. There is not a single ode in honor of Moses or Aaron or Joshua or David; there is not one which sings the glory of the nation, except as that glory is given it of God. The history of the nation, whenever referred to, is referred to almost invariably for the purpose of rebuke and upbraiding, certainly not for the purpose of commendation or self-applause. A similar review of the past history of Israel, joined in the same way with a confession of the sins of the nation during their

history, occurs in the prayer of the Levites on the occasion of the solemn fast proclaimed after the return from the captivity (Neh. ix.). But the earliest specimen of this kind of confession is the prayer which is directed to be used at the offering of the first-fruits, (Deut. xxvi.). Solomon's prayer at the consecration of the temple (1 Kings viii.) is not itself a prayer of confession, so much as a pleading with God that he would hear his people whenever, having sinned, they should come to him confessing their sins. All these instances differ from the Psalm in being prose, not poetry. Still the Psalm is not free, as Delitzsch observes, from certain peculiarities found in the others, such as (1) the fondness for rhyme, especially in the use of suffixes having the same sound (see, for instance, ver. 4, 5, 8, 35-41); (2) the fondness for synonymes, as in ver. 21, 22, "great things," "wonderful things," "terrible things"; (3) the direct, even tautological expansion of the thought, as in ver. 37, 38, to the comparative neglect of the usual principle of parallelism.

From verse 47 it may be fairly inferred that the Psalm is of the date of the exile, or was written shortly after the return of the first company of exiles. It is, however, remarkable that both that verse and the closing doxology, together, perhaps, with the first verse of this Psalm, form the concluding portion of the Psalm which, according to the author of the Book of Chronicles, was sung by David when he removed the ark to Mount Zion (1 Chron. xvi. 34-36). On this point, see more in the introduction to Ps. cv., and the note on verse 48.

The Psalm has no strophical division. It consists of an introduction (ver. 1-5). It then follows the history of Israel as a history of perpetual transgressions, first from Egypt through the wilderness (ver. 7-33), and then in the Holy Land (ver. 34-46), and concludes with prayer for deliverance from the present calamity, viz. the captivity in Babylon (ver. 47).

## 1 HALLELUJAH!

Give thanks unto Jehovah, for he is good,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.

1-5. The first five verses seem to stand alone, and to have little or no direct connection with the rest of the Psalm. Hupfeld regards the first three verses, in particular, as nothing but a general introduction, and one quite at variance with the strain of the Psalm as a confession of sin. But this is a hasty and superficial view. The first verse, no doubt, is of the nature of a doxological formula, such as we find in some other of these later Psalms. But the second and third verses have an immediate bearing on what follows. What so fitting

- 2 Who can utter the mighty acts of Jehovah,  
 (Who) can tell forth all his praise?  
 3 Blessed are they that keep judgment,  
 He that doeth righteousness at all times.  
 4 Remember me, O Jehovah, with the favor thou bearest  
 unto thy people,  
 O visit me with thy salvation ;  
 5 That I may see the prosperity of thy chosen,  
 That I may be glad with the gladness of thy nation,  
 That I may make my boast with thine inheritance.  
 6 We have sinned with our fathers,  
 We have done iniquity, we have dealt wickedly.

to introduce the confession of a nation's sin and ingratitude, as the rehearsal of God's goodness manifested to it, and the acknowledgment of the blessedness of those who, instead of despising that goodness, as Israel had done, walked in the ways of the Lord, keeping judgment and doing righteousness (ver. 3)? Or, again, what more natural than that the sense of the national privilege, the claim of a personal share in that privilege, should spring in the heart and rise to the lips of one who felt most deeply the national sin and ingratitude? The fourth and fifth verses are clearly the expression of *personal* feeling. It is strange that some commentators should have seen here a personification of the people, when the fifth verse so expressly distinguishes, in every clause, between the individual who speaks and the people of which he is a member. Nor is there any reason to assume that the Psalmist speaks in the name of the people. There is the same blending of personal feeling and personal experience with the national life which we find, for instance, in lxxv. 3 [4]. The hope expressed is, that when God looks again with favor upon the nation, when he delivers them from the hand of the heathen (see ver. 47), then the Psalmist himself may share in the general joy.

1. The Psalm begins with the litur-

gical formula which was in use in Jeremiah's time, xxxiii. 11 (under Zedekiah), and which became afterwards more frequent (1 Macc. iv. 24). It is not, therefore, quite so certain that 1 Chron. xvi. 34 was taken from the beginning of this Psalm, as that the two following verses, 35, 36, were taken from its close.

GOOD, i.e. not so much in reference to his own nature, as in his gracious dealing with men. The LXX, rightly, *χρηστός*.

2. THE MIGHTY ACTS are all that he has done for his people, as HIS PRAISE is all the glory which he has thus manifested, and which calls for praise from them.

4. In this and the next verse the same suffix recurs, almost with the effect of rhyme; "the peculiarity," says Delitzsch, "of the T'phillah-style." In ver. 6 the same thing is observable, which is characteristic of these prayers of confession (*Vidduy*, in the later Hebrew, from the verb "to confess," Lev. xvi. 21), 1 Kings viii. 47.

5. NATION. The word in the plural is always used of the heathen, but in the singular sometimes of the nation of Israel, and even with the pronominal suffix, as here, and Zeph. ii. 9.

6. The language is borrowed evidently from that of Solomon's prayer (1 Kings viii. 47). Comp. Dan. ix. 5; Bar. ii. 12,

- 7 Our fathers in Egypt considered not thy wonders ;  
 They remembered not the multitude of thy loving-kind-  
 nesses,  
 But rebelled at the sea, at the Red Sea.
- 8 And (yet) he saved them for his name's sake,  
 To make his might to be known.
- 9 And he rebuked the Red Sea, and it was dried up,  
 And he made them go through the depths as (through)  
 the wilderness.
- 10 And he saved them from the hand of the hater,  
 And ransomed them from the hand of the enemy.
- 11 And the waters covered their adversaries,  
 Not one of them was left.
- 12 And they believed his words,  
 They sang his praise.
- 13 Very soon they forgot his doings,  
 They waited not for his counsel ;

where in the same way several words are used in confession, as if to express both the *earnestness* of deep conviction, and also the sense of  *manifold*  transgressions.

WITH OUR FATHERS. The nation is thus regarded as a whole, one in guilt and one in punishment. See note on lxxix. 8. Not only the "fathers in Egypt" (ver. 7) are meant, because the generation in Canaan are also mentioned (ver. 34-36).

7. OUR FATHERS IN EGYPT. These words are connected together by the accents, but the words "in Egypt" belong to the whole sentence. The "wonders" are wonders wrought in Egypt, the impression of which, great as they were, had so quickly faded, that they were forgotten even when the people stood on the shore of the Red Sea. Again in ver. 13, 21, this *forgetfulness* is censured. Comp. lxxviii. 11; Dent. xxxii. 18; and see note on Ps. ciii. 2.

REBELLED (the verb is here used absol., elsewhere with the accus.), with reference to the occurrence in Ex. xiv. 10-13. This is the first act of transgression of which confession is made.

8. HIS MIGHT TO BE KNOWN, as in lxxvii. 14 [15].

9. Compare, for the form of expression, Nah. i. 4; Isa. l. 2; li. 10; lxiii. 13.

11. NOT ONE OF THEM WAS LEFT. Comp. Ex. xiv. 28.

12. THEY BELIEVED . . . THEY SANG, with evident reference to Ex. xiv. 31; xv. 1; "And Israel saw the great act (lit. hand) which Jehovah had done against Egypt, and the people feared Jehovah, and they *believed* on Jehovah and his servant Moses. 'Then *sang* Moses and the children of Israel this song.'" Both the faith and the song are mentioned, not in praise of their conduct, but only as still further proof that whatever impressions were produced, whether by God's judgments or his mercies, were but temporary and on the surface. The goodness of Israel was like the dew, early gone.

13-33. The confession of Israel's sins in the wilderness. On the first of these, the longing for food, comp. lxxviii. 18, 29, and Ex. xv. 22-24; xvii. 2. See also Ex. xvi. and Num. xi.

13. VERY SOON; lit. "they made

- 14 But lusted for themselves a lust in the wilderness,  
And tempted God in the waste.
- 15 And he gave them their request,  
And sent leanness (withal) into their soul.
- 16 And they were jealous against Moses in the camp,  
Against Aaron, the holy one of Jehovah.
- 17 (Then) 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.
- 19 They made a calf in Horeb,  
And bowed themselves before the molten image,

haste, they forgoat." WAITED NOT; they were not content to exercise a patient dependence upon God, leaving it to him to fulfil his own purposes in his own way, but would rather rule him than submit themselves to his rule.

14. LUSTED FOR THEMSELVES A LUST; the expression is taken from Num. xi. 4.

15. HE GAVE THEM THEIR REQUEST. See on lxxviii. 21, 29.

LEANNESS. Comp. Isa. x. 16; xvii. 4. The LXX, *πλησμονήν*, "satiety," and so the Syr. and Vulg., but wrongly. This LEANNESS and sickness (phthisis) may refer to the loathing of the food, followed by great mortality (the "blow of God"), Num. xi. 20, 33, the SOUL being here used only in a physical sense of the life. But the figurative sense is equally true, and equally pertinent. The very heart and spirit of a man, when bent only or supremely on the satisfaction of its earthly desires and appetites, is always dried up and withered. It becomes a lean, shrunk, miserable thing, always craving more food, yet drawing thence no nourishment, "magnas inter opes inops."

16-18. The second great sin in the wilderness was the insurrection against their divinely-appointed leaders. The reference is to Num. xvi., xvii.

16. THE HOLY ONE. Aaron is so called on account of his priestly office.

It was this, as an exclusive privilege, which was assailed by Korah and his company, on the ground that all the congregation were "holy," i.e. set apart and consecrated to God as his priests.

17. OPENED. In Num. xvi. 30, 32; xxvi. 10, the fuller expression occurs, "opened her mouth." COVERED, as in Num. xvi. 33. Dathan and Abiram only are mentioned; and this is in strict agreement with Num. xxvi. 11, where it is said, "Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not." And the same thing is, at least, implied in Num. xvi. 27, where it is said that, just before the catastrophe took place, "Dathan and Abiram" (there is no mention of Korah) "came out and stood in the door of their tents." See this noticed and accounted for in Blunt's *Veracity of the Books of Moses*, Part i. § 20, p. 86, Am. ed.

18. The other punishment, the destruction by fire, befell the two hundred and fifty princes of the congregation, who offered incense before the Lord (Num. xvi. 2, 35).

THE WICKED, as in Num. xvi. 26, "Get ye up from the tents of these wicked men."

19. The third instance of transgression, the worship of the calf; see Ex. xxxiii. There is probably also a reference to Deut. ix. 8-12, where Moses reminds the people of their sin, especially

- 20 And they bartered their glory,  
For the likeness of an ox that eateth grass.
- 21 They forgat God their Saviour,  
Who had done great things in Egypt;
- 22 Wondrous things in the land of Ham,  
Fearful things by the Red Sea.
- 23 Then he said he would destroy them,  
Had not Moses his chosen stood in the breach before him,  
To turn away his fury from destroying (them).
- 24 And they rejected the desirable land,  
They believed not his word.
- 25 And they murmured in their tents,  
They hearkened not to the voice of Jehovah.
- 26 Then he lifted up his hand unto them,  
That he would make them fall in the wilderness;

as *Horeb* (which is the common name in Deuteronomy), and not Sinai, is here the name of the mountain.

20. THEIR GLORY, i.e. their God, who had manifested himself to them in his glory; glory, like light, being used in Scripture to denote the divine perfections. Others understand by the expression the God who was the source and fountain of their glory, or that revelation of God to them which distinguished them from all other nations. Comp. Deut. iv. 7: "For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?" Jer. ii. 11: "Hath a nation bartered their gods, which are yet no gods? But my people have *bartered their glory* for that which doth not profit."

LIKENESS; properly "model" or "figure." See the same word in Deut. iv. 16, 17, 18.

21. FORGAT GOD; with reference, perhaps, to the warning, Deut. vi. 12, "beware lest thou forget Jehovah."

22. LAND OF HAM, as in cv. 23, 27. Comp. lxxviii. 51, "tents of Ham," peculiar to these historical Psalms.

23. THEN HE SAID; lit. "And he said

(resolved, uttered his word), to destroy them" (Deut. ix. 13). Comp. Ex. xxxii. 10; and for the construction, Ezek. xx. 8, 13, 21.

IN THE BREACH. The intercession of Moses is compared to the act of a brave leader, covering with his body the breach made in the walls of his fortress. Comp. Ezek. xxii. 30: "And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap (*breach*, as here) before me for the land, that I should not destroy it."

24-27. A fourth act of sin, — the rebellion which followed on the report of the spies (Num. xiii., xiv.).

24. THE DESIRABLE LAND, so called also in Jer. iii. 19; Zech. vii. 14 (in E.V. "pleasant land"). The other expressions in this and the next verse are from the Pentateuch; "they rejected" (Num. xiv. 31); "murmured in their tents" (Deut. i. 27); "lifted up his hand," as in Ex. vi. 8; Deut. xxxii. 4; "make them fall," as in Num. xiv. 29, 32. The phrase, "to lift up the hand," refers to the custom in the taking of an oath. Comp. Gen. xiv. 22. The threat of exile (ver. 27), of which nothing is said in Num. xiv., is taken, doubtless, from Lev.

- 27 And that he would make their seed fall among the nations,  
And scatter them in the lands.
- 28 They were yoked also unto Baal-peor,  
And ate the sacrifices of the dead.
- 29 And they gave provocation with their doings,  
And a plague brake in upon them.
- 30 Then stood (up) Phinchas and did judgment,  
And (so) the plague was stayed ;

xxvi. ; Dent. xxviii. Comp. the same expression Ezek. xx. 23 : "I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries."

27. MAKE FALL ; here *projicere*, in the same sense almost as "scatter," in the parallelism.

28. THEY WERE YOKED ; a fifth transgression in the wilderness, recorded in Num. xxv. The same verb is used there, ver. 3, 5, with reference to the prostitution which accompanied the worship of Baal-peor, "the Moabite Priapus." Comp. 1 Cor. vi. 16, 17, and with the next clause ATE THE SACRIFICES, 1 Cor. x. 18-21, with Num. xxv. 2. The LXX, for "they were yoked," have ἐτελέσθησαν, "they were initiated."

THE DEAD. Two interpretations have been given : (1) that idols are meant, as opposed to "the living God." Comp. Jer. x. 10, 11, and the contemptuous expression "carcases of their kings" (probably said of idols, as rivals of the one true King of Israel), in Ezek. xliii. 7, 9. Comp. Lev. xxvi. 30 ; Jer. xvi. 18. (2) Usage, however, is rather in favor of some allusion to necromantic rites, as in Dent. xviii. 11, "one who seeketh to the dead" ; Isa. viii. 19, "should a people seek to the dead (by the aid of necromancers, consulting them as Saul consulted the Witch of Endor), on behalf of the living" ? So Selden, *De Diis Syris*, i. 5, understands this place of sacrifices offered *Dis manibus*. Hupfeld objects that in Num. xxv. 2 the same sacrifices are called "sacrifices of their

*gods*," and that sacrifices to the dead would scarcely be accompanied by sacrificial feasts. This last objection has no force.

This twenty-eighth verse, as Delitzsch remarks, is of historical importance, as having given rise to the prohibition of flesh offered in sacrifice to idols. In the second section of the *Avodah Zarah*, in a comment on the words of the Mishna, "The flesh which is intended to be offered to idols is allowed (to be partaken of), but that which comes from the temple is forbidden, because it is like sacrifices of the dead," it is observed : "R. Jehudah b. Bethera said, 'Whence do I know that that which is offered to idols pollutes like a dead body ? From Ps. cvi. 28. As the dead pollutes everything which is with him under the same roof, so also does all which is offered in sacrifice to idols.'" St. Paul teaches that the pollution, when it exists, is not in the meat which has been offered in sacrifice, but in the conscience of the eater (1 Cor. x. 28, 29).

29. GAVE PROVOCATION. The verb used absol., without a case, as other verbs in ver. 7, 32, 43 ; a peculiarity of the writer of this Psalm.

A PLAGUE. The word is used of a divine judgment, more commonly of sickness, but here, as in Num. xxv. 8, 9, 18, of the slaughter accomplished by human instruments. Comp. Ex. xxxii. 35.

BRAKE IN, or "made a breach" (for the verb is from the same root as the noun in ver. 23). Comp. Ex. xix. 24.

30. STOOD. See the similar expres-



- 31 And it was counted unto him for righteousness,  
Unto all generations for evermore.
- 32 They angered (God) also at the waters of Meribah,  
And it went ill with Moses for their sakes.
- 33 For they rebelled against his Spirit,  
And he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

sion, Num. xxv. 7, "And when Phinehas saw it, he *rose up*"; and the same verb as here (Num. xvi. 48 [xvii. 13]), of Aaron's intercession. It is a picture of the one zealous man rising up from the midst of the inactive multitude, who sit still and make no effort.

**DID JUDGMENT**, not, as in the Prayer-book version, following the Chald. and Syr., "prayed" (i. e. interceded), a meaning which the verb never has in this conjugation (Piel), but only in the Hithpael. The LXX give the sense only, when they render *ἐξιλιάσατο* (Vulg. *placavit*). This righteous act of judgment, like the intercession of Aaron, was propitiatory; it appeased and turned away the wrath of God; "and the plague was stayed"; words borrowed from Num. xxv. 8; comp. Num. xvi. 48 [xvii. 13]. The two figures, Aaron standing with the incense, and with the true priestly heart, between the dead and the living, and making atonement, and Phinehas as the minister of righteous vengeance turning away wrath, form a striking and instructive contrast. The one makes atonement in saving life, the other in destroying it.

31. **IT WAS COUNTED UNTO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS**; it was looked upon as a righteous act, and rewarded accordingly. The same thing is said of the *faith* of Abraham (Gen. xv. 6); a striking instance of the fearlessness of expression which is to be found in the Scriptures, as compared with the dogmatic forms of modern controversial theology. This verse has given occasion to whole disquisitions on the subject of justification, with which it really has nothing to do, though, at least, the language is in perfect accordance with that of St. James (ii. 20-26). The reward of this righteous-

ness was the perpetual continuance of the priesthood in his family (Num. xxv. 12, 13).

**UNTO ALL GENERATIONS**, etc.; lit. "for generation and generation, to (all) eternity," a remarkable instance of the hyperbolic way in which this and similar phrases are employed, and one which is a warning against hastily building doctrines upon mere words.

32. The sixth instance of transgression — the rebellion against Moses and Aaron at Meribah, in the fortieth year of the wandering (Num. xx. 2-13).

**IT WENT ILL WITH**. This must be the meaning here (though elsewhere the same phrase means "it grieved, or displeased," as in Neh. ii. 10; xiii. 8; Jon. iv. 1). Comp. Deut. i. 57; iii. 26, "also Jehovah was angry with me *for your sakes*." The reason why Moses was forbidden to enter the promised land is here stated more distinctly than in the narrative. It was the exasperation into which he suffered himself to be betrayed in uttering the words in Num. xx. 10; though the impatient spirit was shown also in striking the rock twice.

33. **THEY REBELLED AGAINST HIS SPIRIT**. Three explanations of this line have been given. (1) By "his spirit" has been understood the spirit of Moses, and, accordingly, the line has been rendered in the E.V. "they *provoked* his spirit." This, however, is to give a meaning to the verb which it never has. Hence DeWette, "they strove against his spirit." (2) The words have been understood of disobedience against God: "they rebelled against his (God's) Spirit." Comp. Isa. lxiii. 10, "But they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit," with Ps. lxxviii. 40. But (3), retaining this last explanation, it is still a question what

- 34 They did not destroy the peoples,  
As Jehovah had said unto them ;
- 35 But they mixed themselves with the nations,  
And learned their works ;
- 36 And they served their idols,  
And they became unto them a snare :
- 37 And they sacrificed their sons and their daughters to  
false gods ;
- 38 And they shed innocent blood,  
The blood of their sons and their daughters,  
Which they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan ;  
And the land was polluted with bloodshed.
- 39 And they were defiled with their works,  
And went a-whoring with their doings.
- 40 Then the anger of Jehovah was kindled against his people,  
And he abhorred his own inheritance.
- 41 And he gave them into the hand of the nations,  
And their haters ruled over them.
- 42 And their enemies oppressed them,  
And they were bowed down under their hand.

is the subject of the verb. It *may* be said of Moses and Aaron, that *they* rebelled (see Num. xx. 24; xxvii. 14); but it is better to assume that the people are the subject, the two clauses of ver. 33 thus answering to the two of ver. 32.

34. Disobedience in the land of Canaan itself, especially in not rooting out the nations, as enjoined (Ex. xxiii. 32, 33), and often repeated (Josh. xxiii. 12, 13), and the adoption of their idolatrous worship.

AS JEHOVAH HAD SAID, the construction may be either (1) "Which thing Jehovah had said unto them"; or (2) "Concerning whom Jehovah had commanded them," as in the E.V.

36. A SNARE, as the warning ran, Ex. xxiii. 33; xxxiv. 12; Deut. vii. 16. Of the abominations of the heathen, that of human sacrifices, as in the worship of Moloch, is especially dwelt upon. This

was an offering to FALSE GODS (Heb. *Shédim*); lit. "lords," like *Baalim*, 'Adonim, and then applied to gods (as the forms *Shaddai*, 'Adonai, were confined to Jehovah); see the same word Deut. xxxii. 17, for which in Judges ii. 11, *Baalim*. The LXX render *δαίμονιαι*, and Jerome *daemonibus*, whence the E.V. has "devils."

38. POLLUTED. The strongest word, taken from Num. xxxv. 33; comp. Isa. xxiv. 5. The land, the very soil itself, was polluted and accursed, as well as the inhabitants (ver. 39).

40-43. The terrible and repeated judgments of God.

42. THEY WERE BOWED DOWN, elsewhere said of the enemies of Israel (Judges iii. 30; iv. 23; viii. 23; xi. 33).

43. IN THEIR COUNSEL, as in lxxxi. 12 [13]; Jer. vii. 24, emphatically opposed to the counsel and purpose of God.

- 43 Many a time did he deliver them,  
 But they rebelled (against him) in their counsel,  
 And were brought low through their iniquity.
- 44 But he looked upon their distress,  
 When he heard their cry.
- 45 And he remembered for them his covenant,  
 And pitied them according to the greatness of his loving-  
 kindness.
- 46 And he made them to find compassion  
 In the presence of all who carried them captive.
- 47 Save us, O Jehovah our God,  
 And gather us from the nations,  
 That we may give thanks unto thy holy name ;  
 That we may glory in thy praise.
- 48 Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel,  
 From everlasting even to everlasting.  
 And let all the people say, Amen!  
 Hallelujah!

WERE BROUGHT LOW, Lev. xxvi. 39.

44. The Psalmist turns now to the other side of God's dealings with his people. It was not all anger. If they forgot his covenant, he remembered it. Even in the land of their captivity, he softened the hearts of their captors.

THEIR CRY. The word which is often used of the song of joy, here, as in 1 Kings viii. 28, of the cry of distress.

45. PITIED THEM, or "repented," as in xc. 13.

46. MADE THEM TO FIND, etc.; lit. "Made them for (an object of) compassions, or tender mercies." There is a reference to Solomon's prayer (1 Kings viii. 50). Comp. Neh. i. 11; Dan. i. 9. For the construction, see Gen. xliii. 14.

47. The grace of God, already shown to his people, leads to the prayer of this verse — a supplication for which the whole Psalm has prepared the way. The language would seem to indicate that the Psalm was written in exile, though the same prayer might also have been uttered by one of those who returned in

the first caravan, on behalf of his brethren who were still dispersed.

GLORY IN THY PRAISE, or "deem ourselves happy in that we can praise thee." The verb is the reflexive form (Hithpael), which occurs only in this Psalm.

48. The last verse is merely a doxology added at a time subsequent to the composition of the Psalm, to mark the close of the Book. The first line varies but slightly from that at the end of lxxii., "Blessed be Jehovah God, the God of Israel." The chronicler who quotes this verse (see introduction to this Psalm and cv.), changes the wish "Let all the people say, Amen," into the historic sense, "And all the people said Amen, and praised Jehovah" (1 Chron. xvi. 36). The fact that he has incorporated this verse as well as the preceding in his Psalm, is a proof that already in his time the Psalter was divided, as at present, into books; the doxology being regarded as an integral portion of the Psalm.



THE PSALMS.



BOOK V.

PSALMS CVII-CL.



## PSALM CVII.

It has already been observed in the General Introduction to this work (Vol. i. p. 59), that there is no obvious reason why, in the division of the Psalter into five books, the doxology marking the close of the fourth book should have been placed at the end of the one hundred and sixth Psalm. On the contrary, the one hundred and sixth and one hundred and seventh Psalms seem to have certain links of connection, and many critics have supposed that they are the work of the same author.

Not only are the opening words of the two Psalms identical, but what is the subject of prayer in the one is the subject of thanksgiving in the other. In cvi. 47 the Psalmist prays that God would gather Israel from the heathen; in cvii. 3 he bids Israel give thanks to him who has brought them back from their captivity.<sup>1</sup>

Some expositors have even gone so far as to maintain that the four Psalms (civ.-cvii.) were designed to constitute a complete tetralogy arranged in chronological order, beginning with the narrative of creation (Ps. civ.), going on to the history of the patriarchs and the early history of Israel (Ps. cvi.), pursuing the fortunes of the nation in the Promised Land, and even down to the time of the captivity (Ps. cvi.), and finally celebrating the deliverance from Babylon, and the return of the exiles (Ps. cvii.). But the connection between Ps. civ. and those which follow it is by no means so close as that between the three Psalms, cv.-cvii.

"These three anonymous Psalms," says Delitzsch, "form a trilogy in the strictest sense, and are in all probability a tripartite whole from the hand of one author." Phillipson takes the same view, remarking that the poet has shown consummate art in the form which he has given to the whole, and the disposition and grouping of his materials. He thus traces the connection: "In the first part (Ps. cv.) the poet has set forth the benefits of God, and the effect produced by them; in the second (Ps. cvi.), only the sins of Israel, and the loss and suffering thereby incurred; in the third (Ps. cvii.), the deliverance, into

<sup>1</sup> On these grounds both Ewald and Hengstenberg regard these two Psalms as closely connected.

the picture of which he has skilfully introduced both the sufferings of his people and also their return to their God. The first part is bright with praise and thanksgiving; the second, gloomy and terrifying; the third, full of exhortation and encouragement. And how skilful is the transition from one part to another! At the close of the first division (cv. 45) an intimation is given that Israel had not accomplished the purpose for which Canaan had been given him as an inheritance; at the close of the second (cvi. 45) we already see the dawn of approaching redemption."

Delitzsch, who traces the connection in a similar way, points to the three following passages as confirming it: "He gave them *the lands* of the heathen" (cv. 44); "He threatened to cast forth their seed among the heathen, and to scatter them *in the lands*" (cvi. 27); "And he hath gathered them *from the lands*, from the East and the West," etc. (cvii. 3). Other expressions, he observes, occur which link the three Psalms together. Egypt is called in them "the land of Ham," cv. 23, 27; cvi. 22, and Israel "the chosen of Jehovah," cv. 6, 43; cvi. 5 (comp. 23). In cv. 19 and cvii. 20 there is an approach to the hypostatic sense of the "word" of God.<sup>1</sup> In cvi. 14 and cvii. 4 *y' shîmon* is the word used to describe the waste, the wilderness. To these characteristics may be added the use of the Hithpael conjugation in all the Psalms, cv. 3; cvi. 5, 47; cvii. 27. In all alike there is the same absence of strophical arrangement.<sup>2</sup> In all there is evidence of a partiality for the later chapters of Isaiah (xl.-lxvi.) and the Book of Job. This is more especially noticeable in the one hundred and seventh Psalm, where the poet is more at liberty, as he is no longer recapitulating the history of his nation.

But ingenious as all this is, it rests on the assumption that the one hundred and seventh Psalm, like the other two, is historical, and is designed chiefly to celebrate the return from the Babylonish captivity. The second and third verses of the Psalm are supposed to mark the occasion for which it was written, and the rest of the Psalm is held to exhibit, by means of certain examples of peril and deliverance, either in a figure the miseries of the exile, or literally the various incidents of the homeward journey.

Such an interpretation, however, can scarcely be maintained. It is

<sup>1</sup> See, however, the notes on those passages.

<sup>2</sup> This can hardly be maintained with regard to Ps. cvii. At least to the end of ver. 32 the strophical arrangement is clearly marked by the double refrain, "Then they cried unto Jehovah," etc., and "Let them thank Jehovah for his loving-kindness," etc.



unnatural to regard these various examples, taken from every-day experience, as a figurative description of the exile; it is quite impossible, in particular, that the picture of the seafarers should represent the sufferings of captivity, though it certainly might form one part of the story of the return; for the exiles are here described, not merely as coming back from Babylon, but from all the countries of their dispersion (comp. Jer. xvi. 15; xl. 12; Dan. ix. 7).

It is obvious that this Psalm is not historical. It describes various incidents of human life, it tells of the perils which befall men, and the goodness of God in delivering them, and calls upon all who have experienced his care and protection gratefully to acknowledge them; and it is perfectly general in its character. The four or five groups, or pictures, are so many samples taken from the broad and varied record of human experience.

Such a Psalm would have been admirably adapted to be sung in the temple worship, at the offering of the thank-offerings.

But, whatever may have been the circumstances under which the Psalm was written, or the particular occasion for which it was intended, there can be no doubt as to the great lesson which it inculcates. It teaches us not only that God's providence watches over men, but that his ear is open to their prayers. It teaches us that prayer may be put up for temporal deliverance, and that such prayer is answered. It teaches us that it is right to acknowledge with thanksgiving such answers to our petitions. This was the simple faith of the Hebrew poet.

It is needless to say how readily such a faith is shaken now. First there is the old and obvious objection that *all* such prayers, even when offered by men of devout mind, are *not* answered. Calvin notices the difficulty, quoting the story of the wit, who, when he entered the temple, and observed the votive tablets suspended there by merchants, recording their escape from shipwreck by the favor of the gods, sarcastically remarked, "I see no record of those who perished in the sea, and yet the number of them must be immense." Calvin replies, as might be expected, that though a hundred-fold more are lost than escape, still God's goodness is not obscured; that he exercises judgment as well as mercy; that all deserve destruction, and that therefore his sovereign mercy ought to be acknowledged in every instance where it is displayed. It would have been better, surely, to have replied, that answers to prayer are not all of one kind; and that God as really answers his children's supplication when he gives them strength and resignation in prison or in sickness, as when he "breaks in pieces the

bars of iron," or "sends his word and heals them"; when he suffers them to sink beneath the raging waters, with heaven open to their eyes, as when he "brings them to their desired haven." Closely akin to this, there arises another question. Does God ever answer prayer by *direct* action upon the material world? Are not the laws of the universe the expression of his will? Are they not, therefore, unchangeable? And is it not both presumptuous and selfish to ask him to change the phenomena, which are the result of those laws; presumptuous, because we thus dictate to him what is best for us; selfish, because the blessing we crave may be at the expense of injury and loss to others? I conceive it may be replied, that it is not for the most part by immediate action in the material world that God grants our petitions. Even if we were forced to concede that now, since the age of miracles is past, God *never* so acts, still this should not trouble us, seeing how wide the region is in which *indirectly* our prayers even for temporal blessing may be answered. "Thus, for instance" (I venture to repeat what I have said elsewhere<sup>1</sup>), "we pray that the cholera or the murrain may be stayed. God does not with his own hand take away the plague; but he puts it into the heart of some physician to find the remedy which will remove it. He does not hush the storm in a moment; but he gives the mariner courage and skill to steer before it till he reach the haven. He does not shower bread from heaven in a famine; but he teaches the statesman how, with wise forethought and patient endeavors, at least to mitigate the calamity. How often we speak of happy inspirations, little knowing what we mean when we speak thus! And how unable we are to trace the chain! We cannot see God's Spirit prompting the prayer, or suggesting the remedy which shall be the answer to the prayer. But the antecedent and the consequent are as really there, the links of the chain are as essential as they are in any of the phenomena of the material world, which present themselves to our bodily senses. And thus the answer comes not by direct interference with the laws of nature, but in accordance with the laws of the spiritual world—by the divine action on the heart of man." If so, then the answer may be acknowledged with devout thanksgiving, and men may praise the Lord for his goodness.

The Psalm consists of six groups, with a preface (ver. 1-3) and a conclusion (ver. 43). The preface and the conclusion alike give the

<sup>1</sup> The Feast of Harvest. A Sermon preached in St. Peter's Church, Carmarthen, p. 19. [I have discussed the subject still more fully in a Sermon on Prayer and Natural Law, in a volume of sermons recently published by Isbister and Company, 1874].

theme or key-note of the Psalm. The first four groups are marked by the double refrain; the two last have but a slight connection with the others (see note on ver. 33). The grammatical structure is peculiar. In the first part of the Psalm the strophes, except the first, begin with a particle or adjective of the subject; the predicate being virtually contained in the verb of the refrain: *Let them give thanks.*

- 1 "O GIVE thanks unto Jehovah, for he is good,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever,"  
2 Let the ransomed of Jehovah say (so),  
Whom he hath ransomed from the hand of the adversary,  
3 And gathered them out of the lands,  
From the East and from the West,  
From the North and from the South.\*  
4 They wandered in the wilderness, in a pathless waste;<sup>b</sup>  
A city where men dwell they found not:

1. The Psalm opens with the same doxological formula as cvi., only here it is put into the mouth of the exiles returned from Babylon. For a similar opening see cxviii. 1-4. In earlier Psalms where phrases of the kind occur, they do not stand at the beginning of the Psalm, and the verb "say" precedes the doxology, instead of following it; see xxxv. 27; xl. 16 [17]. It is the old liturgical doxology which, as in Jer. xxxiii. 11, is to be heard in the mouth of the captives restored to their own land.

2. RANSMED OF JEHOVAH; as in Isa. lxii. 12 (whence it may be borrowed); lxiii. 4; comp. xxxv. 9, 10.

THE ADVERSARY, the oppressor in Babylon; or the word may mean, as in ver. 6, "distress." "From the hand of distress" might be said in Hebrew, in the same way as "from the hand of the dog" (xxii. 20).

3. GATHERED THEM, as in cvi. 47, and generally in the prophets (comp. Isa. xi. 12; lvi. 8, and often) of the return from the captivity. For the same picture see Isa. xliii. 5, 6; xlix. 12. The exiles, free to return, are seen flocking, not from Babylon only, but from all lands, "like doves to their windows."

THE SOUTH; lit. "the sea" (if the text is correct), which everywhere else means the West (the Mediterranean Sea), but must obviously here denote the South. Hence the Chald. understands by "the Sea," the Arabian Gulf; others again, the Southern (Indian) Ocean; but as these explanations are contrary to usage, there is reason to question the correctness of the text. See more in Critical Note.

4. The first example: the caravan which has lost its way in the desert. The interpretation of the verse will vary according to the view we take of its connection with the preceding. (i.) We may take "the ransomed of Jehovah" (ver. 2) as the subject of the verb; and then (a), by those who adopt the historical interpretation of the Psalm, the picture which follows has been held to be a description either (1) of what befell the Jews who (Jer. xliii.) fled into the wilderness to escape the Chaldeans, after the taking of Jerusalem; or (2) of the perils encountered by the caravans of exiles as they crossed long tracts of sandy desert on their return; or (3) intended to set forth in a figure the miseries of the exile itself. Or (b) "the ransomed

- 5 Hungry and thirsty,  
 Their soul fainted in them :
- 6 Then they cried unto Jehovah in their trouble ;  
 And he delivered them out of their distresses :
- 7 He led them by a straight way,  
 That they might go to a city where men dwell.
- 8 Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his loving-kindness,  
 And for his wonders to the children of men :

of Jehovah" may be taken in a wider sense, as denoting, not the captives at Babylon, but all Jews exposed to the risks and hardships of foreign travel. So Calvin: "Et primo ad gratitudinem hortatur qui ex longinqua et difficili peregrinatione, adeoque ex servitute et vinculis, domum incolumes reversi sunt. Tales autem vocat *redemptos Dei*, quia per deserta et invias solitudines vagando saepius a reditu exclusi essent, nisi Deus, quasi porrecta manu, ducem se illis praebuisset." (ii.) The subject of the verb may be changed, and this, either because (α) the Psalmist, having begun to speak of God's goodness to the exiles, restored by his hand to the land of their fathers, goes on to speak of other instances in which his goodness has been manifested. Or (β), because the first three verses were a liturgical addition, framed with particular reference to the return from Babylon, and prefixed to a poem originally designed to have a wider scope.

THEY WANDERED. The subject of the verb (see last note) may be "men" generally. The incident described was doubtless not uncommon. The usual track of the caravan is lost — obliterated, perhaps, by the sand-storm.

A CITY WHERE MEN DWELL; lit. "a city of habitation" (as E. V.). No particular city is meant, as Prayer-book version, "the city where they dwelt," much less is Jerusalem intended, but any inhabited city, as opposed to the uninhabited wilderness.

5. FAINTED; lit. "covered itself," as with darkness, sorrow, and the like, as in lxxvii. 3 [4]; cxlii. 3 [4]; cxliii. 4; Jon. ii. 7 [8].

6. THEN THEY CRIED. So it ever is; only the pressure of a great need forces men to seek God. Prayer is not only the resource of good men, but of all men, in trouble. It is a natural instinct even of wicked men to turn to God at such times: "Si graviori in discrimine versentur, etiam sine certa meditatione, ad Deum invocandum natura duce et magistra impelli." — Calvin.

JEHOVAH. Hengstenberg alleges the use of this name, instead of the more general one, Elohim, God, in proof that the Psalmist is speaking not of men at large, but only of Jews (and that hence the Psalm refers to the return from the captivity at Babylon). The heathen, he objects, would not be said to call upon *Jehovah*. But surely a Jew, even when speaking of the general providence of God, would have Jews chiefly before his mind as embraced in that providence, and as naturally would use the name of God which was dearest to him as a Jew. The distinction between Jew and Gentile would be lost sight of altogether.

8. Others render, "Let them praise his loving-kindness before Jehovah, and his wonders before the children of men," i.e. let them confess his goodness before God and man. The parallelism may, perhaps, be more accurately preserved by this rendering, but grammatically it is not necessary. It is also doubtful whether we have here the expression of a wish, "*Let them give thanks*"; or the statement of a past fact, "*they gave thanks*." In support of the latter rendering may be alleged the frequent use of the same tense in the Psalm as a past ("a relative preterite," Hupfeld); see

- 9 For he satisfieth the longing soul,  
 And filleth the hungry soul with good.
- 10 They that sat in darkness and the shadow of death,  
 Being bound in affliction and iron,
- 11 Because they rebelled against the words of God,  
 And despised the counsel of the Most High,
- 12 And he brought down their heart with labor,  
 They stumbled, and there was none to help :
- 13 Then they cried unto Jehovah in their trouble,  
 He saved them out of their distresses ;
- 14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,  
 And brake their bonds asunder.
- 15 Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his loving-kindness,  
 And for his wonders to the children of men :
- 16 For he brake the doors of brass,  
 And cut the bars of iron in sunder.
- 17 Foolish men, because of the way of their transgression,  
 And because of their iniquities, bring affliction upon  
 themselves.

on xviii., note <sup>c</sup>. But the analogy of ver. 2, which is clearly optative, makes the former the more probable.

9. There is a reference to ver. 5 ; "longing" answers to "thirsty," as in Isa. xxix. 8.

10-16. The second example — that of prisoners.

10. DARKNESS, etc. The same expression occurs Isa. xlii. 7 ; xlix. 9 ; Mic. vii. 8, of the gloom of the prison-house. Comp. Virgil. *Aen.* vi. 734, "Neque auras Respiciunt, clausae tenebris et carcere caeco."

AFFLICTION AND IRON. Comp. the fuller phrase Job xxxvi. 8, "bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction."

11. WORDS . . . COUNSEL. The commandments of God as given in the law, and his counsel as declared by his prophets, are chiefly meant ; for throughout the passage language is employed which implies the theocratic position of Israel. But the reference may be wider. The law written in the conscience, the

instruction given by inner revelation (comp. xvi. 7) need not be excluded. So the verb THEY DESPISED is used both in the theocratic sense of blasphemy (Num. xiv. 11, 23 ; xvi. 30 ; Deut. xxxi. 20), and also in a more general sense, as in the rejection of the counsels of wisdom (Prov. i. 30 ; v. 12 ; xv. 5).

15. The construction of the whole passage, beginning with ver. 10, is only completed here. The participial subject, "they that sat, or sit," etc., finds here its verb. The intervening verses, 11-14, are, to a certain extent, parenthetical, ver. 11, 12, giving the reason, and ver. 13, 14 the consequences, of the chastisement. The verbs in ver. 10, 13, 14 might all be rendered as presents.

16. The expressions are apparently taken from Isa. xlv. 2.

17-22. Third example : sick persons brought by their sickness to the edge of the grave.

17. FOOLISH MEN, so called because of the moral infatuation which marks

- 18 Their soul abhorreth all manner of food,  
 And they draw near to the gates of death :  
 19 Then they cry unto Jehovah in their trouble,  
 He saveth them out of their distresses :  
 20 He sendeth his word, and healeth them,  
 And rescueth them from their graves.  
 21 Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his loving-kindness,  
 And for his wonders to the children of men :  
 22 And let them sacrifice sacrifices of thanksgiving,  
 And tell of his works with a song of joy.

their conduct, as in xiv. 1, where see notes; men of earthly, sensual, selfish minds, who turn a deaf ear to warning, and despise counsel (comp. Prov. i. 7; xii. 15; xiv. 3, 9; xv. 5; xxvii. 22), and who can only be brought to reason by chastisement. The expression seems quite to exclude the notion that the allusion is to "a party of sick exiles, enfeebled probably by labors, or by uncongenial climates, so that their soul abhorred all manner of meat, and they were hard at death's door." — *Liddon*. Such persons would not be described as "foolish," but rather as objects of pity. The noun "foolishness," xxxviii. 5 [6], is from the same root, and is used in the same ethical sense. See note there.

**THE WAY OF THEIR TRANSGRESSION.** The expression is used to denote the course of conduct, the habit of the life, and is not merely pleonastic.

**BRING AFFLICTION UPON THEMSELVES.** The proper reflexive signification of the conjugation is by all means to be retained. It most expressively marks how entirely a man brings upon himself his own punishment. The same form of the verb is used, but with a somewhat different shade of meaning, in 1 Kings ii. 26. There it rather denotes the involuntary submission to suffering. [Delitzsch would give this sense here, and in 1 Kings ii. 26 explains the Hithp., "geflissentlich leiden." He is quite right in adding, "reines Passivum *affligebantur* ist es nicht."] I have here, and in what follows, after the ex-

ample of our translators, preferred the present tense to the past. This change of tense exists in the Hebrew, and the rendering gives more force and animation to the picture; though it would certainly be possible to continue the use of the past tense throughout. See on xviii., note c.

18. Comp. the similar passage, Job xxxiii. 20-22.

20. **HE SENDETH HIS WORD.** The same expression occurs in cxlvii. 15, 18; comp. Isa. lv. 11. We detect in such passages the first glimmering of St. John's doctrine of the agency of the personal Word. The Word by which the heavens were made (xxxiii. 6) is seen to be not merely the expression of God's will, but his messenger mediating between himself and his creatures. It is interesting to compare with this the language of Elihu in the parallel passage of Job xxxiii. 23, where what is here ascribed to the agency of the Word is ascribed to that of the "mediating angel, or messenger." Theodoret observes: 'Ο Θεὸς Λόγος ἐνανθρωπήσας καὶ ἀποσταλεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος τὰ παντοδατὰ τῶν ψυχῶν ἴδαστο τραύματα, καὶ τοὺς διαφθερέντας ἀνέμρωσε λογισμοῦς. Too much stress, however, must not be laid on the use of the verb "sendeth." Comp. cxi. 9, "He *sent* redemption unto his people."

**GRAVES.** The word may be taken in this sense, in allusion to their nearness to death, ver. 18, or it may mean "pits" metaphorically, the pit of suffering into which they have sunk.

- 23 They that go down to the sea in ships,  
That do business in great waters,  
24 These men have seen the works of Jehovah,  
And his wonders in the deep.  
25 For he commandeth and raiseth a stormy wind,  
Which lifteth up the waves thereof.  
26 They mount up to the heaven,  
They go down (again) to the depths;  
Their soul melteth away because of (the) trouble.  
27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,  
And are at their wits' end :

23-32. Fourth example : seafarers tossed and driven by the tempest, and brought at last safe into port. The description may be compared with the language of *Jonah* i., ii. It is the most highly finished, the most thoroughly poetical of each of the four pictures of human peril and deliverance. It is painted as a landsman would paint it, but yet only as one who had himself been in "perils of waters" could paint the storm—the waves running mountains high, on which the tiny craft seemed a plaything, the helplessness of human skill, the gladness of the calm, the safe refuge in the haven. Addison remarks that he prefers this description of a ship in a storm before any others he had ever met with, and for the same reason for which "Longinus recommends one in Homer, because the poet has not amused himself with little fancies upon the occasion, as authors of an inferior genius, whom he mentions, had done, but because he has gathered together those circumstances which are the most apt to terrify the imagination, and which really happened in the raging of a tempest." By the way, he adds, "how much more comfortable, as well as rational, is this system of the Psalmist, than the pagan scheme in Virgil and other poets, where one deity is represented as raising a storm, and another as laying it ! Were we only to consider the sublime in this piece of poetry, what can be nobler than the idea it gives us of the Supreme Being

thus raising a tumult among the elements, and recovering them out of their confusion ; thus troubling and becalming nature ? " — *Spectator*, No. 489.

23. GO DOWN TO THE SEA, as in *Isa.* xlii. 10 ; *Jon.* i. 3.

BUSINESS. There is no need to restrict this to the management of craft by seamen. It includes the occupations of fishermen, traders, persons on a voyage, etc.

24. THE WORKS OF JEHOVAH, AND HIS WONDERS, i.e. his rule of the elements : how at his word the storm raises the billows high as heaven ; how at his word it sinks down hushed and gentle as the soft breath of summer.

25. FOR HE COMMANDETH ; lit. "and he said" ; the phrase which occurs so often in *Gen.* i. to describe God's creative fiat. Compare the use of the same word in *cv.* 31, 34.

THE WAVES THEREOF, i.e. of the sea, the pronominal suffix referring to the remote noun in *ver.* 23, as is not uncommonly the case in Hebrew. (See for a still more remarkable instance of this, *cxl.* 10, where the plural pronoun "them" can only refer to the word "statutes" in *ver.* 7.) In sense it may also refer to the noun "deep" in *ver.* 24, but not in grammar, this noun being feminine.

26. THEY MOUNT UP, i.e. not "the waves," but "the seafarers." The same expression occurs, but in a different sense, in *civ.* 8, where see note.

27. REEL TO AND FRO, or, even more exactly, "spin round and round."

- 28 Then they cry unto Jehovah in their trouble,  
 And he bringeth them out of their distresses.
- 29 He husheth the storm to a gentle air,  
 So that the waves thereof are still.
- 30 Then are they glad because they be quiet,  
 And he leadeth them to their desired haven.
- 31 Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his loving-kindness,  
 And for his wonders to the children of men.
- 32 Let them exalt him also in the assembly of the people,  
 And praise him in the seat of the elders.
- 33 He turneth rivers into a wilderness,  
 And water-springs into a thirsty ground ;
- 34 A fruitful land into a salt-marsh,  
 Because of the wickedness of them that dwell therein.

ARE AT THEIR WITS' END; lit. "all their wisdom (skill, resources, etc.) swalloweth itself up," or, "cometh of itself to nought."<sup>1</sup> (Comp. Isa. xix. 3: "I will bring his counsel to nought.") The Hithpael occurs only here. Possibly the figure may have been taken from the Syrtes, or a whirlpool.

29. A GENTLE AIR. This, and not absolute "stillness," "calm" (Symm. γαλήνη), seems to be the meaning of the word. Comp. 1 Kings xix. 12, and so the LXX and Aq. ἀῤῥα. J. D. Michaleis quotes Virgil's *aequatae spirant aerae*.

THE WAVES THEREOF; lit. "their waves"; but the plural suffix must refer to the sea, and may, perhaps, have been occasioned by the plural "great waters" in ver. 23. See note on ver. 25. Others refer the plural pronoun to the seafarers: "their waves," i.e. those on which they

are tossed, and which threaten to engulf them.

30. BE QUIET. A word used of the quiet of the sea after a storm (Jon. i. 11, 12), and only once besides (Prov. xxvi. 20), of the ceasing of contention.

HAVEN. This is probably the meaning of the word, but it occurs nowhere else. The Rabbinical interpreters render it "shore," "coast."

32. SEAT, or "assembly," *consessus*; See note on i. 1.

33. The character of the Psalm changes at this point. We have no longer distinct pictures, as before; the beautiful double refrain is dropped, the language is harsher and more abrupt. Instead of fresh examples of deliverance from peril, and thanksgiving for God's mercies, we have now instances of God's providential government of the world ex-

<sup>1</sup> The whole description up to this point finds a striking parallel in Ovid, *Trist.* i. 2:

"Me miserum quanti montes voluntur aquarum :  
 Jamjam tacturos sidera summa putes.  
 Quantae diducto subsidunt aequore valles :  
 Jamjam tacturos Tartara nigra putes.  
 Rector in incerto est, nec quid fugiatve petatve  
 Invenit : ambiguis ars stupet ipsa malis."



- 35 He turneth a wilderness into a pool of water,  
 And a dry land into water-springs.
- 36 And there he maketh the hungry to dwell,  
 And they build a city to dwell in ;
- 37 And sow fields, and plant vineyards,  
 Which may yield the fruit of (yearly) produce.
- 38 And he blesseth them so that they multiply greatly,  
 And he suffereth not their cattle to be minished.
- 39 And again they are minished and brought low  
 Through oppression, evil, and sorrow.

hibited in two series of contrasts. The first of these is contained in ver. 33-39, and expresses a double change—the fruitful, well-watered land smitten, like the rich plain of Sodom, with desolation, and changed into a salt-marsh (LXX, εἰς ἄλμυρον; Jerome, *in saluginem*); and anon, the wilderness crowned with cities, like Tadmor (of which Pliny says, *vasto ambitu arenis includit agros*), and made fertile to produce corn and wine; the second is contained in ver. 40, 41, and expresses the changes in the fortunes of *men* (as the last series did those of *countries*), viz. how the poor and the humble are raised and the rich and the proud overthrown.

35. HE TURNETH, etc. The language is borrowed from Isa. xli. 18, 19, and hence it has been supposed that the allusion here is to historical events; that ver. 33 depicts the desolation of the land whilst the Jews were captives in Babylon, ver. 35 the change which took place on their return (comp. with this the language of cxxvi. 4: "Turn again our captivity, as the streams in the south"). But the passages in Isaiah (comp. besides that already quoted, xxxv. 6, 7; xlii. 15, 16; xliii. 19, 20; xlv. 27; l. 2) refer not to the Holy Land, but to the deserts through which the exiles would pass on their return; and further, the language employed is far too general to be thus limited to one event. It describes what frequently has occurred. The histories of Mexico and of Holland might furnish examples of such a contrast.

37. WHICH MAY YIELD (lit. "and they yield"). This rendering is in accordance with the common usage of the verb and noun. Others, however, render: "and they (men) get their fruit of increase," or the like. So Mendels., "Jährlich Frucht sammeln."

39. It is possible that this verse and ver. 40 stand to one another in the relation of protasis and apodosis: "When they are minished, etc. . . . he poureth contempt, etc." Another reverse is described as befallen those who had just risen into prosperity. It may have happened, says the poet, that the prosperity of this race, living at peace amid its herds and flocks, and the labors of its hands, has provoked the envy and the cupidity of some neighboring tyrant. He destroys their harvest, and burns their homestead, and drives off their flocks; but God pours contempt upon him, leads him astray in the wilderness to perish, and restores the victims of his tyranny to more than their former fortune. But it is more probable that as ver. 33, 34 present one picture of which the contrast is given in ver. 35-37, so ver. 38 and 39 are in opposition to each other, and again ver. 40 and 41. We thus have three successive contrasts, the second (ver. 38, 39) being in the reverse order to the other two. The play on the word "minished" in ver. 38 and 39 indicates a close connection between the two. On the other hand, here, as in ver. 4, the subject may not be found directly in what precedes, but

- 40 "He poureth contempt upon princes,  
And maketh them to wander in the waste (where there  
is no) way."
- 41 And he setteth the poor on high out of affliction,  
And maketh families like a flock.
- 42 The upright see (it) and are glad,  
And all iniquity hath shut her mouth.
- 43 Who is wise that he should observe these things,  
And that they should understand the loving-kindnesses  
of Jehovah?

may be general: "They, i.e. men, who-  
ever they may be, are minished," etc.

40. This verse is a quotation from  
Job xii. 21 where it stands in a series  
of participial sentences describing the  
method of God's government. Here it  
is introduced not only as forming a  
direct antithesis to the following verse,  
but as suggesting also an antithesis to  
ver. 36.

41. LIKE A FLOCK; a figure expres-  
sive of large increase, as in Job xxi. 11.

42. The impression produced by these  
acts of Divine Providence. Comp. Job  
v. 16.

43. The conclusion, in the form of a  
question, such as that with which Hosea  
concludes his prophecy (xiv. 10). This  
verse might, however, also be rendered,  
either (1) "Who is wise and will observe  
these things? Let them understand,"  
etc., or (2) "Whoso is wise will observe,"  
etc., "and they shall understand," etc.

\* **ים** everywhere else (unless possibly in Isa. xlix. 12, where it is  
opposed to **צפון**) means *the West*, the "Sea" being the Mediterranean.  
That evidently cannot be the meaning here, where another word is  
already used for *West*. Perhaps, therefore, we ought to read **מִיָּמִין**  
(Köst.) or **מִיָּמִין**, as in Isa. xliii. 5.

<sup>b</sup> **רְשִׁימוֹן הַרְהָוֹ**. It seems unnecessary, with Olsh. and others, to read  
**לֹא הָרְהָוֹ**, as in ver. 40. The negative is implied in the word **רְשִׁימוֹן**.  
The noun "way" is the accus. of nearer definition, as it is called  
(Ges. § 118, 3), "Waste as to way" = "a region where there is no  
way," "a pathless desert." The LXX join **הָרְהָוֹ** with what follows, "a  
way to a city of habitation," etc. Others would join it with **תָּבֵעוּ** (*errarunt  
a via*), which, however, is too remote.

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## PSALM CVIII.

THIS Psalm consists of portions of two others; the first half of it  
being taken from the fifty-seventh Psalm, verses 7-11 [8-12], and  
the latter half from the sixtieth, verses 5-12 [7-14]. It bears the

name of David, because the original passages both occur in Psalms ascribed to him as their author. But there is no reason for concluding that these fragments were thus united by David himself. Some later poet probably adapted them to circumstances of his own time; possibly wished thus to commemorate some victory over Edom or Philistia. The change in the tenth verse, as compared with the corresponding passage in the sixtieth Psalm, may be held to favor this view. There are a few other not very important variations of the text which will be pointed out in the notes.

For the interpretation at large, the notes on the other two Psalms may be consulted.

[A Song. A Psalm of David.]

- 1 My heart is steadfast, O God,  
I will sing and play, yea, even my glory.
- 2 Awake, lute and harp,  
I will wake the morning-dawn.
- 3 I will give thanks unto thee, among the peoples, O Jehovah,  
And I will play unto thee among the nations.
- 4 For great above the heavens is thy loving-kindness,  
And thy truth (reacheth) unto the skies.
- 5 Be thou exalted above the heavens, O God,  
And thy glory above all the earth.
- 6 That thy beloved may be delivered,  
Save with thy right hand, and answer me.
- 7 God hath spoken in his holiness:  
Let me exult, let me portion out Shechem,  
And the valley of Succoth let me measure.

1. MY HEART IS STEADFAST. In lvii. 7 [8] this is repeated. In the next member of the verse, MY GLORY has been made a second subject, "I, (even) my glory," instead of being joined with the following imperative, as in lvii. 8 [9].

MY GLORY, i.e. "my soul," with all those powers and faculties which belong to the rational being, as created in the image of God. See Gen. xlix. 6.

3. JEHOVAH. In lvii. "Adonai" (Lord).

4. ABOVE; comp. exiii. 4. In xxxvi. 5 [6] the form of expression is somewhat different; "in the heavens . . . unto the clouds"; see also Jer. li. 9.

6-13. These verses are taken from Ps. lx. The passage consists of two lines of the first strophe of that Psalm, and the second and third strophes complete.

6. The construction of this verse is different from that in lx. 5 [7]. Here it forms a complete sentence in itself, the

- 8 Mine is Gilead, mine Manasseh,  
 Ephraim also is the defence of my head ;  
 Judah is my sceptre :
- 9 Moab is my washpot ;  
 Upon Edom will I cast my shoe ;  
 Over Philistia will I shout (in triumph).
- 10 Who will conduct me into the fenced city ?  
 Who hath led me unto Edom ?
- 11 Hast not thou, O God, cast us off ?  
 And wilt not go forth, O God, with our hosts ?
- 12 O give us help from the adversary,  
 For vain is the salvation of man.
- 13 Through God we shall do valiantly,  
 And HE shall tread down our adversaries.

first clause depending on the second. The verse was evidently necessary to soften the abruptness of the transition from the former passage to this.

ANSWER ME; here in the text, and not the Masoretic correction, as in lx.

9. On the change in this verse, instead of "Because of me, O Philistia,

cry aloud," the principal variation in the Psalm, see note on lx. 8.

10. FENCED. The more common word *mitsar* is used instead of *mâtsôr* in lx. The omission of the copula in ver. 9a, and of the pronoun in ver. 11, are the only other variations of any note.

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## PSALM CIX.

THIS is the last of the Psalms of imprecation, and completes the terrible climax. The remarks already made in the note on xxxv. 22, in the introduction to lxix., and the note on verse 22, and in the General Introduction to Vol. i. pp. 50-52, may be consulted here.

This Psalm differs from the ninety-sixth in being levelled against one enemy chiefly, not against many. This circumstance may partly account for the even more intensely-wrought and detailed character of the curse. In the awfulness of its anathemas the Psalm surpasses everything of the kind in the Old Testament. Who the person was who was thus singled out for execration it is in vain to conjecture. Those who hold, in accordance with the inscription, that the Psalm was written by David, suppose that Doeg or Cush, Shimei or Ahithophel, is the object of execration.

In Acts i. 20, St. Peter combines a part of the eighth verse of this Psalm, "his office let another take," with words slightly altered from the 25th [Heb. 26th] verse of the sixty-ninth Psalm, and applies them to Judas Iscariot. Hence the Psalm has been regarded by the majority of expositors, ancient and modern, as a prophetic and Messianic Psalm. The language has been justified not as the language of David, but as the language of Christ, exercising his office of Judge, or, in so far as he had laid aside that office during his earthly life, calling upon his Father to accomplish the curse. It has been alleged that this is the prophetic foreshadowing of the solemn words, "Woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed; it were good for that man if he had not been born" (Matt. xxvi. 24). The curse, in the words of Chrysostom, "is a prophecy in form of a curse" (*προφητεία ἐν εἴδει ἀρᾶς*).

The strain which such a view compels us to put on much of the language of the Psalm ought to have led long since to its abandonment. Not even the woes denounced by our Lord against the Pharisees can really be compared to the anathemas which are here strung together. Much less is there any pretence for saying that those words, so full of deep and holy sorrow, addressed to the traitor in the Gospels, are merely another expression of the appalling denunciations of the Psalm. But terrible as these undoubtedly are,—to be accounted for by the spirit of the old dispensation, not to be defended by that of the new,—still let us learn to estimate them aright. This is the *natural* voice of righteousness persecuted. These are the accents of the martyr, not smarting only with a sense of personal suffering, but feeling acutely, and hating nobly, the triumph of wickedness.<sup>1</sup>

The strains of this Psalm are strains which have lingered even in the Christian church, not softened by "the meekness and gentleness of Christ." Let any one read the closing passage of Tertullian's treatise *De Spectaculis*, in which he does not hesitate to speak of the joy and

<sup>1</sup> Calvin defends the imprecations on this ground partly, but goes further: "Tenendum est," he says, "Davidem quoties diras istas vel maledictionis vota concepit, nec immodico carnis affectu fuisse commotum, nec privatam causam egisse, nec zelo inconsiderato fuisse accensum. Hæc tria diligenter notanda sunt." He then warns us not to allege the example of David when we are hurried away by our own passions, — for Christ's answer to his disciples will apply to us, "Ye know not of what spirit ye are," — and severely comments on the sacrilege of the monks, and particularly the Franciscans, who could be hired to recite this Psalm as a curse against an enemy. He mentions as a fact coming within his own knowledge, that a lady of quality in France had hired some Franciscans to curse her only son in the words of this Psalm.

exultation with which, at the day of judgment, he shall look upon the agonies of the damned, of the delight with which he shall see the kings of the earth, and the rulers who persecuted the name of the Lord, melting in flames fiercer than those which they lighted for the Christians, philosophers burning with their disciples, tragic actors shrieking with real pain, the charioteer red upon his fiery wheel, and the wrestler tossing in the flames, till the fierce invective ends in a perfect shout of triumph as he thinks of the grandeur of the spectacle — let any one, I say, read passages such as this, let him remember how long it was held a sacred duty by Christian fathers and bishops to persecute, and then let him pause before he passes a too sweeping judgment on “the fierce vindictiveness” of the Jew.

[A mode of interpretation has, however, sometimes been advocated which would get rid of the difficulty connected with the imprecations, by supposing them not to be uttered by the Psalmist, but to be merely cited by him as the words of his enemies directed against himself. We have only at the end of verse 5 to apply the word “saying” which is so commonly omitted in Hebrew before quotations (see, for instance, ii. 2; xcv. 7, 10), and all that follows to the end of verse 19 may be regarded as the malediction of the Psalmist’s enemies. This is the view of Kennicott and of Mendelssohn, and it has been recently revived by Mr. Taylor (*Gospel in the Law*, p. 244, etc.), who has also attempted to apply the same method in explaining Ps. lxxix. (*ibid.* p. 225, etc.), though I cannot think successfully. For not to mention that other passages of vindictive and imprecatory character remain, of which no such solution is possible, he is obliged to give an interpretation of verse 20 of this Psalm which to say the least of it is strained and improbable (see note on the verse). It is, moreover, somewhat difficult to understand how the imprecations of the *Psalmist’s enemies* could be cited by St. Peter, Acts i. 20, as prophetically descriptive of the fate of Judas. Would not this almost imply that the Psalmist himself was a kind of Old Testament Judas? Moreover, if we could account for *every* imprecation in the Psalms on the principle advocated by Mr. Taylor, what are we to say of such passages as the closing verses of Ps. lviii., or cxxxix. 19, or cxlix. 5–9?]

[For the Precentor. A Psalm of David.]

1 O GOD of my praise, be not silent!

1. GOD OF MY PRAISE, i.e. the object of my praise (Jer. xvii. 14). “The name contains the ground of the prayer. The God whom the Psalmist has hitherto found reason to praise will now also give him fresh reason for praise. In

- 2 For a wicked mouth and a deceitful mouth have they  
opened against me ;  
They have spoken against me with a false tongue.
- 3 Yea with words of hatred have they compassed me about,  
And fought against me without a cause.
- 4 For my love they are adversaries unto me,  
But I (give myself unto) prayer.
- 5 They have requited me also evil for good,  
And hatred for my love.
- 6 Set thou a wicked man over him,  
And let an adversary stand at his right hand.

this faith he offers the prayer: 'Be not silent' (comp. xxviii. 1; xxxv. 22). God speaks when he interferes to judge and to save." — *Delitzsch*.

2. A WICKED MOUTH, etc.; lit. "a mouth of the wicked, and a mouth of deceit." For the first, some would read, by a slight change of the vowels, "a mouth of wickedness," so as to bring the two clauses into harmony. Stier, however, thinks that the expression "mouth of the wicked" may have been purposely employed with reference to the wicked man against whom the Psalmist prays. Hence, too, the play upon the word in ver. 6.

4. THEY ARE ADVERSARIES UNTO ME, or "withstand me," (as in xxxviii. 20 [21]); the verb is from the same root as the noun in ver. 6, "an adversary," "a Satan"; see also ver. 20, 29. It is used like διαβάλλω, διάβολος, of malicious accusation.

I (GIVE MYSELF UNTO) PRAYER; lit. "I (am) prayer," i.e. one who prays, having recourse to no other means of defence. So in cxx. 7, "I am peace"; cx. 3, "Thy people are freewillingness." To supply "for them," as if the prayer were for his enemies, as the Syriac translator and others do (influenced probably by the language of xxxv. 13), is against the tenor of the Psalm. The sense is, rather, "I find refuge in prayer, committing myself and my cause to thee." Comp. lxix. 12, 13.

5. For the sentiment comp. xxxv. 12; xxxviii. 20 [21].

6. Leaving the mass of his enemies, the Psalmist suddenly singles out one, on whom he pours forth the terrible curse which follows. See a similar transition in lv. 12 [13]. Ver. 1-5 do not give the whole grounds for the curse; they are resumed in ver. 16-18.

SET, i.e. in an official capacity (comp. the use of the noun from the same root, "office," in ver. 8). Here, "appoint as judge," or "set over him with power and authority to punish." For the construction, comp. Lev. xxvi. 16.

AN ADVERSARY, or, "Satan," (the LXX, διάβολος; Jerome, *Satan*). Let him have not only an unrighteous judge, but a malicious accuser. On the whole, I prefer the more general word "adversary," which is that of the margin of the E.V., especially as the same root occurs several times in the Psalm; see note on ver. 4. It is not, indeed, certain from the language of ver. 7 that the process is supposed to take place before a human tribunal; for the "prayer" there spoken of is prayer to God, not supplication to the human judge. But, on the other hand, "a wicked man" in the parallelism, and the general tenor of what follows, are rather in favor of the rendering "adversary." In Zech. iii. 1, where there is the same form of expression,—"and he showed me Joshua the high-priest standing before the angel

- 7 When he is judged let him go forth condemned,  
And let his prayer be turned into sin.
- 8 Let his days be few ;  
His office let another take.
- 9 Let his children be orphans,  
And his wife a widow.
- 10 Let his children also be continually vagabonds and beg :  
(Driven) from their ruined houses<sup>a</sup> let them seek (their  
bread).
- 11 Let the extortioner lay snares for all that he hath ;  
And let strangers spoil his labor.

of Jehovah, and the adversary (or, the Satan) *standing at his right hand* to be an adversary unto him," Satan himself is doubtless meant, for the whole scene is that of a vision, as also in Job i. 6-13. This last passage shows how comparatively early the name occurred as a proper name. There is no pretence, therefore, for saying that the use of the name as that of the evil spirit is later than this Psalm.

7. WHEN HE IS JUDGED, etc. When his case is tried let him GO FORTH, leave the court, with sentence pronounced against him (lit. "guilty," comp. the verb from the same root "to condemn, to pronounce guilty," xxxviii. 33).

HIS PRAYER, not addressed to the human judge for mitigation of the sentence, but here, as always, prayer to God. The criminal looking in vain for pity or justice at the hands of man, turns in his extremity to God ; but even there, at the very fount of mercy, let mercy fail him, let his prayer aggravate his guilt. The utterance of such a wish is the most awful part of the imprecation. That prayer may thus draw down not forgiveness but wrath, see Isa. i. 15 ; Prov. xxviii. 9 ("He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination") ; xv. 8 ; xxi. 27. But it is one thing to recognize this as a fact in the divine government of man ; it is another thing to imprecate it.

8. HIS OFFICE, implying that the person held a position of some importance. The LXX, *ἐπισκοπή*, whence in Acts i. 20 the passage is applied to Judas. In this verse a double loss is imprecated, the loss of life, "let his days be few," and the loss of honor, "let another take his office"; in ver. 11 a third is added, the loss of property.

9. The curse passes in accordance with the Mosaic law ("visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children") to the family of the offender. This has occasioned considerable perplexity to those who take the whole Psalm as prophetic, and aimed throughout at Judas Iscariot. It is painful to see an expositor like Stier driven to maintain that from this point the curse is directed against the Jews at large, rather than against Judas Iscariot, and that "wife" and "mother" are used figuratively to denote city, land, etc. Others have inferred from the passage that Judas must have left a wife and children.

10. BEG. The form of the verb is intensive or frequentative. The object, "bread" (comp. xxxvii. 25 ; Prov. xx. 4), must be supplied here, and with the verb "seek" in the next member.

FROM THEIR RUINED HOUSES ; lit. "from, out of, their ruins."

11. EXTORTIONER ; lit. "creditor," LXX, *δανειστής*. But Symm. has the stronger word *πράκτωρ*. LAY SNARES FOR, admirably descriptive of the arts



- 12 Let there be none to continue kindness unto him ;  
 Neither let his fatherless children have any to favor  
 (them).<sup>b</sup>
- 13 Let his posterity be cut off ;  
 In the next generation let their name be blotted out.
- 14 Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with Jehovah,  
 And let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.
- 15 Let them always be before Jehovah,  
 That he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.
- 16 Because he remembered not to show kindness,  
 But persecuted the afflicted man and the poor,  
 And the broken in heart, to put (them) to death ;
- 17 And he loved cursing, and it came unto him,  
 And he had no delight in blessing, and it was far from  
 him ;

of the usurer, never resting till he has robbed his victim of "all that he hath."

12. CONTINUE KINDNESS to himself in distress, or to his children. See the same phrase xxxvi. 10 [11].

14, 15. The curse goes backward as well as forward. The whole race of the man is involved in it; root and branch he is accursed. Not the guilt of the individual only, but the guilt of all his guilty ancestors, is to be remembered and visited on his posterity. For the great law, comp. Matt. xxiii. 32-36. Hupfeld objects that the curse on "the fathers" is pointless, as it could no longer reach them; but if I see rightly, the object is to heighten the effect of the curse as it falls upon *the children* mentioned in ver. 13. So in our Litany: "Remember not our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers."

16. HE REMEMBERED NOT: therefore "let his iniquity be *remembered*," ver. 14.

TO PUT TO DEATH. The intensive form of the verb (Poel instead of Hiphil) denotes the eagerness, the relentless cruelty of the persecutors. The construction of this and the three following verses admits of some question.

(i.) Ver. 16 may be connected with

ver. 15, as giving the reason for the prayer of that verse, "Let them always be," etc., "because he remembered not," etc. Then ver. 17, 18 stand alone describing the man's wickedness and the retribution it brought upon him. The man's own curse, aimed at others, has fallen back upon himself. What he has sown, *that* he has also reaped. Thus the figures "as with a garment," "like water," "like oil," would denote the penetrating, clinging nature of the curse, or, as Stier expresses it: "As the man has sinned through and through his whole being, so is his whole being cursed through and through." But there are two objections to this explanation. (a) The figures in a Hebrew writer would more naturally denote what is refreshing than what is hurtful (comp. Job xv 16, xxxiv. 7, Prov. iii. 7, 8, and xvii. 22).

(b) The change to the expression of a wish, when the figures employed are so much weaker, has almost the effect of an anti-climax. This is only partially obviated, even if, with Delitzsch, we make the verb "covereth" emphatic, = "envelopeth."

(ii.) We may take ver. 16-18 as the protasis, and ver. 19 as the apodosis:

- 18 Yea, he clothed himself with cursing as with his raiment,  
 And it came like water into his bowels,  
 And like oil into his bones ;
- 19 Let it be unto him as the garment (wherewith) he covereth  
 himself,  
 And as the girdle that he is always girded withal.
- 20 This is the reward of mine adversaries from Jehovah,  
 And of them that speak evil against my soul.
- 21 But THOU, O Jehovah Lord, deal with me for thy name's  
 sake ;  
 For thy loving-kindness is good : deliver thou me.
- 22 For I am afflicted and poor,  
 And my heart is wounded within me.
- 23 As a shadow, when it lengtheneth, am I gone hence,  
 I have been driven away as the locust.

"Because he persecuted the poor, because cursing was as water to his thirsty soul, as marrow and fatness to his bones, let it be unto him as a garment, let it wrap him round, and envelop him, covering him from head to foot, and clinging to him like a girdle which never leaves his loins." The verbs cannot be rendered in ver. 17, 18, as in the E.V., as optatives. The tenses are past tenses, and have been rightly so rendered by the LXX.

20. Two explanations of this verse are possible, according to the view we take of the former part of the Psalm. (1) It may mean, "My enemies may curse me thus, but, after all, this cursing returns upon themselves. This is the reward they themselves receive from the hand of the righteous Judge" (comp. vii. 15, 16 [16, 17]). (2) Those who take the passage ver. 6-19, not as the words of the Psalmist, but as the words of his enemies, suppose the genitive here to be subjective: "This is mine adversaries' award unto me; this the sentence they would procure against me from Jehovah, when they pray, Set thou a wicked man over him," etc. So Mr.

Taylor explains (*Gospel in the Law*, p. 249), and illustrates this use of the genitive by such expressions as "the wages of sin," i.e. the wages sin gives. (Rom. vi. 23); "children are an heritage of the Lord," i.e. which the Lord bestows (Ps. cxxvii. 3); "My reward is with me" (Rev. xxii. 12). But the addition "from Jehovah" renders the first explanation far the more probable: "This is the reward which my adversaries receive from Jehovah." The sentence is clear and intelligible. But on the other interpretation we should have expected, not "from Jehovah" meaning "supplanted from Jehovah," but rather the personal pronoun which can hardly be omitted, "This is mine adversaries, reward unto me."

21. BUT THOU. He turns from his adversaries to God, from their curses to his loving-kindness. The emphatic pronoun, and the double name of God, both mark the earnestness of the appeal. See the use of these two names in lxviii. 20 [21]; cxl. 7 [8]; cxli. 8; Hab. iii. 19. The second member of the verse might be rendered, "Deliver me, because thy loving-kindness is good"; or, again,

- 24 My knees are become weak through fasting,  
And my flesh hath failed <sup>d</sup> of fatness.
- 25 As for me, — I am become a reproach unto them ;  
When they see me, they shake their head.
- 26 Help me, O Jehovah my God,  
Save me according to thy loving-kindness.
- 27 And let them know that this is thy hand ;  
Thou, Jehovah, hast done it.
- 28 Though *they* curse, yet THOU blessest ;  
They arose and were put to shame,  
But thy servant rejoiceth.
- 29 Mine adversaries are clothed with confusion :  
They cover themselves with their own shame (as with)  
a mantle.
- 30 I will greatly give thanks unto Jehovah with my mouth,  
And in the midst of a multitude will I praise him.
- 31 For he standeth at the right hand of the poor,  
To save (him) from them that judge his soul.

the imperative, "Deliver me," might be transferred to the beginning of ver. 22.

23. AS A SHADOW, etc.; comp. cii. 12.

AM I GONE HENCE, or, more literally, "am I made to go hence." This passive form (which only occurs here) denotes external compulsion.

I HAVE BEEN DRIVEN AWAY; lit. "I have been shaken out," as from a cloth, or mantle, or the deep folds of an Eastern robe. See the use of the verb in Neh. v. 13, where the shaking out of the upper part of the robe is symbolical of the divine judgment.

AS THE LOCUST, as easily terrified and driven away. Comp. Job xxxix. 20; Ex. x. 19.

25. SHAKE THEIR HEAD. See on xxii. 7.

27. At the close of the Psalm the individual persecutor drops out of sight,

and a return is made to the plural number, as in ver. 2-5.

28. The emphatic position of the pronoun before the second verb makes the rendering as given in the text more probable than the optative rendering of the E.V., "Let them curse," etc.

30, 31. The Psalm closes with the confident and joyful anticipation that the prayer in ver. 26, 27 is heard and answered. There is, further, a remarkable contrast between these verses and verses 6, 7. There, the adversary stands at the right hand of the wicked man to accuse him; here, Jehovah, at the right hand of the poor, defenceless victim, to protect him. There, the persecutor finds no mercy at the hands of the human judge, into whose hands he has fallen; here, the Great Judge of all rescues "the poor" from "those that judge his soul."

<sup>a</sup> מִתְּרוֹבָם, "from, i.e. out of, away from, *their ruins*, i.e. the ruins of their homes." The LXX have ἐκβληθήτωσαν ἐκ τῶν οἰκοπέδων αὐτῶν,

whence it has been conjectured that they read  $\text{הָרִשָׁה}$  (as in Ex. xii. 39; Job xxx. 5) instead of  $\text{הָרִשָׁה}$ .

<sup>b</sup>  $\text{הוֹצִיָן}$ , *a benefactor*. This is the form everywhere, except in Prov. xiv. 21, where it is  $\text{הוֹצִיָן}$ . Like the verb, it is always construed with the accus. of the person, consequently  $\text{לְיִת}$  is not governed by  $\text{הוֹצִיָן}$ , but belongs to  $\text{הָרִי$ .

<sup>c</sup>  $\text{הָרִי לְהָ}$ . On this periphrastic future or optative, see on lxii., note <sup>e</sup>.

<sup>d</sup>  $\text{כַּחֵשׁ}$  (Kal. only here, elsewhere Piel), lit. *hath lied or become faithless*, i.e. *is changed* (as LXX and Symm.  $\eta\lambda\lambda\omega\acute{\iota}\omega\theta\eta$ ) *from fatness*, so as no longer to be fat. Or it may be rendered *hath fallen away* (hath become faithless) *from fat*.  $\text{שֶׁמֶן}$  here, as in Isa. v. 1; xxviii. 1, *fat not oil*. The LXX,  $\delta\iota' \epsilon\lambda\alpha\iota\omega\nu$ ; Symm.,  $\acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron \acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\psi\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$ , "my flesh has changed, grown lean for (want of) oil"; but wrongly.

## PSALM CX.

THIS Psalm claims emphatically to be the fruit and record of a divine revelation. The words of the poet, though shaped in the poet's heart, come to him from the very sanctuary of the Most High. It is an oracle, an utterance of Jehovah which he has heard, and which he is to declare to others. It is an oracle which concerns a king who reigns in Zion; it is addressed to one to whom the poet does homage, calling him "Lord"; it assures him of the high favor of Jehovah, who lifts him to a share in his own regal dignity, giving him the victory over all his enemies. The poet then pictures the king going forth to battle, surrounded by his youthful warriors, bright and numberless as the dew-drops on a summer's morn, willing to shed their heart's blood in his service, each one robed as a priest, each one a soldier of God.

As he gazes on the vision which has been called up by the first word from heaven, another divine word sounds in his ear, — the word confirmed by the oath of Jehovah, that the king shall also be "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

Then he follows the king in imagination to the war, sees him winning victory after victory with great slaughter, aided by God himself in the fight, and securing the fruits of his victories by a pursuit of his enemies which knows no check even in the burning heat of an Eastern sun.

If we were at liberty to adopt in this Psalm the same principles of

interpretation which we have already adopted with regard to all the other Messianic Psalms, it would present no special difficulty. We might suppose it to have been written by some poet of David's time, who would naturally speak of David himself as his lord. In the first and lowest sense his words would apply to David as the theocratic king; in their ultimate and highest sense they would be fulfilled in David's great descendant, in him who was both David's son and David's Lord. But we seem to be precluded from this method of interpretation here by the argument which, according to all the evangelists, our Lord, in disputing with the Pharisees, builds upon the first verse of the Psalm. "When the Pharisees were gathered together," St. Matthew tells us, "Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, the son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" (xxii. 41-45). In St. Mark's Gospel still more emphatically: "And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David? (For) *David himself* said by the *Holy Ghost*, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David (therefore) himself calleth him Lord, and whence is he his son?" (xii. 35-37). In St. Luke the quotation is introduced by "David himself saith in the Book of Psalms," but there is no other variation of any importance.

Now in this argument all turns on these two points: first, that David himself wrote the Psalm, and the next, that in writing he was moved by the Holy Ghost. David himself, in a confessedly Messianic Psalm, is speaking not of himself, but of his great descendant, and, so speaking, calls him his *lord*. David was able to do this, was able in faith to recognize the true divine greatness of One who, according to the flesh, would be his son, because he spake as the organ of a divine revelation, as "he was moved by the Holy Ghost." This is clearly the scope of our Lord's argument. And if so, then it is plain that there can be no lower reference of the Psalm to David or any other Jewish monarch. It is a prediction, and a prediction of the Christ as the true King, as the everlasting Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Nor is there anything to startle us in such a conclusion, unless we are prepared to deny altogether the possibility of a revelation of the future. The real difficulty is this, that, taking this view of the Psalm, it differs from all the other prophetic Psalms, which, in their first

intention at least, refer to David or Solomon, or some other Jewish monarch. And further, the language of the latter part of the Psalm is such as to be only fairly applicable to an earthly king literally reigning in Zion, and literally engaged in fierce and bloody war with his enemies; and therefore it becomes the more difficult to understand on what principle the former part of the Psalm can be detached from a primary reference to some reigning monarch.

Attempts have consequently been made to reconcile a primary reference in the Psalm with our Lord's argument as given by the evangelists. It has been said, for instance, that the Psalm may have been written, not by David, but by Nathan, or some other poet, in honor of David, without either impugning our Lord's veracity or affecting his argument. We are reminded that our Lord in his human nature does not claim omniscience, and that in so trifling a matter as the authorship of a particular poem there is no reason why any supernatural illumination should have been vouchsafed him. In matters of literature and criticism his knowledge was the knowledge of his time.<sup>1</sup> It is conceivable, therefore, that he might have adopted, as man, the popular view respecting the authorship of the books of Holy Scripture. Or, as Neander puts it: "If Christ really named David as the author of the Psalm, we are not reduced to the alternative of detracting from his infallibility and unconditional truthfulness, or else of admitting that David really wrote it. The question of the authorship was immaterial to his purpose; it was no part of his divine calling to enter into such investigations." (*Life of Christ*, Bohn's ed., p. 403.)

But whilst we may freely admit that our blessed Lord's human knowledge was subject to limitation, since this is implied in the Gospel narrative, and we have his own express declaration to the same effect, it does not follow that we are justified in deciding for ourselves where the line is to be drawn — when it is that he speaks only as a man, when it is that his divine nature operates. Surely on so mysterious a subject it is wiser and more reverent to abstain from speculation; wiser and more reverent, to say the least, not lightly to charge him with error to whom we look as the source and fountain of truth. But apart from this, how does the argument hold, if the Psalm was not written by David, but by some one else? Neander contends that it is not invalidated. "Its principal point," he says, "is precisely that of the Psalm; the idea of the theocratic king — king and priest at once — raised up to God, and looking with calm assurance for the end of the conflict with his foes, and the triumphant establishment of his kingdom. This

<sup>1</sup> So Meyer, *Evang. des Matthäus*, kap. xxii. 43.

idea could never be realized in any *man*; it was a prophecy of Christ, and in him it was fulfilled. This idea went forth necessarily from the spirit of the old dispensation, and from the organic connection of events in the old theocracy; it was the blossom of a history and a religion that were in their very essence prophetic. In this regard it is a matter of no moment whether David uttered the Psalm or not. History and interpretation, perhaps, may show that he did not. But whether it was a conscious prediction of the royal poet, or whether some other, in poetic but holy inspiration, seized upon this idea — the natural blossom and offshoot of Judaism — and assigned it to an earthly monarch, although in its true sense it could never take form and shape in such an one, still it was *the* idea by which the Spirit — of which the inspired seer, whoever he may have been, was but the organ — pointed to Jesus." All very true, except that it does not show how it is possible for our Lord's argument to stand if we reject the Davidic authorship of the Psalm. If we hold ourselves at liberty to assume that our Lord was mistaken on this point, then his argument might certainly still be of force as against the Pharisees, who, like himself, held the Psalm to be David's, but has no force whatever for ourselves. For the very hinge of the argument turns on the circumstance that David wrote the Psalm. "The Messiah, you admit, is David's son. How, then, doth David in spirit call him Lord?" Suppose the prophet Nathan, or some poet of David's time, to have written the Psalm in honor of David, and the argument falls to the ground.<sup>1</sup>

It has been suggested by others, in order to escape from the embarrassment in which the argument involves them, that our Lord's object, in this instance, was not to establish any particular doctrine, as he had before established against the Sadducees the doctrine of a resurrection, but only to silence his adversaries. It was quite unnecessary for him, therefore, to do more than argue from the premises admitted by the Pharisees, that the Psalm was a Messianic Psalm, and that it was written by David. But this distinction is too subtle. As in his conflict with the Sadducees he proved the doctrine of the resurrection from the Pentateuch, so in his conflict with the Pharisees he showed from the Psalms that the Messiah must be not only the Son of Man, but the Son of God. His object was, in each case, to establish a truth which had been gainsaid by his opponents.

It seems to me, then, that we are shut up to the conclusion, that in this lofty and mysterious Psalm, David, speaking by the Holy Ghost

<sup>1</sup> But see the remarks of the Bishop of St. David's, quoted in the note at the end of the Psalm, p. 299.

(*ἐν ἀγίῳ πνεύματι*), was carried beyond himself, and did see in prophetic vision that his son would also be his lord. Nor is it altogether strange, altogether inconsistent with the course of God's providence, that such a vision should be vouchsafed to one to whom so clear a promise was given that the Messiah should come of his seed, and who in his "last words" pictured in such glowing terms the Righteous Ruler and the blessings of his righteous reign.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst, however, we maintain what our Lord's argument compels us to maintain, that the Psalm is a prediction, we cannot tell to what extent it was a conscious prediction. We do not know how far David himself needed an interpretation of the vision in which he saw the majestic figure of the priestly king. His words may have been higher than his thoughts: they may have been pregnant with a meaning which he did not see. Unless we deny all inspiration, we must be prepared to admit this. At the same time he is not wholly lifted out of his own age and time. If he speaks of a Messiah to come, and so far sees something of his greatness as to call him "lord," he is still suffered to conceive of him, partially at least, as an earthly monarch, fighting bloody battles with his enemies. The Psalm thus sinks down towards its close into — must we not say? — a lower key. The image which it presents to us is an image partly of fine gold, but partly of clay. We may, indeed, think ourselves at liberty to take the earthly words as symbols of spiritual truths. We may understand the victories of the Messiah as won in the kingdom of the mind and heart, not as won with sword and spear. But we cannot suppose that it was with any such meaning that David wrote "He shall judge among the nations, filling them with corpses." To his eye the struggle was one of flesh and blood, the victory such as he had himself obtained, the triumph that of an earthly conqueror.

Again as we may allow that the prediction was, partially at least, unconscious, or that the vision was obscure, so we may also admit that it was vouchsafed in connection with circumstances and events

<sup>1</sup> It is impossible not to feel how not only our Lord's argument, but also that of the Epistle to the Hebrews fails, if we suppose the Psalm to have a first reference to David. If the writer of the Epistle had supposed that David himself was a priest after the order of Melchizedek, what would have become of his argument that the abrogation of the Levitical priesthood was signified by the fact that the priesthood of Christ was after the order of Melchizedek? For if David, who raised the Levitical priesthood to a pitch of importance and splendor which it had never before possessed, was a priest after the order of Melchizedek, it is not clear how the priesthood of Christ was a proof that the Levitical priesthood had come to an end, or that the one positively excluded the other.



to which it would stand in some definite relation. Prophecy — and the inspired songs of Psalmists are often prophecies — never seems wholly to forsake the ground of history. However extended the vista which stretches before him, that vista begins at the prophet's feet. The present is his home and his starting-point, though he may make "all the ages" his own. So we must look to some occurrence in David's life for the secret impulse of his song; and none seems so naturally and obviously to associate itself with the language of the Psalm, as that marked occurrence to which, in all probability, many other Psalms are due, the bringing up of the ark of God into the tabernacle which he had prepared for it in Zion. David on that occasion danced before the ark, girded with a linen ephod, offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts;<sup>1</sup> and thus, though but in a passing and temporary manner, prefigured in his own person the union of the kingly and priestly offices. Zion had become, by the removal of the ark thither, the seat of Jehovah's visible presence. The king, therefore, who made Zion his abode, was himself in some sense the assessor of Jehovah on his throne. Jerusalem, tradition said, was the ancient Salem, the capital of Melchizedek, and the memories which thus lingered about it, and hallowed it, may have helped David to understand how the true Ruler, Priest as well as King, should be Priest, not after the ancient and venerable order of Aaron, but after the order, still more ancient and more venerable, of Melchizedek. It may, however, have been wisely ordered not only with a view to the future Antitype, but with regard to the present relation between the king and the priesthood, that no hint should be given of any unwarranted assumption on the part of the one of the duties belonging to the other. David did not interfere with the Levitical priesthood as existing in his own day; he pointed to a time when that priesthood would be superseded by a higher.

It may throw still further light on some of the expressions in the Psalm, if we recollect in what a spirit and with what resolves David had begun his reign, how jealously he desired to maintain the purity

<sup>1</sup> See 2 Sam. vi. 14-18. I own I cannot see any evidence in this passage that "David was recognized as the head of the priesthood," or that "the union of priesthood and kingship in David was more complete than in any other sovereign in Judah." We read of no repetition of such acts as those here recorded; the occasion itself was peculiar; and certainly no stress can be laid upon the expression "he offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord," for the same might be said of any one who brought the victims to the priests to sacrifice, e.g. Solomon and all the congregation (1 Kings viii. 5).

of his household and of his court (see Psalm ci.), how firm his determination was to have recognized under his sway the great ideal to which Israel was called: "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." For the people of the king in the Psalm who offer themselves willingly to fight his battle are priestly soldiers. If the king is henceforth to be a priest on his throne, he is so as embodying in his own person the priestly character of the people. He is not only the military chief, he is the religious head of the nation, the representative both of church and state.

It has been said that it is of importance for the right understanding of the Psalm, and especially of the fourth verse of the Psalm, to bear in mind the military character of the Hebrew priesthood. It is perhaps of more importance to bear in mind that the whole nation was at once a nation of soldiers and a nation of priests. They were the soldiers of God, pledged to a crusade, a holy war; pledged to the extermination of all idolatry and all wickedness, wherever existing. The character of the war marked the character of the soldiers. They were God's "sanctified ones." They were set apart as priests for his service. That zeal for God should have manifested itself chiefly in the priesthood, and that they should not have hesitated to draw the sword, is readily accounted for by the fact that in them the ideal of the nation culminated; they were in every sense its representatives.

The Psalm is not only quoted by our Lord as Messianic in the passages already referred to; it is more frequently cited by the New Testament writers than any other single portion of the ancient Scriptures. Comp., besides those passages in the Gospels, Acts ii. 34, 35; 1 Cor. xv. 25; Heb. i. 13; v. 6; vii. 17, 21; x. 13.

In later Jewish writings nearly every verse of the Psalm is quoted as referring to the Messiah.

Ver. 1. In the Talmud (*Sanhedrin*, f. 108, 2) it is said: "God placed king Messiah at his right hand, according to Ps. cx. 2, and Abraham at his left. But the face of the latter grew pale, and he said: 'The son of my son sitteth at thy right hand, but I at thy left.' And God appeased him, saying: 'The son of thy son is at my right hand, but I (according to ver. 5) am at thy right hand.'" In the Midrash Tehillim on this passage, it is said, "God spake thus to the Messiah;" and on Ps. ii. 7 the same explanation is given; in the same Midrash on Ps. xviii. 36 we read (fol. 14, 3): "R. Judah in the name of R. Channa, the son of Chanina, says: 'In the age to come [i.e. the new Messianic dispensation] will the Holy One — blessed be he! — set the Messiah at his right hand (as it is written in Psalm cx.), and Abraham

at his left.’” In the book Zohar (*Genes.* fol. 35, col. 139) it is said: “The higher degree spake unto the lower, ‘Sit thou at my right hand.’” And again (*Numb.* fol. 99, col. 394), “The righteous (Jacob) spake to the Messiah, the son of Joseph, ‘Sit thou at my right hand.’” According to the same authority (*Genes.* fol. 35, col. 139), R. Simeon explains the words, “Jehovah said unto my Lord,” of the union of the Jews and the heathen in one kingdom by the Messiah. R. Saadia Gaon, commenting on Dan. vii. 13, “And behold there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto the Son of Man,” writes: “This is the Messiah, our righteousness, as it is written in the one hundred and tenth Psalm, ‘Jehovah said unto my lord,’ etc. And in Dan. v. 14, ‘And he gave unto him power,’ etc. As it is written in Psalm ii. 6, 7, ‘But I have set my king,’ etc.”

Ver. 2. According to Bereshith Rabba (sect. 85, fol. 83, 4), on Gen. xxxviii. 18, the sceptre of the kingdom which the Lord sends out of Zion is the king Messiah, of whom Isaiah (xi. 1) speaks: “There shall go forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse.” So according to Bammidbar Rabba (sect. 18, near the end), “The rod of Aaron is preserved, that it may be in the hand of king Messiah, which is the meaning of ‘the rod of thy strength.’” And according to Tanchuma (*Yalkut Shimeoni*, ii. fol. 124, 3), the Messiah will smite the nations with the same rod or sceptre.

Ver. 3. The words “From the womb of the morning,” etc., are applied in Bereshith Rabba to the Messiah, as follows: “R. Barachias says, God spake to the Israelites: ‘Ye say unto me, We are orphans and have no father (Lam. iv. 3). The Redeemer (*Goel*) likewise, whom I shall raise up for you, hath no father,’ and it is said in Zech. vi. 12, ‘Behold a man whose name is the Branch (*Zemach*), and he shall branch out of his place.’ And so saith Isaiah (liii. 2): ‘He groweth up before him as a shoot.’ It is of the same also that David speaks in Ps. cx. 3, ‘From the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth’; and in Ps. ii. 7, ‘The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son.’”

Ver. 4. In Bereshith Rabba, on Gen. xiv. 18, it is remarked of Melchizedek, king of Salam, “This is what the Scripture says, Ps. cx. 4, ‘The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.’ And who is this? It is the King Messiah, as in Zech. ix. 9, ‘Behold thy King cometh to thee: He is righteous, and bringing salvation.’ But what did he? He brought forth bread and wine, as in Ps. lxxii. 16, ‘There shall be abundance of corn in the land’; and this it is which is written, ‘He

was a priest of the Most High God.' The Targum on this verse runs: "For thou hast been appointed Prince of the age to come, and that for thy merit's sake, because thou art a righteous King."

Ver. 6. On the words, "He will judge among the nations," it is said in the book Zohar (*Genes.* fol. 29, col. 113), "The Holy One — blessed be he! — hath determined to clothe the King Messiah with purple, that he may judge the nations, as the Psalm saith, 'He shall judge.'"

Ver. 7. The Midrash Tehillim on "He shall drink of the brook in the way" is, "In the time to come [the age of the Messiah], streams of blood shall flow from the wicked, and the birds shall come to drink of the stream of blood, as it is written, 'He shall drink.'" See the authorities in Raym. Martini, *Pugio Fidei*; Schöttgen, *De Messiâ*, p. 246.

It is not surprising, however, to find that by many of the Rabbies this line of interpretation was abandoned. So long as the Psalm was admitted to be a Messianic Psalm, the argument based upon it by our Lord and his apostles was irresistible. Accordingly, we find as early as the second century that the interpretation common among the Jews was that which explained the Psalm of Hezekiah. Both Justin Martyr in his Dialogue with Trypho (§ 33, 83), and Tertullian in his Treatise against Marcion (lib. v. cap. 9), set themselves to meet this as the then current Jewish application. The Rabbies of Justin's days interpreted the words "sit thou on my right hand" as a command to Hezekiah to sit on the right side of the temple, safe under the divine protection, when the messengers of the king of Assyria came to him with the threat of their master's vengeance.<sup>1</sup> Chrysostom tells us that the Jews of his time held that these words were addressed, not to the Messiah, but to Abraham, or Zerubbabel, or David. The Rabbies of the middle ages all agree in repudiating the Messianic interpretation. Rabbi Solomon Isaki (Rashi) mentions that some of the earlier Rabbies expounded the Psalm of Abraham, whom in Gen. xxiii. the children of Heth called "my lord." He himself attempts to carry out this exposition in the most extraordinary way; interprets the "enemies" of verse 2 of the four kings mentioned Gen. xiv. (because of their connection with the history of Melchizedek), and finds an allusion in the "corpses," verse 6, first to the carcasses of the animals which Abraham divided, Gen. xv., and then to the dead bodies of the Egyptians at the

<sup>1</sup> Conf. Tertullian (*ut supra*): "Dicunt denique (Judæi) hunc Psalmum in Ezechiam cecinisse, quia is sederit ad dextram templi, et hostes ejus averterit Deus et absumperit; Propter ea igitur, etc. ante luciferum ex utero generavi te, in Ezechiam convenire, et in Ezechiae nativitatem."

Red Sea, Ex. xiv. Immediately after he suggests another application of the Psalm to David, and on verse 6 yet another to Hezekiah and the destruction of the Assyrians. Aben-Ezra and Kimchi argue that David is the subject of the Psalm, explaining the inscription to mean not "of David," but "*for or concerning David.*" The former sees a reference to the war with the Philistines, 2 Sam. xxi. 15-17, when David, having nearly lost his life, his men swore unto him, saying, "Thou shalt not go forth with us any more to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel." In accordance with this, Aben-Ezra explains the address in the first verse of the Psalm to mean, "Remain safe in thy stronghold of Zion, trusting in my help; go not forth to battle; I will subdue thine enemies for thee, even when thou art not present in the battle."

[Psalm of David.]

1 THE oracle <sup>a</sup> of Jehovah unto my lord:

"Sit thou at my right hand,

Until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

1. SIT THOU AT MY RIGHT HAND, i.e. on my throne. The expression denotes that the person thus honored occupied the second place in the kingdom, taking rank immediately after the king, and also sharing as viceroy in the government. The custom was a common one in antiquity. We find allusion to it both amongst the Arabs and the Greeks. The viceroys of the ancient Arab kings sat on the right hand of the king. Ibn Cotaiba says: "The *Ridafut* is the dignity of sitting next to the king. But the *Radaf* (he who holds rank after the king) sits on his right hand, and if the king drinks, the Radaf drinks next, before all others, and if the king goes out upon an expedition, the Radaf sits on his seat and acts in his room till he returns, and if the king's army goes forth to war, the Radaf receives a fourth part of the booty." — Eichhorn, *Monum. Antiquiss. Hist. Arabum*, p. 220.

Similarly the Greek poets spoke of their gods as *σύνεδροι*, *πάρεδροι* *σύνθρονοι* with Zeus. So Pindar (*Fragn.* Ed. Schneider, p. 55) speaks of Minerva as associated with Zeus in his sovereignty,

and receiving his commands for the other gods: *δεξίαν κατὰ χεῖρα τοῦ πατρὸς καθεζομένην, τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῖς θεοῖς ἀποδέχεσθαι*, on which Aristides observes that Minerva was *ἀγγέλου μείζων*, and that she *τῶν ἀγγέλων ἄλλοις ἄλλα ἐπιτάττει, πρώτη παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς παραλαμβάνουσα*. And Callimachus (*Hymn. in Apoll.* ver. 28) says that Apollo is able to reward the chorus, if they sing to please him, because he sits at the right hand of Zeus. *δύναται γάρ, ἐπεὶ Διὶ δεξίος ἦσται*. In both these passages it is clear that this session at the right hand of Zeus indicates not merely a mark of honor conferred, but actual participation in the royal dignity and power. It is true that we have no exactly parallel instance in the Old Testament. When Solomon placed Bathsheba on his throne, and gave her a seat at his right hand (1 Kings ii. 19), this was done as a mark of honor, not as associating her with himself in the government. So also in Ps. xlv. 9 [10], the queen consort stands at the right hand of the king as the place of honor — though possibly there the expression

2 The sceptre of thy strength shall Jehovah stretch forth out of Zion (saying):

“Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.”

may denote more than this, may signify her joint sovereignty, for the Tyrians are said to entreat her favor with gifts, ver. 12 [13]. The same mark of honor was conferred by the king of Syria on Jonathan (1 Macc. ii. 19). There is a more nearly parallel passage in Matt. xx. 20, etc. (comp. Mark x. 35, etc.), where the mother of Zebedee's children asks for her two sons that they may sit one on the right hand and the other on the left of our Lord in his kingdom. Ewald, indeed, supposes that the king is represented as sitting in the war-chariot, at the right hand of Jehovah. This, no doubt, agrees with the martial character of the Psalm, but it does not agree so well with the language of ver. 2. It is evident that in the Psalm not an occasional honor, but a permanent dignity is meant, for Jehovah is to aid the king in effecting the subjugation of his enemies: he is to sit at Jehovah's right hand till that subjugation is effected. If, then, this be the meaning, if the solemn address “Sit thou at my right hand” is equivalent to saying, “Be thou associated with me in my kingly dignity, in my power and universal dominion,” then the best comment on the passage is to be found, as even some of the Jewish interpreters have seen, in Dan. vii. 13, 14, where “one like the Son of Man comes with the clouds of heaven, and is brought unto the Ancient of Days, and there is given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him.” The two passages, the one from the Psalm and the other from Daniel, are, in fact, combined by our Lord himself, when standing before the high-priest he says, “Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” The same interpretation is given by St. Peter, Acts ii. 34-36. Comp. Eph. i. 20-22; Heb. i. 13, 14.

UNTIL. St. Paul, in 1 Cor. xv. 24-28,

gives a limitation to the meaning of the passage which does not lie on the surface. He argues from the words of this verse that Christ must reign until (i.e. only until) he has put all enemies under his feet, and that then his mediatorial reign will cease, and he will give up the kingdom to God, even the Father. But this sense is not necessarily conveyed by the use of the conjunction “until.” It does not follow that what takes place *until* a certain limit is reached must cease immediately afterwards. Thus, for instance, in exii. 8, “He shall not be afraid *until* he see his desire upon his enemies”; Gen. xxviii. 15, “I will not leave thee *until* I have done that which I have spoken to thee of”; Deut. vii. 24, “There shall no man be able to stand before thee, *until* thou have destroyed them,” — the “until” is clearly not to be pressed as if it were equivalent to “only until, not afterwards.” The context must determine in each case whether the “until” is inclusive or exclusive of a time subsequent to the limit mentioned, and here the general tenor of the Psalm does not seem to favor a restriction to previous time. This is accordingly one of those instances in which a peculiar turn is given in the New Testament to the language of the Old. See the remarks of Calvin quoted in the notes on xcv. 11; civ. 3.

THY FOOTSTOOL; lit. “a stool for thy feet,” an emblem of complete subjection; comp. viii. 6 [7]; xviii. 38 [39]. The allusion is probably to the custom of conquerors placing their feet on the necks of the conquered. See Josh. x. 24, 25.

2. Having announced the oracle which he has received by divine revelation, the poet turns to address the king, and declares by what means he is to conquer, viz. by the help of God, and the willing courage and self-sacrifice of his own people. The Son of David has his royal seat in Zion, the city of David. Thence,

### 3 Thy people<sup>b</sup> offer themselves willingly in the day that thou warrest.

by the grace of God, he shall give laws to the world, for Jehovah himself, whose vicegerent he is, in whose strength he rules, holds and sways his sceptre. So the throne of even the earthly king is in like manner called the throne of Jehovah (1 Chron. xxviii. 5; xxix. 23).

THE SCEPTRE OF THY MIGHT, i.e. of "thy kingly majesty," as in Jer. xlviii. 17; Ezck. xix. 14. Chrysostom plays upon the word *πάβδος* (LXX) as a rod of strength and consolation, as in xxiii. 4; a rod of chastisement, as in ii. 9; 1 Cor. iv. 21; a symbol of kingly rule, as in Isa. xi. 1; Ps. xlv. 6 [7]. It was by this rod, he says, that the disciples wrought when they subdued the world in obedience to the command, "Go and make disciples of all nations"; a rod far more powerful than that of Moses, "for that divided rivers, this brake in pieces the ungodliness of the world." And then with profound truth he adds, "Nor would one err who should call the cross the rod of power; for this rod converted sea and land, and filled them with a vast power. Armed with this rod, the apostles went forth throughout the world, and accomplished all that they did, beginning at Jerusalem." The cross, which to men seemed the very emblem of shame and weakness, was, in truth, the power of God.

RULE THOU, or, "have dominion," the same word as in lxxii. 8. The imperative contains in itself a prediction or promise of fulfilment. See for the same use of the imperat. xxxvii. 3; Gen. xx. 7. These words are probably (as many of the best commentators suppose) addressed by Jehovah to the king. Others think that the poet himself thus speaks.

IN THE MIDST OF THINE ENEMIES. Rosenmüller well explains: "Hostes tuos non quidem protinus delebit Jova, sed tuæ potentiae metu injecto continebit. Qui Davidem hac oda cani existimant, illi vicinos Palaestinae populos indicari volunt, hoc sensu; imperabis, quamvis

circum circa hostes, Philistaei, Ammonitae, Moabitae, alii, sint; coll. 2 Sam. iii. 18. *In medio* i.e. medius inter hostes, ut sensus sit; quamvis terrarum orbis hostibus tuis repletus sit, non tamen hi impedire poterunt, quominus regnum tuum in eorum medio propagetur."

3. THY PEOPLE. In the midst of his enemies, the King has his own faithful adherents. God, who holds the sceptre of his Anointed, and assures him of victory, has also given him a willing people, working in their hearts by his Spirit joyfulness and courage, and ready self-sacrifice. Comp. Isa. xxviii. 5, 6, "In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory . . . and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate."

OFFER THEMSELVES WILLINGLY; lit. "are free-will offerings," i.e. give, devote themselves as a willing sacrifice. Comp. for the form of expression eix. 4, "I am prayer," and for the sacrificial sense of the word Ex. xxxv. 29; Lev. xxii. 18, 21, 23; Amos iv. 5. This interpretation harmonizes best with the priestly character assigned both to the warriors and to their leader. Otherwise the word often loses its sacrificial meaning; and so here many render, "thy people are most willing"; lit. "are willingnesses," (plur. for sing. as more emphatic, comprising every possible aspect of the idea contained in the word, alacrity, readiness, devotion in every form). They are no hireling soldiery; they serve not of constraint nor for filthy luere. For this sense of the word, see the notes on li. 12 [14]; liv. 6 [8], and comp. Hos. xiv. 4 [5], "I will love them *freely*." The reflexive form of the verb from the same root is used in like manner in Judges v. 2, 9, of the people "willingly offering themselves" for the war against Jabin and Sisera.

IN THE DAY THAT THOU WARREST; lit. "in the day of thy *host*," i.e. in the day thou musterest thy host to the battle; or we may render, "in the day of thy *power*," for the word occurs in both sig-

In holy attire ;  
 (As) from the womb of the morning,  
 Thou hast the dew of thy youth.

nifications ; for the former, see for instance, Ex. xiv. 28 ; Deut. xi. 4 ; 2 Kings vi. 15 ; for the latter, Ps. xviii. 32 [33], 39 [40].

IN HOLY ATTIRE. Comp. xxix. 2 ; xvi. 9. The youthful warriors who flock to the standard of the king are clad in holy attire, combatants in a holy war. Comp. Isa. xiii. 3, 4, "I have commanded *my sanctified ones*, I have also called *my mighty ones* for mine anger. . . . The Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle." (See also 1 Sam. xxv. 28 ; Jer. vi. 4, "*Sanctify* ye war against her" ; li. 27, "Raise a standard blow a trumpet among the nations, *sanctify* the nations against her.") But more is implied perhaps than this. The "holy garments" are priestly garments. They who wear them are priestly warriors, in the train of a priestly leader. If so, the imagery is the same as in Rev. xix. 14, where it is said that "the armies in heaven followed him (whose name is called the Word of God) upon white horses, *clothed in fine linen, white and clean.*" The garments of Aaron and the priests were of linen (Ex. xxviii. 39. 42 ; Lev. vi. 10 [3] ; xvi. 4), and they were called "holy garments" (Ex. xxviii. 4 ; Lev. xvi. 4. The Hebrew word there rendered *garments* is different from that employed in this, and the two parallel passages in the Psalms, but apparently the same thing is intended. Some have supposed that the allusion is to a solemn religious service held before going out to battle, but we have no evidence of the existence of any such custom. Instead of "in holy attire," another reading found in several mss. is "on the holy mountains." This reading, which only involves the slightest possible change in a single letter, is as old as Jerome, who has *in montibus sanctis*. It would describe the armed host as going forth to the battle from the mountain ridge on which Zion lay (see

on lxxvi. 4), and from which Jehovah stretches out the sceptre of his Anointed.

FROM THE WOMB OF THE MORNING. According to the Masoretic punctuation, these words belong to the preceding member, "In holy attire, from the womb of the morning," the principal accent being after "thou warrest," and the next chief accent after "morning." It is clear, however, that they belong to the figure of the dew, and the only question is, whether the words "in holy attire" should be connected with the previous noun, "thy people," or with the following, "thy young men,"—a question of little importance. Another rendering of the words is possible. A comparison may be implied, "*More than the dew from the womb,*" etc., the construction being the same as in iv. 7 [8], where see note.

DEW OF THY YOUTH, or, "thy youthful dew." Elsewhere the word (*yalduth*) means *the time of youth*, as in Eccl. xi. 9, 10 ; and so it has been understood here, the object being thus to mark the vigor and prowess of the leader, as the dew denotes fresh and early beauty. But the parallelism requires us to take "thy youth" here in a collective sense,—"thy young men," "thy youthful warriors." Aben-Ezra makes the parallelism yet more complete by rendering *n'dâvoth* "willingnesses" ver. 3, as if it were *geshem n'dâvoth*, "a bountiful rain" (lxviii. 9 [10]), and explains "If thou needest to make war, thy people shall go forth to thee as plentiful showers." [It would be quite possible to render the line "thy youth is (or, cometh) to thee as the dew."] This has been adopted by Mendelssohn, who observes: "The force of the figure is, that they shall flow to him, and hasten to serve him, as fruitful showers do the field. The meaning is repeated in the next hemistich, which is as if the Psalmist had said, 'In the day of thy battle thy young men are



4 Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent ;  
 “ Thou art a priest forever  
 After the order ° of Melchizedek.”

to thee (as) dew from the womb of the morning.’ And how beautiful is the figure which likens the act of men who make to the battle to drops of rain, and the act of young men who are anxious to try their strength in battle to drops of dew, which are smaller and finer than rain.” The dew which, especially in the East, falls so copiously, is most probably employed here as a figure denoting *infinite multitude*. Comp. the use of the figure in 2 Sam. xvii. 11, 12, “Therefore I counsel that all Israel be gathered to thee . . . as the sand that is by the sea for *multitude* . . . and we will light upon him as the dew filleth on the ground,” etc. Others find the point of comparison here in the *brightness* and *freshness* of the dew ; and this may be suggested by the figure as well as multitude. In Micah v. 7 [6] the point of comparison seems to be different : “And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from Jehovah, as showers upon the grass, that turneth not for man nor waiteth for the sons of men.” Here the point is, that the dew, like the rain, is a wonderful gift of God, with which man has no concern. The Greek and Latin Fathers, following the rendering of the LXX and Vulg. (See Critical Note), build on this verse the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son, and his oneness of nature with the Father.

4. This verse contains the great central revelation of the Psalm. How weighty it is, and of how vast import, may be inferred from the solemnity of the introduction “Jehovah hath sworn” (see on the divine oath, Heb. vi. 13, 17, 18), and this is carried to the very highest pitch by the addition of the words “And will not repent,” i.e. the decree is absolutely immutable (for God himself is said to have repented, Gen. vi. 6). It is the solemn inauguration of the Messiah in time to the priestly office.

It is the first intimation of the union of the kingly and priestly functions in his person. See the latter typical representation of the same truth in Zech. vi. 12, 13. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews dwells on the significance of each expression in this verse : “with an oath” — “forever” — “after the order of Melchizedek.” (1) He lays stress on the fact that this solemn inauguration into the priestly office was by an oath, which was not the case with the institution of the Levitical priest. This, he observes, is a proof that Christ is mediator of a better covenant than that of Moses (Heb. vii. 20-22). (2) He argues that as the priesthood rests on an unchangeable *foundation*, so it is in its *nature* unchangeable ; a priest *forever*. “He, because he abideth forever, hath his priesthood unchangeable” (vii. 23, 28). (3) He enlarges upon all those points in which Melchizedek, rather than Aaron, was the most fitting type of Christ ; passing over, however, in entire silence that which in the Patristic and Romish expositors holds a prominent place, the bringing forth of bread and wine. Another and essential feature of the type which is implied in Heb. vii. is too often overlooked, viz. that the priesthood of Melchizedek was not only before the law, but was a Gentile priesthood, and therefore the most fitting type of a universal priesthood.

5-7. The martial strain of ver. 2-4 is resumed. There the might of the king and his army were described, here the conflict and the victory. It is remarkable how these earthly images, this warlike tone, predominates, considering the language of ver. 4. The priestly character of the monarch, the very name of Melchizedek, who was not only king of righteousness, but king of Salem, that is, king of peace (Heb. vii.), would have led us to expect anything but the picture of a battle-field covered with corpses

## 5 The Lord at thy right hand

Hath smitten through kings in the day of his wrath.

and a leader in full pursuit of his enemies. Still it must not be forgotten that we have a parallel example in the New Testament. See Rev. xix. 11-16.

5. THE LORD ('Adonai). This form of the plural is never used except as a divine name. The Targum gives as the equivalent here "the Shechinah of Jehovah." Is this name here applied to Jehovah or to the King? Many expositors argue that the King must be meant; for (1) it is hardly probable that in so short a Psalm the King should first be said (ver. 1) to be at the right hand of Jehovah, and then that in ver. 5 Jehovah, on the contrary, should be said to be at the right hand of the King. (2) There is, apparently, no change of subject to the end of the Psalm, and in the seventh verse it is quite clear that the King is the subject; it is he, and not Jehovah, who drinks of the brook in the way. Hence it has been inferred that as the Messiah is called 'Adonai, we have here a testimony to his divine nature. On the other side it has been argued that (1) the name 'Adonai is never elsewhere given to the Messiah, or to any but God; (2) that the expression "in the day of his wrath" is more naturally to be interpreted of God than of the Messiah; see ii. 12, where that is threatened which is here fulfilled; (3) that when, in ver. 1, the King *sits* at the right hand of Jehovah, this is a session on the throne, indicating equal rank and honor; whereas in ver. 5 Jehovah is said to *stand* at the right hand of the King, a different phrase altogether, and one denoting help, succor, and the like, both phrases being legitimately employed to express a distinct meaning; (4) that the change of subject (in ver. 6 or 7), though abrupt, is only what is found in other Psalms, and is characteristic of Hebrew poetry. Where the arguments are so nearly balanced, it is difficult to decide, although most of the recent expositors — even those who hold to the Messianic interpretation — under-

stand by 'Adonai, ver. 5, not the Messiah, but Jehovah. It should be observed, however, that there is no reason why the King who is called 'Elohim (God) in Ps. xlv., should not be called 'Adonai (Lord) in this Psalm. On the other hand, to assume a change of subject, whether that change is to be introduced at the beginning of ver. 6 or ver. 7 (see below), is perfectly justifiable; and it is more justifiable in this instance, because Jehovah and the King are so closely associated, that what the one does the other may be said to do. It is Jehovah's throne on which the King sits, it is Jehovah's hand which wields the King's sceptre; Jehovah discomfits the King's enemies, and the King pursues them in their flight. It may be remarked, further, that throughout the Psalm the address is directed to the King and Priest, and that in cix. 31, Jehovah "stands at the right hand" of the poor to succor and defend him, as here at the right hand of the King. Taking this view, however, it is still difficult to say whether the King is the subject of both verses 6 and 7, or only of ver. 7. Hupfeld, Bansen, and Ewald think that the King is not introduced till ver. 7, which they regard as a single scene taken from the war. But I confess Reinke's objection to this view appears to me to be weighty, viz. that such a scene standing by itself has no meaning, We must first see the warrior in the battle, or we cannot understand why he should drink of the brook in the way. I prefer, therefore, regarding the King as the subject of ver. 6.

KINGS. There may, perhaps, be an allusion to the glorious victories of old, such as that of Moses (Num. xxi.); of Joshua (Josh. x.); of Deborah (Judges v. 3, 19); of Gideon (Judges viii.). Comp. Ps. lxxviii. 12 [13]. If so, this would account for the use of the past tense "*hath smitten through*," all God's judgments having been judgments executed on behalf of his Anointed. But

- 6 He shall judge among the nations,  
 He hath filled (them) with corpses,<sup>a</sup>  
 He hath smitten through the heads over wide lands.<sup>o</sup>
- 7 Of the brook shall he drink in the way ;  
 Therefore shall he lift up (his) head.

as the future tenses are interchanged with the past in the next two verses, it seems better to regard the former as indicating that the victory is yet future, while the latter imply that it is represented so vividly to the poet's eye that he can conceive of it as already accomplished.

6. THE HEADS. The word is singular, but used apparently in a collective sense, either literally as in lxxviii. 21 [22], or metaphorically of rulers, princes. See the same ambiguity in Hab. iii. 14. The older expositors, adhering to the singular, "the head over the wide earth," suppose Satan to be meant, who is called "the god of this world," others, "over a great country." On the construction, see in Critical Note. Some interpreters,

as Mendelssohn and Delitzsch, render "over the land of Rabbah," supposing that David's war with Ammon was the historical occasion of the Psalm. But the land of Ammon would no more be called the land of Rabbah, than the land of Judaea would be called the land of Jerusalem.

7. OF THE BROOK, or, "torrent." The victorious leader, who has made so terrible a slaughter that the field of battle is covered with corpses, is now seen pursuing his enemies. Wearied with the battle and the pursuit, he stops for a moment on his way to refresh himself by drinking of the torrent rushing by, and then "lifts up his head," derives new vigor to continue the pursuit.

<sup>a</sup> נָאֵם. The word is used in almost every instance of the immediate utterance of God himself, more rarely of that of the prophet or inspired organ of the divine revelations, as of Balaam, Num. xxiv. 3, 15 ; of David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. Once only is the word used apparently in a catachrestic sense of the evil inspirations of the wicked man, xxxvi. 1 [2], where see note <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> This verse has been altogether misinterpreted by the LXX. They render: Μετὰ σοῦ ἡ ἀρχὴ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τῆς δυνάμεώς σου, ἐν ταῖς λαμπρότησι τῶν ἀγίων σου· ἐκ γαστροῦ πρὸ ἐωσφόρου ἐγέννησά σε. They must have read עֲמָה for עֲמָה, עֲמָה, רָבָה, רָבָה, as in ii. 7, for רָבָה, מִשְׁחָר, מִשְׁחָר, and קָרָשׁ for קָרָשׁ. The words בָּהֶן they have passed over altogether. In rendering נְדָבוֹת by ἀρχή, rule, dominion, they connected it with נְדָבָה, a prince. Etymologically this is defensible, for the two ideas of nobleness and freedom are readily and naturally connected. But the noun נְדָבוֹת can only mean either willingness (plur. and sing.) or free-will offerings. The Vulg. carried the blunder further by translating ἀρχή, principium: "Tecum principium in die virtutis tue in splendoribus sanctorum: ex utero ante luciferum genui te." The Syr. confounding בָּהֶן with בָּהֶן, the young of an animal (1 Sam. vii. 9), a

*young child*, Isa. lxxv. 25, has: "In the splendor of holiness have I begotten thee as a child (son) from the womb of old" (reading like the LXX,  $\text{בְּיָמֵי הַקְּדוּשָׁה}$ , and interpreting it as =  $\text{בְּקֶדְשׁ}$ ). All these renderings point to the eternal generation of the Messiah as the Son of God, and have so been explained by the Greek and Latin Fathers. Jerome follows Symmachus (*ἐν ὄρεσιν ἁγίοις*) in adopting the reading  $\text{בְּיָמֵי קְדוּשָׁה}$ , which has the support of many mss. and some editions (the interchange of  $\text{ב}$  and  $\text{בְּ}$  being very common), and is preferred by some of the ablest critics, though I think, on hardly sufficient grounds. He renders: "Populi tui spontanei erunt in die fortitudinis tue: in montibus sanctis quasi de vulva orietur tibi ros adolescentiæ tuæ." The latter part of the verse is rendered by Aquila: *ἀπὸ μητρὸς ἐξωρθρισμένης* [*ἐξ ὠρθρισμένου*] *σοι δρόσος παιδιότητός σου*; Symm., *ὡς κατ' ὄρθρον σοι δρόσος ἢ νεότης σου*; Tholuck, *ἐκ μητρὸς ἀπὸ πρῶτ' (σοι δρόσος) νεότητός σου*. S'. *ἐκ γαστρὸς ζητήσουσί σε, δρόσος νεανικότητος σου*, which seems to anticipate the more recent interpretations.

$\text{עַל־הַקְּדוּשָׁה}$ , the old form of the stat. constr. with the connecting vowel, for  $\text{עַל הַקְּדוּשָׁה}$ , which occurs in Eccl. iii. 18; vii. 14; viii. 2; and in the Chald. of Dan. ii. 30; iv. 14, instead of the earlier and more usual  $\text{עַל הַקְּדוּשָׁה}$ . For the termination of the stat. constr. in  $\text{עַל}$ , see on cxiii. note <sup>a</sup>. In the other passages where it occurs, the phrase  $\text{עַל הַקְּדוּשָׁה}$  means *because of*, a meaning which Hupfeld would retain here, "because of Melchizedek," i.e. so far as the type is the ground of the antitype. Others (as Herder) and Geiger, *Urschrift*, etc., p. 29) take final  $\text{עַל}$  as a suffix: "Thou art a priest forever — I swear it by my word — a (second) Melchizedek." It is, however, far simpler and more natural, although no other instance of like usage can be adduced, to take  $\text{עַל הַקְּדוּשָׁה}$  in the sense of the LXX, *κατὰ τὴν τάξιν*. So the Syr. and so Jerome, *Secundum ordinem*. Except in this phrase and in the passages above quoted,  $\text{עַל הַקְּדוּשָׁה}$  only occurs once, Job v. 8.

<sup>d</sup>  $\text{אֶתְּמַלֵּא בָּם}$ . The second accus. is understood,  $\text{אֶתְּמַלֵּא בָּם}$ . "He hath filled them (i.e. the nations) with corpses," the verb being transitive, as often. Others make of  $\text{אֶתְּמַלֵּא בָּם}$  an adjective governing  $\text{אֶתְּמַלֵּא בָּם}$ , "(it, i.e. the field of battle, or the land, is) full of corpses, as in lxxv. 10,  $\text{מָלֵא מַיִם}$ , "full of water."

<sup>e</sup>  $\text{עַל רֹאשׁוֹ}$ . The prep. may either depend on the verb, "He hath smitten over a wide extent of country," etc., or it may depend on  $\text{עַל רֹאשׁוֹ}$ , "head over, i.e. prince over a wide territory," like  $\text{עַל נְיָרֵי}$ , etc., but here the former is clearly to be preferred.

A. I subjoin the following paraphrase of the Psalm :

“ Thus saith Jehovah, — it is his revelation that I hear, it is his word addressed to one who, though he be my son, is yet my Lord — ‘ I give thee honor and dignity equal to my own, I associate thee with myself in kingly rule and dominion, until I have subdued every enemy who shall dare to lift himself against thee.’ ”

Then turning to the King who has thus been solemnly placed on the throne of Jehovah, and who rules as his vicegerent in Zion, the Psalmist says : “ From Zion, thy royal seat, shall Jehovah himself, on whose throne thou sittest, stretch out the sceptre of thy dominion. So close shall be the fellowship between him and thee. Thou shalt sit on his throne, he shall wield thy sceptre ; his might shall be thy might, his kingdom shall be thy kingdom, and thou shalt not only subdue thine enemies, but before they are yet vanquished thou shalt rule in the midst of them. When thou goest forth to war, thine own people shall flock with glad and willing hearts to thy standard. They shall come clad, not in armor, but in holy vestments as ministering priests, for thou hast consecrated them to be thy priestly soldiers. They shall come, a youthful host, in numbers numberless as the dew, bright and fresh as the dew from the womb of the morning.

“ Yet another solemn word concerning thee have I heard. It is a word confirmed by an oath, the oath of the Most High, which cannot be broken. By that oath he hath made thee Priest as well as King ; King thou art, Priest thou shalt be henceforth ; Priest not after the law of a carnal commandment, or by descent through the Levitical priesthood, but after the order of Melchizedek, — Priest, therefore, not of the Jew only, but of the Gentile also, — Priest not for a time, but forever.”

Then, looking on the leader, the host, the conflict, the poet exclaims : “ The Lord, the God of hosts who is with thee, O King, who is at thy right hand to succor and give thee the victory in the battle, hath already crushed the rival monarchs that dispute thy sway. Thou shalt be a judge and ruler among the nations whom he has given thee as thine inheritance. The vast battle-field is strewn with the corpses of thy foes. Far and wide hast thou extended thy conquests, vanquishing one leader after another ; and thou shalt reap the fruit of thy victories, like a warrior who, pressing hotly on the rear of his enemies as they flee before him, scarcely pauses for a moment to snatch a hasty draught from the wayside brook, and then with renewed ardor, with head erect and kindling eye, continues the pursuit. Thus shall victory be crowned, and not a foe remain.”

B. The Bishop of St. David's has favored me with the following valuable remarks on this Psalm, which he has kindly allowed me to publish :

"I think it will be convenient first to consider the Psalm by itself, just as if no reference had been made to it in the New Testament, and then to see how our conclusions about it must be modified by our Lord's language.

"(i.) I think there can be no doubt that, whoever was the author, it must be considered as a Messianic Psalm, a picture of a state of things which had not been fully realized either in the literal or the spiritual sense, before the coming of Christ. This character of the Psalm, as manifested by its contents, would not be more strongly marked if it is considered as the work of David; and the only question is whether, without some special revelation, beyond what would have been required for any other author, he could have spoken of the person described in it as his 'Lord.' I will only say that it does not appear to me inconceivable, but quite natural, that he should so style one who answered to the description given of the future victorious King. Only I am not sure that there is anything in that description that might not be accounted for without any peculiarly distinct *consciousness* — *some* consciousness the writer must have had, whoever he was — in David's mind, partly by the promises which he had received (2 Sam. vii.), and partly by traditional expectations of the coming Great One.

"(ii.) How, then, is the case altered by our Lord's reference to the Psalm? Here we find ourselves in the presence of two opposite theories as to our Lord's ordinary intellectual state. According to that which invests him with the fulness of divine as well as human knowledge, there is of course no room for doubt about the authorship of the Psalm. You, however, seem willing to admit that of Neander, Meyer, and others (among the rest, Pressensé, *Vie de Jésus*), that our Lord was not habitually conscious of facts, such as 'matters of literary criticism,' which did not fall within the range of his human knowledge. But then arises the question whether, even on this theory, we are not compelled to suppose that he would not have argued as he does with the Pharisees on the Psalm, if a certain knowledge of its real authorship had not been supernaturally infused into him for the special occasion. This leads us to inquire what his argument was. And here it is to be observed that, strictly speaking, it was no *argument* at all. Still less was it an argument proving that the Christ was foreseen by David to be the Son of God. As far as our Lord's words

go, they are simply questions, and questions which might have been put by one who wished to suggest to the Pharisees that they were mistaken in believing that David was the author of the Psalm. Nothing of course could be farther than that from our Lord's intention (though I see from Alford that De Wette actually thought so). But if he did not take, but stand on, the same intellectual level, in this respect, with the Pharisees, can it be said that his question, if David was not really the author of the Psalm, tended to mislead them, and therefore that this was a case in which, if he had needed a supernatural revelation of the truth, he must have received one? I must own, that is not at all clear to me. But that which most perplexes me is the difficulty I find in understanding the precise drift of our Lord's questions, or why they should have had the effect of putting the Pharisees to silence. One would think that they could have been at no loss for an answer, according to the current Messianic notions of the day. They knew that Messiah was to be of the lineage of David. They also believed that he was to be a greater than David, though the precise degree of his superiority might be open to doubt. But this might suffice to remove the appearance of inconsistency between David's language and his relation to the expected Messiah. Nor does it appear elsewhere that the question between our Lord and his opponents was, who and what the Messiah was to be, but whether he was the Messiah. If the Pharisees had not believed that the Psalm related to the Messiah, the question would have been futile. The argument, whatever it may have been, turns upon that, quite as much as it does upon David's authorship, and though the title of *Lord* implied a dignity higher than David's, it can hardly be said to carry so much as the sitting on Jehovah's right hand, or even than the everlasting priesthood. But if so, the alleged occasion for a supernatural infusion of superhuman knowledge seems to lose almost all its importance, as the only result would be the addition of a title, which could have no such meaning except in the mouth of David, but which is thrown into the shade by other attributes which do not depend on the supposition of his authorship.

“On the whole, the conclusion to which I am led, as far as the great obscurity and imperfection of the data permit me to draw any, is that we are left very much in the same position with regard to the Psalm as if our Lord had not asked those questions about it; and that though we may be at liberty, we are not ‘compelled’ to attach any greater weight to it than it would have if it was not written by David. All that ‘falls to the ground’ in our Lord's ‘argument’ is a particular which does not seem to have any bearing upon doctrine, and to be, indeed, immaterial.”

## PSALM CXI.

THIS Psalm and the next are framed exactly on the same model. They are both alphabetical Psalms. In both, the letters of the alphabet mark not only the beginning of verses, as in other Psalms, but the beginning of each several clause of the verses. In both, there are exactly twenty-two lines, each line consisting usually of three words, and in both the order of the alphabet is strictly preserved, which is not the case in other alphabetical Psalms (see, for instance, xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii.). Finally, so exactly does the structure of the two Psalms correspond, that the first eight verses in both consist each of two lines, and the last two verses of three lines.

But the Psalms answer to one another not only in structure, but in thought. The same significant phrases occur in both, and occur in such a way as to mark the mutual relation of the two poems. In the one hundred and eleventh the mighty deeds, the glory, the righteousness of Jehovah are celebrated in the assembly of the upright. In the one hundred and twelfth the righteousness, the goodness, the blessedness of the upright themselves is described and enlarged upon. The one sets forth God, his work and his attributes; the other tells us what are the work and character of those who fear and honor God. Thus in cxi. 3 it is said of Jehovah that "His righteousness standeth fast forever"; in cxii. 3 the same thing is affirmed of the man that feareth Jehovah. In cxi. 4 it is declared of Jehovah that "He is gracious and of tender compassion"; in cxii. 4 the same character is given of the upright. In the one hundred and eleventh Psalm the faithfulness of Jehovah to his covenant is magnified (ver. 5, 9), in the one hundred and twelfth the faithfulness of the righteous man, his trust in Jehovah is exhibited (ver. 7, 8).

In spite of the acrostic arrangement by which the writer has chosen to fetter himself, this Psalm is more than a mere string of gnomic sentences. The thoughts have a real inner connection. The Psalmist begins by declaring that with his whole heart he will give thanks to God, and because to keep his thankfulness and his ascription of praise to himself would be to rob God of half his honor, therefore will he give utterance to his feelings, and give utterance to them in the fitting place, "in the congregation of the upright." Abundant subject for such praise is to be found in the works of God; the more these are studied, the more will their marvellous and unsearchable character be seen, and the greater the delight which will be experienced in the



study. Everywhere the glory of God will be traced, everywhere will the footsteps of his unchangeable righteousness be discovered. At all times his works testify of him, rebuking the apathy and forgetfulness of men, and calling them to him who is "gracious and of tender compassion."

He has shown his goodness in never failing to supply the need of his people: he gave them manna in the wilderness, he gave them the spoil of the heathen in Canaan; he thus kept with them the covenant which he made of old with their fathers. Not unmindful of other nations, it is to his people that he has specially revealed himself; he has given them their promised inheritance. As in his works so in his commandments, as in his providence so in his word, the same truth and faithfulness are visible. Therefore his commandments cannot fail; they remain the sure, everlasting pillars of his kingdom. The great seal of all is the redemption which he accomplished for his people: He who brought them out of Egypt will never suffer his covenant to fail.

Is it not the highest wisdom to fear such a God as this, so great in his works, so true in his word, so faithful to his covenant? To fear God and to keep his commandments is the whole duty of man; to praise him man's highest employment both now and forever.<sup>1</sup>

## 1 HALLELUJAH!

- ⌘ I will give thanks unto Jehovah with (my) whole heart,
  - ⌘ In the council of the upright and in the congregation.
- 2 ⌘ Great are the works of Jehovah,
- ⌘ Sought out<sup>a</sup> of all them that have delight therein.

1. COUNCIL. See on xxv. note<sup>g</sup>. A narrower and more intimate circle is implied than in the word "congregation" which follows. In xxv. 14 [15] the word occurs in the sense of "secret," i.e. "secret converse," and in lv. 14 in a similar sense. See note on this last passage.

2. THE WORKS OF JEHOVAH, i.e. specially his mighty deeds on behalf of his people. These are said to be—  
 SOUGHT OUT, the objects of earnest

and devout meditation and study, studied that they may be known, studied that they may be lived. The same law holds of God's revelation in his word as of his revelation in nature. They only who search diligently, and who have a *delight* therein, can discover his wonders either in the one or the other. For if what Origen says of the final revelation is true, ἐπέμφοθη γὰρ οὐ μόνον ἵνα γνωσθῆ, ἀλλ' ἵνα καὶ λάθῃ (*Contr. Cels.* ii. 67), it is no less true, λαμβάνει ἵνα γνωσθῆ.

<sup>1</sup> With this Psalm begins another series of Hallelujah Psalms, exi.—cxiii., cxv.—cxvii.

- 3 **†** His doing is honor and majesty,  
 † And his righteousness standeth fast forever.
- 4 † He hath made a memorial for his wonderful works ;  
 † Gracious and of tender compassion is Jehovah.
- 5 **‡** He hath given meat to them that fear him,  
 † He remembereth his covenant forever.
- 6 **‡** The power of his works hath he shewed to his people,  
 † To give them the heritage of the nations.
- 7 **‡** The works of his hand are truth and judgment ;  
 † Faithful are all his statutes ;
- 8 **‡** They are upheld forever and ever,  
 † They are done in truth and uprightness.

3. HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS STANDETH FAST FOREVER. Comp. cxii. 3, where the same is said of the righteousness of the man who fears Jehovah, and hath delight in his commandments. See also xix. 9.

4. A MEMORIAL. Comp. Num. xvi. 40 [xvii. 5] ; Josh. iv. 6, 7.

FOR (or "belonging to") HIS WONDERFUL WORKS. By means of all that he has so marvellously wrought on behalf of Israel, he has reared, so to speak, a monument to his glory.

5. MEAT, or perhaps rather "prey" or "booty." "The use of this word," says Mr. Grove, "especially when taken in connection with the words rendered 'good understanding' in ver. 10, which should rather be as in the margin, 'good success,'" throws a new and unexpected light over the familiar phrases of this beautiful Psalm. It seems to show how inextinguishable was the warlike predatory spirit in the mind of the writer, good Israelite and devout worshipper of Jehovah as he was. Late as he lived in the history of his nation, he cannot forget 'the power' of Jehovah's 'works' by which his forefathers acquired the 'heritage of the heathen'; and to him, as to his ancestors when conquering the country, it is still a firm article of belief that those who fear Jehovah shall obtain most of the spoil of his enemies — those who obey his commandments shall have

the best success in the field."—*Dict. of the Bible*, Art. "Meat." To the above may be added the probable allusion to the deliverance from Egypt, and the occupation of Canaan, in ver. 9. It is doubtful, however, whether the rendering "good success" in ver. 10 is correct. Delitzsch, on the other hand, supposes that by the "memorial" is meant the festivals, which were instituted to keep alive the remembrance of God's mighty works in the days of Moses, and by the "food," the meal accompanying the sacrifices, and the paschal feast. [It is with reference to this verse, doubtless, that Luther calls the Psalm "an Easter or Paschal Psalm."] Theodoret, Augustine, and others understand by this "food" in the New Test. sense, the Eucharist, and the Psalm has been accordingly used as a Eucharistic Psalm. It is a curious instance of the way in which a word may draw to itself a whole train of thought with which it has really no connection.

6. TO GIVE, or, the infin. may be used gerundially, as often, "giving."

8. UPHELD, not however by any external prop but by their own inherent power: comp. the use of the word cxii. 8; Isa. xxvi. 3 (where the E.V. has "stayed").

UPRIGHTNESS. The neuter adj. used thus in connection with a noun preceding is peculiar (see evii. 20).

- 9 פ He hath sent redemption to his people ;  
 ז He hath commanded his covenant forever ;  
 ק Holy and fearful is his name.  
 10 ר The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom,  
 ש A good understanding have all they that do them :  
 ה His praise endureth forever.

9. HE HATH SENT. There is probably an allusion to the redemption from Egypt, and in the next member to the Sinaitic covenant. Then Jehovah revealed himself as the holy and the awful God. But here, and throughout the Psalm, I have rendered the past tenses as perfects, because the reference is evidently not exclusively to the past, but also to the still present results of the "redemption" and the "covenant."

HE HATH COMMANDED. The verb is used, as in cv. 8, in its original sense of *appointing, establishing*.

10. THE BEGINNING, or, "chief part, principal thing." Comp. Job xxviii. 28; Prov. i. 7; ix. 10. Augustine beautifully says: "Pro deliciis autem omnibus hujus sacculi, quales vel expertus es, vel angere ac multiplicare augendo potes, immortalium deliciarum matrem con-

cupisce sapientiam; sed *Initium sapientiae timor Domini*. Delectabit illa, et ineffabiliter procul dubio delectabit castis atque aeternis veritatis amplexibus: sed prius tibi donanda sunt debita, quam praemia flagitanda. *Initium ergo sapientiae,*" etc.

A GOOD UNDERSTANDING, or perhaps rather "understanding of, insight into, that which is good." Comp. Prov. iii. 4; xiii. 15; 2 Chron. xxx. 22.

THEY THAT DO THEM. The reference of the plur. pron. "them" can only be to the "statutes" mentioned in ver. 7, 8. See the note on cvii. 25. The Prayer-book version, "thereafter," Augustine lays stress on this "doing." "*Bonus est intellectus,*" he says; "quis negat? Sed intelligere et non facere periculosum est. *Bonus ergo facientibus.*"

\* הָרִוּטִים, pass. part. only here; not merely *worthy of being sought out*, as in other passive forms, like נִחְמָד, נִחְמָדָה, *sought*, but the subject of diligent investigation, earnest pursuit, etc. לְכָל-חַפְצֵיהֶם, not "according to all their desires" (as the sing. 1 Kings ix. 11), i.e. so that they find in it their highest satisfaction; for the plur. of חַפְצֵי does not mean *wishes, desires*, but *precious things* (Prov. iii. 15; viii. 11), and לְ after a pass. can only point out the author or subject. Hence this is plur. of חַפְצֵי. It is true this appears elsewhere in the form חַפְצֵי, as xxxv. 27; xl. 15; but that is really an incorrect form of the stat. constr., with the vowel retained, contrary to the rule (Gesen. § 133. Rem. 1, 2). In like manner we have שִׁמְחָה, Isa. xxiv. 7, and שִׁמְחָה, Ps. xxxv. 26. There is, indeed, no parallel case where the first radical takes Segol. Usually a guttural first radical has Pathach or short Chirek, as נִבְחָה, נִבְחָה, etc., but this is of no importance, as the guttural in other forms is found with a Segol. Besides, though the long vowel might be retained in the stat. constr., it would naturally fall away before the grave suffix הֶם. The rendering given in the text is supported by the Syr., Chald., Jerome, Kimchi, Luther, Calvin, Gesen., etc.

## PSALM CXII.

ON this Psalm see the Introduction to Psalm cxi. In its general character it resembles Psalms i. and xxxvii. In the Vulgate the title is "Conversio Aggaei et Zachariae."

1 HALLELUJAH!

⊗ Happy is the man that feareth Jehovah,

⊕ That delighteth greatly in his commandments.

2 ♪ His seed shall become mighty in the earth,

⊗ The generation of the upright shall be blessed.

3 ♫ Wealth and riches are in his house,

⊗ And his righteousness standeth fast forever.

4 ♫ There ariseth a light in the darkness for the upright;

⊗ (He is) gracious, and of tender compassion, and righteous.

5 ♫ Well<sup>a</sup> is it with the man who dealeth graciously and  
lendeth,

⊗ He shall maintain his cause in (the) judgment;

1. Comp. i. 1, 2.

2. MIGHTY. The word is commonly used of *warlike* strength and prowess, but sometimes also in a more general sense of wealth, substance, etc. So Boaz is called "a mighty man of wealth" (Ruth ii. 1); and Kish (1 Sam. ix. 1); see also 2 Kings xv. 20.

3. WEALTH AND RICHES. So in the Proverbs these are said to be the gift of Wisdom to them that love her. See iii. 16; viii. 18; xxii. 4. So even in the New Testament: see Mark x. 29, 30.

HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, etc. It seems a bold thing to say this of anything human, and yet it is true; for all human righteousness has its root in the righteousness of God. It is not merely man striving to copy God. It is God's gift and God's work. There is a living connection between the righteousness of God and the righteousness of man, and therefore the imperishableness of the one appertains to the other also. Hence the same thing is affirmed here of the human righteousness which, in cxi. 3, is affirmed of the divine.

4. A LIGHT FOR THE UPRIGHT. Cf. xxvii. 11, "Light is sown for the up-

right." In the next clause of the verse the three adjectives occasion some difficulty. Although they are in the singular number, whilst "the upright" in the preceding line is plural, it seems most natural to take them as intended further to describe the character of the upright. The first two epithets, elsewhere applied only to Jehovah, are so applied in cxi. 3, and the relation of the two Psalms makes it almost certain, therefore, that they are here applied to his servants. See also Matt. v. 45, 48; Isa. lviii. 7. The change from the plural to the singular is certainly unusually harsh, as the three epithets are loosely strung together, without anything to mark their reference; but this may be accounted for in some measure by the requirement of the alphabetical arrangement. Others take the three attributes as in apposition with the noun "light" in the preceding clause, God himself being the "Light" (as in xxvii. 1; comp. Isa. x. 17; lx. 1-3; Mal iv. 2. [iii. 20]): "There hath arisen a light, viz. he who is gracious," etc.

5. LENDETH, see xxxvii. 21, 26. HE SHALL MAINTAIN, etc.: mentioned as

- 6 כ For he shall not be moved forever ;  
 ל The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.
- 7 מ Because of evil tidings he shall not fear ;  
 נ His heart is established trusting in Jehovah.
- 8 ס His heart is upheld, he cannot fear,  
 ע Until he see (his desire) upon his adversaries.
- 9 פ He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor,  
 צ His righteousness standeth fast forever ;  
 ק His horn shall be exalted with glory.
- 10 ר The wicked shall see (it) and be grieved,  
 ש He shall gnash his teeth and melt away ;<sup>b</sup>  
 ה The desire of the wicked shall perish.

an instance of his happiness, which is then confirmed by what follows, ver. 6, cxxxiii. 5, in the courts of judgment, cxliii. 2; Prov. xvi. 10.

6. IN EVERLASTING REMEMBRANCE (comp. Prov. x. 7), or, "shall have an everlasting memorial," see exi. 3.

7. Further evidence of the happiness of such a man — a clear conscience and a heart that trusts not in itself, but in God, and thus is raised above all fear. The epithets "established," "trusting," "upheld," are all strikingly descriptive of the true attitude of faith, as that which *leans upon* and *is supported by* God.

The two last are combined also in Isa. xxvi. 3.

9. HE HATH DISPERSED. The verb occurs in Prov. xi. 24 in the same way, of the free and active exercise of charity. This verse is quoted by St. Paul when exhorting the Corinthians to liberal contributions on behalf of the poor (2 Cor. ix. 9).

HIS HORN. See on lxxv. 5 [6].

10. BE GRIEVED, filled with vexation, irritated. SHALL GNASH HIS TEETH, as in xxxv. 16; xxxvii. 12.

MELT AWAY, i.e. through jealousy and annoyance.

<sup>a</sup> טִיב, here not in a moral sense *good*, but rather in a physical sense *fortunate, happy*, as in Isa. iii. 10; Jer. xlv. 17; Eccl. viii. 12, 13. It is not necessary, however, to make it a noun, as Kimchi does (as in xxv. 13). The expression טִיב אֵינִי is exactly equivalent to אֵינִי טִיב, ver. 1, and the article is absent before אֵינִי, in both cases, because it is defined by the attributes which follow.

<sup>b</sup> נָמַס, 3 pret. Niph. pausal form (as in Ex. xvi. 21) of נָמַס or נָמַס. Usually the pausal substitute for Tseré is Pathach; here we have Kametz, probably as lengthened from the form נָמַס, as in the plur. נָמַסִּים. Comp. also the use of the suffixes מֵ- and מִ-, instead of מִן-, cxviii. 10.

## PSALM CXIII.

WITH this Psalm begins "the Hallel," which was sung at the three Great Feasts, at the Feast of Dedication, and at the New Moons. At the Feast of the Passover it was divided into two parts, the first of which, consisting of Psalms cxiii., cxiv., was sung before the meal, that is, before the second cup was passed round; and the second, consisting of Psalms cxv.—cxviii., after the meal, when the fourth cup had been filled. This last, probably, was "the hymn" which our Lord and his apostles are said to have sung (*ὑμνήσαντες*, Matt. xxvi. 30; Mark xiv. 26), after his last Passover.

Paulus Burgensis styles Psalms cxiii.—cxviii. *Alleluia Judaeorum magnum*, and this has been a very usual designation. But according to the ancient Jewish tradition this series of Psalms is called simply "the Hallel," or sometimes "the Egyptian Hallel," whereas the name "Great Hallel" is given to Psalm cxxxvi. (See Delitzsch, from whom the above is taken.)

The Psalm may be said to be a connecting link between the Song of Hannah and the Magnificat of the Virgin.

It may be viewed as consisting of three strophes.

1. The first exhorts to the praise of Jehovah as the one great object of praise (ver. 1-3).

2. The second sets forth his greatness (ver. 4-6).

3. The third magnifies his condescension (ver. 7-9).

The second and third of these divisions, however, are closely connected, and, in fact, run into one another.

## 1 HALLELUJAH!

Praise, O ye servants of Jehovah,

Praise the name of Jehovah.

## 2 Blessed be the name of Jehovah

From this time forth and for evermore.

## 3 From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same

The name of Jehovah be praised.

1. SERVANTS OF JEHOVAH; all Israel as a nation consecrated to his service; comp. lxix. 36 [37]; cxxv. 1 (where this same verse is found, but with the clause transposed), cxxxvi. 22. The rhythm of this verse is that of xxix. 1.

3. BE PRAISED. This rendering seems preferable in the context, though we might render "is worthy to be praised," as in xviii. 3 [4]; xlviii. 1, "greatly to be praised," but here the participle depends on the verb in the jussive or simply "is praised."

- 4 Jehovah is lifted up above all nations,  
 His glory is above the heavens.
- 5 Who is like Jehovah our God  
 Who setteth his throne on high,<sup>a</sup>
- 6 Who stoopeth down to see  
 (What is) done in the heaven and in the earth?
- 7 He raiseth the miserable from the dust,  
 (And) lifteth up the poor from (the) dunghill,
- 8 That he may set (him) with princes,  
 (Even) with the princes of his people.
- 9 Who maketh the barren woman to keep house,  
 As a joyful mother of children.<sup>b</sup>  
 Hallelujah!

4. ABOVE THE HEAVENS. DeWette remarks that this goes beyond what we find elsewhere in describing the exaltation of Jehovah; that in Ps. xviii., for instance, he inhabits the lower atmospheric heaven, and in Ps. lxxviii. he is throned in Zion, whereas here he is lifted high above the sphere of creation. But he must have forgotten such passages as viii. 1 [2], and lvii. 5 [6], 11 [12].

5. SETTETH HIS THRONE ON HIGH; lit. "maketh high to sit"; as in the next verse, "maketh low to see." The same antithesis occurs cxxxviii. 6. It denotes not merely the omniscience of God, but his greatness and his condescension. Comp. viii. 4 [5], and the striking expansion of the same thought Isa. lvii. 15.

6. STOOPETH DOWN TO SEE, etc. This verse might also be rendered, "Who looketh low down — vaileth or lowereth his regard — upon the heavens and the earth," the construction of the verb and prep. (רָאָה בְּ) being the same as in Gen. xxxiv. 1; Judges xvi. 27. Some commentators would connect the second hemistich of this verse with the first clause of ver. 5: "Who is like Jehovah our God in the heaven and in

the earth" (as in Deut. iii. 24), taking the two intervening clauses as parenthetical; but this is quite unnecessary. The rendering given above may be adopted, or the ellipsis may be supplied as it is in the E.V.

7. This and the next verse are almost word for word from the Song of Hannah (1 Sam. ii. 8).

9. The curse of barrenness was so bitter a thing in Jewish eyes, that its removal was hailed as a special mark of divine favor. The allusion to it here was suggested, doubtless, by Hannah's history, and by the strain of Hannah's song already quoted; see 1 Sam. ii. 5.

MAKETH THE BARREN WOMAN, etc.: lit. "maketh her who is barren of (in) the house to dwell," i.e. maketh her who through barrenness has no family to have a family, and so a fixed, settled habitation in the land. A barren woman might be divorced; but, having children, her position in the house is sure. The use of the phrase in lxviii. 6 [7] is somewhat different, as there the word "house" means *the place of abode*; here, the *family*. Compare the expression "to make a house" Ex. i. 21; 2 Sam. vii. 11.

<sup>a</sup> הַמְּבִיָּרִי. The final Chirek, *Yod* or *Chirek compaginis* as it is called, or long connecting vowel, in this and the two following parti-

ciples, and also in the Hiph. infin. לְהוֹשִׁיבֵי (ver. 8), is the vowel originally employed to mark the relation of the genitive. The old form of the stat. constr. had for its termination either Cholem, as in חֲרִירוֹ אֶרֶץ, Gen. i. 24, or Chirek, as in the compound names מְלֶכֶת־צָדֵק, אֱלֹהֵי־קוֹר, and many others, in the participle לְגִבּוֹן אֶסְרֵי, Gen. xlix. 11, חֲכָל־יָלֵי עֵינַיִם, *ib.* 12, and in some prepositions, as בְּלִתֵּי, וּבְלִתֵּי, מִנֵּי (poet.).

The termination *î* is found (*a*) with the first of two nouns in the stat. constr., whether masc., as in Deut. xxxiii. 16; Zech. xi. 17, or fem., as in Gen. xxxi. 39; Ps. cx. 4. It is found also (*b*) when the stat. constr. is resolved by means of a prep. prefixed to the second noun, as in the passage already quoted, Gen. xlix. 11; in Ex. xv. 6; Obad. 3; Hos. x. 11; Lam. i. 1; Ps. cxxiii. 1; and in the K'thîbh, Jer. xxii. 23; li. 13; Ezek. xxvii. 3. It occurs (*c*) even where a word intervenes between the two which stand in the genitival relation, as in ci. 5; Isa. xxii. 16; Mic. vii. 14. The fact that this long vowel draws to it the accent shows that it is no mere euphonic (paragogic) addition, but that it is really a connecting vowel marking the relation of the gen. case. Hence it may be regarded as a connecting link between the Semitic and Indo-Germanic languages.

In this and other late Psalms (see for instance cxxiii. 1; cxiv. 8, where we have both the Chirek and the Cholem, and perhaps cxvi. 1) an attempt seems to have been made to bring back the old termination, but without regard always to its original signification. Thus in ver. 8 of this Psalm it is appended even to the Hiph. infin., a form which occurs nowhere else.

<sup>b</sup> חֲכָל־יָלֵי. Hupfeld and Olsh. condemn the article as incorrect. Delitzsch says: "The poet brings the matter so vividly before him, that he points, as it were, with his finger to the children with which God blesses her."

According to Aben-Ezra, זֶהְרָה in the first hemistich is not in construction, but absolute. If so, we may render: "Who setteth the barren woman in a house."

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## PSALM CXIV.

THIS is perhaps the most beautiful of all the Psalms which touch on the early history of Israel. It is certainly the most graphic and the most striking in the boldness of its outlines. The following remarks may perhaps illustrate the conception and plan of the poem.



1. In structure it is singularly perfect. This rests upon the common principle of pairs of verses, and thus we have four strophes, each consisting of two verses; each of these verses, again, consists of two lines, in which the parallelism is carefully preserved.

2. The effect is produced, as in Psalm xxix., not by minute tracing of details, but by the boldness with which certain great features of the history are presented.

3. A singular animation and an almost dramatic force are given to the poem by the beautiful apostrophe in verses 5, 6, and the effect of this is heightened in a remarkable degree by the use of the present tenses. The awe and the trembling of nature are a spectacle on which the poet is looking. The parted sea through which Israel walks as on dry land, the rushing Jordan arrested in its course, the granite cliffs of Sinai shaken to their base — he sees it all, and asks in wonder what it means?

4. Then it is that the truth bursts upon his mind, and the impression of this upon the reader is very finely managed. The name of God, which has been entirely concealed up to this point in the poem (even the possessive pronoun being left without its substantive, "Judah was his sanctuary, Israel was his dominion"), is now only introduced after the apostrophe in verses 5, 6.

"The reason seems evident, and the conduct necessary, for if God had appeared before, there could be no wonder why the mountains should leap and the sea retire; therefore, that this convulsion of nature may be brought in with due surprise, his name is not mentioned till afterward; and then, with a very agreeable turn of thought, God is introduced all at once in all his majesty" (Spectator, No. 461).

We have no clue to guide us to the age of the Psalm, or the occasion for which it was written, except that perhaps the forms in verse 8, which are found in other late Psalms, may be taken to indicate a date after the exile.

1 WHEN Israel went forth out of Egypt,

The house of Jacob from a people of strange language,

2 Judah became <sup>a</sup> his sanctuary,

Israel his dominion.

1, 2. The introduction sets forth at once both the great redemptive act and also the end of the redemption; viz. that God himself might dwell among and rule his people. This sanctifying of the nation, as a nation to himself, took place in the wilderness before the law was given: "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. xix. 6).

A PEOPLE OF STRANGE LANGUAGE;  
lit. "a stammering (i.e. an unintelligible)

- 3 The sea saw and fled,  
Jordan turned backwards ;
- 4 The mountains skipped like rams,  
The hills like young sheep.
- 5 What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleest ;  
Thou Jordan, that thou turnest backwards ?
- 6 Ye mountains, that ye skip like rams ;  
Ye hills, like young sheep ?
- 7 Before the Lord tremble, O earth,  
Before God (the God of) Jacob.
- 8 Who changed <sup>b</sup> the rock into a pool of water,  
The flint-stone into a fountain of waters.

people." Comp. Deut. xxvii. 49 ; Isa. xxviii. 11 ; xxxiii. 19 ; Jer. v. 15 ; LXX, λαοῦ βαρβάρου.

2. HIS SANCTUARY. Comp. Ex. xv. 17, where the promised land is called "the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established."

HIS DOMINION or kingdom ; comp. Num. xxiii. 21. The noun is in the plural, which is here used poetically as a plural of amplification. Comp. xliii. 3 ; xlv. 4 [5] ; lxviii. 35 [36] (where see note).

3. THE SEA SAW, viz. God, whose name and whose presence are still purposely concealed. Comp. lxxvii. 16 [17] ; xcvii. 4 ; Hab. iii. 10. The passage of the Red Sea and of the Jordan are combined, not only as miracles of a similar character, but as marking the beginning and the end of the great deliverance—the escape from Egypt, the entrance into the Promised Land.

4. The reference is probably to the

terrors which accompanied the giving of the law on Sinai (Ex. xix. 18, "and the whole mount quaked greatly"), although these convulsions of nature form a part of every Theophany, or manifestation of God. Comp. xviii. 7 [8] ; lxxvii. 18 [19] ; Hab. iii. ; Isa. lxiv. 1-3. For the figure see Ps. xxix. 6.

8. THE ROCK (*tsûr*), referring to the miracle in Ex. xvii. 6. THE FLINT-STONE (or perhaps "the steep cliff"; LXX, τὴν ἀκρότατον) seems to be placed here poetically for the other characteristic word (*sclâ'*), which marks the scene of the miracle at Kadesh. See notes on lxxviii. 15, 16.

These miracles are selected as the most striking proofs of "God's absolute creative omnipotence, and of the grace which changes death into life." They are, moreover, parallel miracles, like the two mentioned in ver. 3, and thus the poetical effect is heightened.

<sup>a</sup> יהודה "Judah" is here feminine, in accordance with the general principle that *lands* and *nations* are feminine.

<sup>b</sup> יהלך. On the termination see xciii. note.<sup>a</sup> The final Chirek, however, in this instance, is not strictly that of the stat. constr., for the participle here has the article prefixed, and therefore cannot be in construction. But it is one of the instances in which, as has been remarked

in the note referred to, the later language adopted the termination without regard to its original use.

In לְמַעַן, on the other hand, we have a genuine instance of the old termination of the stat. constr. This final Cholem, however, is by no means so widely used as the final Chirek. With the exception of this place, and Num. xxiv. 3, 15, בְּנֵי בְעֵר, it is found only in the phrase תִּירְחוּ אֶרֶץ (or תִּשְׁרְחָה 'ת), which first occurs Gen. i. 24.

## PSALM CXV.

This is evidently one of the later liturgical Psalms. It was probably composed for the service of the second temple, whilst yet the taunts of their heathen adversaries were ringing in the ears of the returned exiles, and whilst yet contempt for the idolatries which they had witnessed in Babylon was fresh in their hearts.

The Psalm opens with a confession of unworthiness, and a prayer that God would vindicate his own honor against the scoff of the heathen (ver. 1, 2).

It exalts him, the invisible, omnipotent, absolutely Supreme Ruler of the universe, and pours contempt upon the idols and their worshippers (ver. 3-8).

It bids all Israel, both priests and people, put their trust in him who is alone worthy of trust, the help and shield of his people (ver. 9-12).

It promises that Jehovah shall give his blessing to them that thus trust in him, and calls upon them in return to give him thanks forever (12-18).

Ewald's conjecture that the Psalm was intended to be sung whilst the sacrifices were offered, and that at verse 12 the voice of the priest declares God's gracious acceptance of the sacrifice, is not improbable. He gives verses 1-11 to the congregation, verses 12-15 to the priest, verses 16-18 to the congregation. But it seems more likely that the change of voices comes in at verse 9, and that, as Tholuck supposes, in each of the verses, 9, 10, 11, the first line was sung as a solo, perhaps by one of the Levites, and the second by the whole choir.

The LXX, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic have strangely enough, and in defiance of all probability, joined this with the preceding Psalm, and then have restored the balance by dividing Psalm cxvi. into two parts. Even in some Hebrew mss. Psalms cxiv. and cxv. are found written as one Psalm. But the very structure of Psalm cxiv., its

beauty and completeness in itself, are sufficient to make us wonder what caprice could have led to such an arrangement.

(*The Congregation.*)

- 1 NOT unto us, O Jehovah, not unto us,  
But unto thy name, give glory,  
Because of thy loving-kindness, because of thy truth.
- 2 Wherefore should the nations say :  
“Where now is their God?”
- 3 But our God is in the heavens ;  
He hath done whatsoever he pleased.
- 4 Their idols are silver and gold,  
The work of men’s hands.

1. NOT UNTO US. The repetition of the words expresses the more vividly the deep sense of unworthiness, the unfeigned humility which claims nothing for itself.

LOVING-KINDNESS . . . TRUTH. The two great characteristic attributes of God, even in the Old Testament; though in contrast with the law as given by Moses, St. John could say, *ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο*, (John i. 17). Both these attributes of God would be assailed if the taunt of the heathen should be allowed to pass unsilenced. It is God’s glory which is at stake. “Deo itaque,” says Calvin, “gratiam suam objiciunt (fideles), deinde fidem, quarum utramque manebant impiae calumniae, si populum quem aeterno foedere sibi devinxerat, et quem adoptaverat gratuita misericordia, frustratus esset.”

2. NOW IS NOT a particle of time, as might be inferred from the rendering of the E. V., but an interjection used in taunt as well as in entreaty, etc.

3. BUT, or “and yet.” See the same use of the conjunction in ii. 6. The answer to the taunt of the heathen, who, seeing no image of Jehovah, mocked at his existence. First, he is *in heaven*, invisible indeed, yet thence ruling the universe; next, *he doeth what he will*, in

fine contrast with the utter impotence of the idols of the heathen. The last expression denotes both God’s almighty power and his absolute freedom. This, truthfully accepted, does away with all *a priori* objections to miracles.

4. SILVER AND GOLD, i.e. however costly the material, this adds no real value to the image; it is, after all, man’s workmanship. This seems to be the thought: otherwise the Psalmist would have said “wood and stone” rather than “silver and gold.” This agrees also with what follows. “*Though* they may be of costly materials, they are but of human workmanship; *though* they may have the form and members of man, they are lifeless.” DeWette remarks that “the Jew, who was accustomed to see no image of the Deity, fell into the error (often perhaps purposely) of confounding the idols of the heathen with the gods whom they represented, and of which they were only the symbols. The Israelite of the ten tribes, who had his symbols of Jehovah himself, could not have made such a mistake.” But it may be replied, in the first place, that the Jew would not have admitted that the gods had any real existence; they were as much the creatures of man’s imagination as the idols were of his art. In the next place, the heathen worship

- 5 A mouth have they, but they speak not ;  
 Eyes have they, but they do not see.
- 6 They have ears, but they hear not ;  
 A nose have they, but they do not smell.
- 7 They have hands, but they handle not ;  
 Feet have they, but they walk not ;  
 They do not utter any sound with their throat.
- 8 Like unto them are they that make them,  
 Every one who putteth his trust in them.

itself was not careful to maintain the difference between the symbol and the thing symbolized, and the great mass of worshippers probably drew no distinction between them. "Non habent Siculi deos ad quos precentur," says Cicero. On which Calvin remarks: "Barbare hoc diceret, nisi hæc infixæ fuisset opinio vulgi animis, deorum coelestium figuras sibi ante oculos versari in aere, vel argento, vel marmore." Even the refined teaching of the Church of Rome does not save the ignorant and the unlettered from absolute idolatry. Augustine has here some admirable remarks on idol-worship, and the various attempts made to distinguish between the image and the deity it represented. But he concedes the real existence of the gods as demons: "Aliis itaque locis et contra ista divinæ Literæ vigilant ne quisquam dicat, cum irrisa fuerint simulacra, Non hoc visibile colo, sed numen quod illic invisibiliter habitat. Ipsa ergo numina in alio psalmo eadem Scriptura sic damnat: *Quoniam dii gentium, inquit, daemonia; Dominus autem caelos fecit. Dicit et Apostolus: Non quod idolum sit aliquid, sed quoniam quæ immolant gentes, demoniis immolant, et non Deo,*" etc. The whole passage is well worth reading as a masterly analysis of idol-worship. We have the same description of these dumb and deaf and dead gods in cxxxv. 15-18, probably borrowed from this passage. Comp. Dent. iv. 28, and the sarcastic picture in Isa. xlv. 9-20.

5. A MOUTH. The picture is of a single image.

7. THEY HAVE HANDS; lit. "As for their hands, they handle not (with them); As for their feet, they do not walk (therewith:)" or, "with their hands they handle not; with their feet they walk not." The construction is changed, and we have nominative absolutes, followed by the conjunction introducing the apodosis. See for the same construction Gen. xxii. 24; Prov. xxiii. 24; Job xxxvi. 26.

UTTER ANY SOUND. The verb may mean only to *speak*, as in xxxvii. 30; Prov. viii. 7; but the rendering in the text approaches more nearly to the root-signification of the word, "do not utter even an inarticulate sound." So Abenezra and Kimchi.

8. LIKE UNTO THEM. So true it is, not only that as is man so is his god, but the reverse also, as is the god so is his worshipper. Comp. Isa. xlv. 19, where what is elsewhere said of the idols is said of the worshippers, that they are "emptiness" (*tôlâ*); and observe the use of the verb "to become vain" (2 Kings xvii. 15; Jer. ii. 5), applied in like manner to idolaters. They who, turning away from God's witness of himself in the visible creation, worshipped the creature rather than the Creator, received in themselves the sentence of their own degradation, "Their foolish heart became darkened." They became blind and deaf and dumb and dead, like the idols they set up to worship.

ARE, or "become." By the LXX, Jerome, and the Syriac the verb is ren-

(*Levites and Choir.*)

- 9 O Israel, trust in Jehovah!  
 He is their help and their shield.
- 10 O house of Aaron, trust ye in Jehovah!  
 He is their help and their shield.
- 11 Ye that fear Jehovah, trust in Jehovah!  
 He is their help and their shield.

(*The Priest.*)

- 12 Jehovah (who) hath been mindful of us will bless —  
 He will bless the house of Israel,  
 He will bless the house of Aaron.
- 13 He will bless them that fear Jehovah,  
 Both small and great.
- 14 Jehovah increase you more and more,  
 You and your children!

dered as an optative, "May they become," etc., which, however, is less forcible.

9. The change in the strain of the Psalm here must unquestionably have been accompanied by a change in the music. And it appears highly probable, as has been said, that the first line of this and the two following verses was sung as a solo — by some one of the Levites, — and the second line, or refrain, which occurs in each verse, "He is their help and their shield," by the choir.

TRUST IN JEHOVAH, in contrast with the "trust" of the previous verse. Trust in Jehovah, for he is not like the idols, he is the living God, "the help and the shield" (comp. xxxiii. 20) of them that trust in him. Trust in Jehovah, for he *hath been* mindful of us in times past, he *will* bless us in time to come (ver. 12). The threefold division — Israel, house of Aaron, they that fear Jehovah — is the same as in exviii. 2, 3, 4. In cxxxv. the house of Levi is added.

10. First the people at large are ex-

horted to this trust, then the priests — because to them was confided the worship of Jehovah, with them it rested to keep it pure, and they might naturally be expected to lead the people in the path of holy trust.

11. YE THAT FEAR JEHOVAH. This has been understood of proselytes of the gate, in accordance with the later Jewish and New Test. usage, as in the Acts, *σεβόμενοι τὸν Θεόν*, or simply *σεβόμενοι*. Comp. Acts xiii. 43, 50. But in other places in the Psalms the phrase occurs of all Israel; see xxii. 23 [24]; ciii. 11, 13, 17.

12. (WHO) HATH BEEN MINDFUL . . . WILL BLESS. So the LXX, *μνησθείς*, and Jerome recordatus, and so Aben-Ezra takes זכרתי as a relative. The past is the pledge of the future. Again the same three classes are mentioned as in the three preceding verses. It seems probable that this blessing, thus promised (ver. 12, 13) and thus supplicated (ver. 14, 15), was sung, as Ewald conjectures, by the priest. But see p. 313.

14. INCREASE YOU. Comp. Gen. xxx. 24; Deut. i. 11; 2 Sam. xxiv. 3.

15 Blessed be ye of Jehovah,  
The Maker of heaven and earth.

(*The Congregation.*)

16 The heavens are Jehovah's heavens ;  
But the earth he hath given to the children of men.  
17 The dead praise not Jah,  
Neither all they that go down into silence ;  
18 But *we* will bless Jah  
From henceforth even forever,  
Hallelujah !

15. MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. The title has reference to the impotent idols before described.

16. The words in this and in the next verse are simple enough, but their connection with the rest of the Psalm is not very clear. Perhaps it may be traced thus : In ver. 15 Jehovah is said to have made heaven and earth. Then in ver. 16 these are distributed : heaven is his abode ; earth is the abode of man. But the mention of heaven and earth suggests

the thought of another region, that unseen world below, where none can praise God as they do on this fair earth which he has given to the children of men. But what the dead cannot do, *we* will do, — we to whom our God has given the earth, we to whom he has been a help and a shield, we whom he has blessed and will bless, we, with thankful hearts, will never cease to show forth his praise.

17. Comp. cxviii. 17 ; Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19.

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## PSALM CXVI.

IN this Psalm one who has been in peril of death (ver. 3, 9, 15) gives thanks to God with a full heart for the deliverance which has been vouchsafed to him. Beginning with the expression of a love to God called forth by his mercy, the Psalmist then passes in review all God's goodness, till he feels that it surpasses infinitely not only all his deserts, but all adequate power of acknowledgment (ver. 12) ; and he concludes by declaring that, in the most public manner, before the assembled congregation, he will confess how great the debt he owes, and bind himself solemnly to the service of Jehovah.

The Psalm is evidence of the truth and depth of the religious life in individuals after the return from the exile ; for there can be little doubt that it must be assigned to that period. Many words and turns of phrases remind us of earlier Psalms, and especially of the Psalms of David. His words must have laid hold in no common degree of

the hearts of those who were heirs of his faith, and have sustained them in times of sorrow and suffering; and nothing would be more natural than that later poets should echo his strains, and mingle his words with their own when they poured forth their prayers and praises before God.

- 1 I LOVE (him) because Jehovah heareth  
My voice and my supplications,
- 2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me,  
Therefore as long as I live will I call (upon him).
- 3 The cords of death compassed me,  
And the pains <sup>a</sup> of the unseen world gat hold upon me;  
I found distress and sorrow:
- 4 Then I called upon the name of Jehovah,  
“O Jehovah, I beseech thee,<sup>b</sup> deliver my soul.”
- 5 Gracious is Jehovah and righteous;  
Yea, our God showeth tender compassion.
- 6 Jehovah preserveth the simple:  
I was in misery and he saved <sup>c</sup> me.

1. I LOVE. The verb stands alone without any expressed object, as if the full heart needed not to express it. The object appears as subject in the next clause, from which it is readily supplied: “I love Jehovah, for he heareth,” etc. The writer is fond of this pregnant use of the verb without an object expressed. See ver. 2, “I call,” and ver. 10, “I believe.” For the sentiment, comp. xviii. 1 [2], “Tenderly do I love thee.” The rendering, “I am well pleased that,” etc. has no support in usage. On this first verse Augustine beautifully says: “Cantet hoc anima quae peregrinatur a Domino, cantet hoc ovis illa quae erraverat, cantet hoc filius ille qui mortuus fuerat et revixit, perierat et inventus est; cantet hoc anima nostra, fratres et filii carissimi.”

2. AS LONG AS I LIVE; lit. “in my days.” The phrase, “in my days will I call,” is certainly hard, and 2 Kings xx. 19 (Isa. xxxix. 8), to which Delitzsch refers, is not a real parallel.

Still, as the LXX and Jerome evidently had the reading, it is probably the true one, and we need not adopt any of the conjectural emendations which have been proposed.

3. The later Psalmists would naturally often use David's words as the best expression of their own feelings, especially in seasons of peril and sorrow. See xviii. 1-6 [2-7].

GAT HOLD UPON; lit. “found,” as in exix. 143.

5. Instead of saying directly “Jehovah answered me,” he magnifies those attributes of God which from the days of his wonderful self-revelation to Moses (Ex. xxxiv. 6), had been the joy and consolation of every tried and trusting heart. See introduction to ciii. The epithet “righteous” is added here, as in cxii. 4.

6. THE SIMPLE. LXX, τὰ νήπια. The very simplicity which lays them most readily open to attack is itself an appeal for protection to Him who “showeth tender compassion.”



- 7 Return unto thy rest,<sup>d</sup> O my soul,  
 For Jehovah hath dealt bountifully with thee.
- 8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death,  
 Mine eye from tears,  
 My foot from stumbling.
- 9 I will walk before Jehovah  
 In the land of the living.
- 10 I believe;—for I must speak:  
 I was greatly afflicted.
- 11 I said in my confusion,  
 “All men are liars.”
- 12 How shall I repay unto Jehovah  
 All his bountiful dealings<sup>e</sup> with me?
- 13 I will take the cup of salvation,  
 And call on the name of Jehovah.

7. The deliverance vouchsafed in answer to prayer stills the tumult of the soul. The REST is the rest of confidence in God.

9. THE LAND OF THE LIVING; lit. “the lands,” but the plural may be only poetic amplification. In xxvii. 13 (comp. lvi. 13 [14]), we have the singular.

10. The E. V., “I believed, therefore have I spoken,” follows the LXX, ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα, a rendering which is also adopted by St. Paul (2 Cor. iv. 13), in illustration of the truth that a living faith in the heart will utter its convictions with the mouth. But the Hebrew will not admit of such a rendering. The following are possible interpretations: (1) “I believe when I speak,” i.e. when I break forth into the complaint which follows in the next clause. For this use of the verb *speaks*, comp. xxxix. 3 [4] (so Hupfeld). Or (2), “I believe,”—emphatic, i.e. I do believe, I have learned trust in God by painful experience—“for I must speak”—I must confess it, “I even I (pron. emphatic) was greatly afflicted; I myself (pron. emphatic as before) said,” etc. The latter explanation seems, on the whole, preferable, as it gives the due

prominence to the repeated pronoun, and moreover a satisfactory sense is obtained. Kay renders: “I believed in that I spake.” In all other instances where the Hiph. of אָמַן is followed by אֲנִי the subject of the verb in the subordinate clause is different from that of the principal clause. The Psalmist declares that he *stays himself* upon God (“I believe”), for he had looked to himself, and there had seen nothing but weakness; he had looked to other men, and found them all deceitful, treacherous as a broken reed. Comp. lx. 11 [13]; lxii. 9 [10]; cxviii. 8, 9. There is an allusion to this passage in Rom. iii. 4.

11. The first member is the same as in xxxi. 22 [23].

13. THE CUP. Many see in the word an allusion to the “cup of blessing” at the paschal meal (Matt. xxvi. 27), and this would accord with the sacrificial language of ver. 14, 17. It is true there is no evidence of any such custom at the celebration of the Passover in the Old Test.; but as the custom existed in our Lord’s time, the only question is as to the *time* of its introduction. If it was introduced shortly after the exile, this Psalm may very well allude to it.

- 14 My vows unto Jehovah will I pay,  
 Yea, in the presence of<sup>f</sup> all his people let me (pay them).
- 15 Precious in the sight of Jehovah  
 Is the death of his beloved.
- 16 I beseech thee, O Jehovah — for I am thy servant,  
 I am thy servant, the son of thine handmaid;  
 Thou hast loosed my bonds.<sup>g</sup>
- 17 I will sacrifice unto thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving,  
 And I will call upon the name of Jehovah.
- 18 My vows will I pay unto Jehovah,  
 Yea, in the presence of all his people let me (pay them),
- 19 In the courts of Jehovah's house,  
 In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem!  
 Hallelujah!

Others understand by "the cup," in a figurative sense, the portion allotted to man, whether of prosperity, as in xvi. 5 [6]; xxiii. 5, or of adversity, as in xi. 6 [7]; lxxv. 8 [9]. So the Arabs speak of "the cup of death," "the cup of love," etc. Then the meaning of the verse will be, "I will accept thankfully and with devout acknowledgment the blessings which God gives me as my portion."

14. LET ME (PAY THEM). I have endeavored thus to render here, and in ver. 18 (the refrain), the interjection

which is used in beseeching. It is a part of the same interjection which occurs in ver. 4 and 16, and which is there rendered "I beseech thee." A fondness for these forms is characteristic of the Psalm.

15. PRECIOUS . . . IS THE DEATH, i.e. it is no light thing in the sight of God that his servants should perish. The more obvious form of expression occurs lxxii. 14, "precious is their blood in his eyes."

16. SON OF THINE HANDMAID. Cf. lxxxvi. 16; 2 Tim. i. 5.

<sup>a</sup> מְצַרִּי; a later word, which occurs besides in the sing. הַמְצַרִּי, cxviii. 5, and in the plur. הַמְצַרִּים, Lam. i. 3. In these other passages it means *narrowness, straitness*, as of a narrow *place*, whereas here an abstract sense is required. The word does not also seem very suitable to שְׂאוֹל. In the original passage הַבְּלִי is the word employed, and hence Hupfeld would read here מְצַרִּי, *nets*, as in Job xix. 6; Eccl. vii. 26.

<sup>b</sup> אָנָּה with ה, as in five other places, instead of א, compounded of אָנָּה and נָּה. It is accentuated both Milel and Milra. Properly speaking, in beseeching it is *aná*, Milra; in asking questions, *ánah* Milel.

<sup>c</sup> רְהוּשֵׁשׁ. For this form, with the ה retained, see lxxxix. 5 [6].

<sup>d</sup> מְנוּחָתִי. The plur. masc. occurs only here, the plur. fem. in two other places instead of the sing. The noun means primarily *a resting-*

*place*, and then *rest* (xxiii. 2). The plur. is used to denote *rest in its fulness*. On the form of the fem. suffix in this word, and in  $\text{קָלְיָדִי}$  in the same verse, and again in  $\text{בְּהוֹיָבְרִי}$ , ver. 19, see on ciii. note <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>e</sup>  $\text{הַגְּמֻלָּהִי}$ . This Aramaic plural suffix occurs only here in Biblical Hebrew (Ges. § 91, 2, Obs. 2).

<sup>f</sup>  $\text{נִגְדָה}$ . The form seems adapted to the following  $\text{נָא}$ , to express the inward earnestness of wish; see the same form ver. 18, and again the use of  $\text{נָא}$ , ver. 16. It is more difficult to account for the termination *-ah* in  $\text{הַמְּוֹרָה}$ , ver. 15, which, as an accusative termination, can have no force. Delitzsch calls it "a pathetic form" for  $\text{מָוֶרָה}$ , but the fondness for this termination is a peculiarity of the writer.

<sup>g</sup>  $\text{לְמוֹסְרֵי}$ . The prep.  $\text{לְ}$  instead of the accus. after the trans. verb is an Aramaic construction, and one of the signs of the later date of the Psalm.

## PSALM CXVII.

THIS short Psalm may have been a doxology intended to be sung after other Psalms, or perhaps at the beginning or end of the temple service. In many mss. and editions it is joined with the following Psalm, but without any sufficient reason.

- 1 O PRAISE Jehovah, all ye nations,  
Laud him, all ye peoples! <sup>a</sup>
- 2 For his loving-kindness is mightily shown towards us,  
And the truth of Jehovah (is) forever.  
Hallelujah!

2. LOVING-KINDNESS . . . TRUTH. These two great attributes of God (see on cxv. 1), as manifested to Israel, "towards us," are to be the subject of praise for the heathen, an indication of those wider sympathies which appear to have manifested themselves after the exile. Hence the first verse is quoted

by St. Paul, Rom. xv. 11, together with Deut. xxxii. 43, "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people," as showing that in the purpose of God the Gentiles were destined to be partakers, together with the Jews, of his mercy in Christ.

IS MIGHTILY SHOWN. Comp. ciii. 11.

<sup>a</sup>  $\text{אֲמִים}$ . The only instance of this form in Biblical Hebrew. Elsewhere, either  $\text{אֲמוֹת}$  (Gen. xxv. 16; Num. xxv. 15), or more commonly  $\text{לְאֻמִּים}$ .

## PSALM CXVIII.

It is evident that this Psalm was designed to be sung in the temple worship, and was composed for some festal occasion. Its liturgical character is shown by the formula with which it opens and closes, "O give thanks to Jehovah," etc.; by the introduction of different voices, which may be inferred in verse 2-4; and by the frequent repetition of certain lines as a refrain in the former half of the Psalm, which can leave little doubt that it was constructed with a view to antiphonal singing. The allusions in the latter part, and especially verse 24, "This the day which Jehovah hath made," etc., point to some great festival as the occasion for which it was written. Its general character, and the many passages in it borrowed from earlier writers, render it probable that it is one of the later Psalms, and we may assume that it was composed after the return from the captivity.

Four different occasions have been suggested for which it might have been written :

1. The first celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month of the first year of the return, when nothing but the altar had, as yet, been erected for the worship of God, Ezra iii. 1-4. (Ewald.)

2. The laying of the foundation-stone of the second temple in the second month of the second year, Ezra iii. 8-13. (Hensenberg.)

3. The completion and consecration of the temple in the twelfth month of the seventh year of Darius, Ezra vi. 15-18. (Delitzsch.)

4. The extraordinary celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles after the completion of the second temple, recorded in Neh. viii. 13-18. (Stier.)

The following conclusions may help us to decide :

1. The use of the Psalm in the ritual of the second temple leads to the conclusion that it was composed originally for the Feast of Tabernacles. For the words of the twenty-fifth verse were sung during that feast, when the altar of burnt-offering was solemnly compassed; that is, once on each of the first six days of the feast, and seven times on the seventh day. This seventh day was called "the great *Hosannah*" (*Save now*, ver. 25); and not only the prayers for the feast, but even the branches of trees, including the myrtles which were attached to the palm-branch (*Lulab*), were called "*Hosannas*" (*הוֹשַׁנּוֹת*). Further, although the Psalm itself contains no direct allusion to any of the national feasts, yet the use of the word "tents" in verse 15 at least accords very well with the Feast of Tabernacles.

2. In the next place, it seems equally clear that the Psalm supposes the completion of the temple. The language of verses 19, 20, "Open to me the gates of righteousness," "This is the gate of Jehovah," and the figure employed in verse 22, "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head stone of the corner," cannot be easily explained on any other supposition. The allusion in verses 8-12 to the deceitfulness of human help and the favor of princes, as well as to the active interference of troublesome enemies, are exactly in accordance with all that we read of the circumstances connected with the rebuilding of the temple. The most probable conclusion therefore is, that the Psalm was composed for the first celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, after the completion of the second temple (Neh. viii.).

Mr. Plumptre, who, like Ewald, supposes the Psalm to have been originally composed for the first Feast of Tabernacles after the return, suggest that it may subsequently have been used with adaptations at the later great gatherings of the people. He thus, in fact, combines the different views which have been held as to the occasion for which the Psalm was written. He thinks it may possibly have been written by one of the two prophets of that time, and draws attention to the prominence in Zechariah of parables and illustrations drawn from the builder's work: the "stone" of iii. 9; iv. 7; the "house" and "timber" of v. 4, 11; the "line" of i. 16; the "carpenters" of i. 20; the "measuring-line for the walls of Jerusalem" of ii. 1; the "plummet" in the hand of Zerubbabel of iv. 10. The prophet lives, as it were, among the works of the rising temple" (*Biblical Studies*, p. 274). Comp. verses 19 and 22 of the Psalm.

Ewald distributes the Psalm between different voices, giving verses 1-4 to the choir, verses 5-23 to the leader of the choir, verses 24, 25 to the choir, verses 26, 27 to the priest, verse 28 to the leader of the choir, verse 29 to the choir. But, as Delitzsch observes, the priest took no part in the singing of the service; they blew with the trumpets, but the singers and players on the stringed and other instruments of music were Levites. The Psalm, therefore, should be distributed between the Levites and the congregation, the lines containing the refrains being probably sung antiphonally by the latter. Delitzsch thinks it more certain that the Psalm consists of two parts, the first of which, verses 1-19, was sung by the festal procession, led by priests and Levites, on the way to the temple; the second, verses 20-27, by the Levites, who received the procession at the temple gate. Finally, verse 28 would be the reponse of those who had just reached the

temple, and verse 29 would be sung by all, both Levites and those who formed the procession.

A similar arrangement of the Psalm is suggested in the Midrash (*Shocher tobh*), but there "the men of Judah" form the procession, which is received by "the men of Jerusalem." In *Pesachim* 119 *a* the Psalm is assumed to be intended for antiphonal singing.

The congregation speak of themselves sometimes in the singular, sometimes in the plural; but it is not necessary to assume that in the former case the words were always sung by a single voice and in the latter by many. It is more probable that in some portions of the Psalm, although it was intended for public worship, the personal feelings of the writer were uppermost. There is the same change, for instance, in the "Te Deum," and such variations are perfectly natural. On the other hand, we may take it for granted, that in the first four verses the lines would be sung antiphonally, the precentor, perhaps singing the first line of each verse, and the choir taking up the refrain, "For his loving-kindness," etc.

- 1 O GIVE thanks to Jehovah, for he is good,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 2 Let Israel now say,  
That his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 3 Let the house of Aaron now say,  
That his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 4 Let them now that fear Jehovah say,  
That his loving-kindness (endureth) for ever.
- 5 Out of (my) straitness I called upon Jah,  
Jah answered <sup>a</sup> me (and set me) in a large place.
- 6 Jehovah is on my side, I am not afraid;  
What can man do unto me?
- 7 Jehovah is on my side, to help me,  
Therefore I shall see my desire upon them that hate me.

1-4. Comp. Ezra iii. 11, where the same refrain is found as the burden of the psalmody which was sung at the laying of the foundations of the second temple. This is so far in favor of Hengstenberg's view as to the occasion on which the Psalm was first sung. See introduction to the Psalm.

2. THAT, or rather "for," as in ver. 1.

It is the same participle. The words "for his loving-kindness endureth for ever," are in fact a quotation, a refrain such as Jehoshaphat's singers were directed to sing, 2 Chron. xxv. 21.

6. Borrowed from lvi. 9, 11 [10, 12].

7. TO HELP ME, or "as my helper." Comp. liv. 4 [6], where see note. Ex. xviii. 4.

- 8 It is better to find refuge in Jehovah,  
Than to put any trust in man :
- 9 It is better to find refuge in Jehovah,  
Than to put any trust in princes.
- 10 All nations compassed me about ;  
In the name of Jehovah will I cut them off.<sup>b</sup>
- 11 They compassed me about, yea, they compassed me about ;  
But in the name of Jehovah will I cut them off.
- 12 They compassed me about like bees,  
They were extinguished like a fire of thorns ;  
In the name of Jehovah will I cut them off.
- 13 Thou didst thrust sore at me, that I might fall.<sup>c</sup>  
But Jehovah helped me.
- 14 Jah is my strength and my song ;<sup>d</sup>  
And he is become my salvation.
- 15 The voice of joyous song and salvation  
Is in the tents of the righteous :  
The right hand of Jehovah doeth valiantly.
- 16 The right hand of Jehovah is exalted,<sup>e</sup>  
The right hand of Jehovah doeth valiantly.

8, 9. See lxii., xxxiii. 16-19, and comp. cxlvi. 3. The allusion is probably to the hostility of the Samaritans and the Persian satraps during the building of the temple. The Jews had learned by painful experience how little they could trust in princes, for the work which had been begun under Cyrus had been threatened under Cambyses, and had been suspended under the pseudo-Smerdis, and and it was not till Darius came to the throne that they were allowed to resume it (Ezra iv.).

10. ALL NATIONS, i.e. the neighboring tribes, who harassed the returning exiles, the four times repeated "compassed me about" marking their close and pertinacious hostility.

12. LIKE BEES. See the same figure in Deut. i. 44.

WERE EXTINGUISHED. Others "they blazed up" (so Leaser), the Pael being taken here in the privative sense which

the Piel sometimes has, as, for instance, in li. 7 [9]; Isa. v. 2. So the LXX, *ἐξεκαύθησαν ὡς πῦρ ἐν ἀκάνθαις*. Vulg. *exarserunt*.

FIRE OF THORNS, quickly blazing up and as quickly dying out. Comp. lviii. 9 [10].

13. THOU DIDST THRUST SORE, or perhaps "Thou didst *indeed* thrust, etc., . . . *but*," for the emphasis in the repetition of the verb (infin. absol.) belongs, as Hupfeld remarks, not merely to the idea contained in the verb, but rather to the whole sentence, and implies an opposition, as here, in what follows. The words are an apostrophe to the enemy, here addressed as an individual.

14. In the first line there is a reminiscence of Israel's song of triumph at the Red Sea, Ex. xv. 2 (comp. Isa. xii. 2).

15. TENTS. "We can imagine with what special force the words [of this verse] would come to those who then

- 17 I shall not die but live,  
 And I shall tell forth the works of Jah.
- 18 Jah hath chastened me sore,  
 But he hath not given me over unto death.
- 19 Open to me the gates of righteousness,  
 I will enter into them, I will give thanks to Jah.
- 20 This is the gate of Jehovah;  
 The righteous shall enter into it.
- 21 I will give thanks unto thee, for thou hast answered me,  
 And art become my salvation.
- 22 A stone which the builders rejected  
 Is become the head (stone) of the corner.

were, or had but recently been, keeping their Feast of Tabernacles, dwelling in the temporary huts which they constructed of the branches of the olive and the fir-tree, the myrtle and the palm, and rejoicing in the great deliverance which God had given them." — Plumptre, *Biblical Studies*, pp. 274, 275.

17. "Ad se redit, laetusque exclamat," remarks Rosenmüller. And certainly the personal feeling of the Psalmist seems here to predominate, though the Psalm is so manifestly liturgical, and therefore intended to represent the feelings of the congregation, that the personal experience includes that of the nation at large. Each one of those redeemed captives may take up the words and utter them as his own, and the whole nation as one man may adopt them also. Nationally and individually they are alike true.

19. THE GATES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. The gates of the temple are so called with reference to the service of God, and the character he requires of his worshippers. This is evident from the next verse, "The *righteous* shall enter into it." Comp. v. 4 [5], "Evil cannot dwell with thee," i.e. in thy house; xv. 1, 2, "Who may dwell on thy holy mountain? He that walketh perfectly and worketh *righteousness*," etc. See also xxiv. 3-6. What David had declared to be the necessary condition of all ac-

ceptable worship in Zion was felt to be perpetually true. The demand "open to me," may be understood either (1) literally, in which case it is best explained as the words of the singers in the festal procession when they reach the temple gates (see introduction to the Psalm); or (2) figuratively, as implying the readiness and alacrity with which the Psalmist will go to the house of God, there to offer his sacrifices and to utter his thanksgivings. Comp. Isa. xxvi. 2: "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation may enter in," where righteousness is made the condition of entrance into "the strong city," or God's building, as here into the holy place

22. A STONE. The imagery is drawn obviously from the building of the temple. "Some incident in the progress of the works had probably served as the starting-point of the parable. Some stone—a fragment, we may conjecture, of the old temple, rescued from its ruins—had seemed to the architects unfit for the work of binding together the two walls that met at right angles to each other. They would have preferred some new blocks of their own fashioning. But the priests, it may be, more conversant with the traditions of the temple, knew that that was the right place for it, and that no other stone would answer half as well. The trial



- 23 This is Jehovah's doing,  
It is marvellous in our eyes.<sup>f</sup>
- 24 This is the day which Jehovah hath made,  
Let us exult and be glad in it.
- 25 We beseech thee, O Jehovah, save now,  
We beseech thee, O Jehovah, send now prosperity.

was made, and the issue answered their expectations. Could they fail to see that this was a type and figure of what was then passing in the history of their nation? Israel had been rejected by the builders of this world's empire, and seemed now about to be once more 'the head of the corner'" (*Biblical Studies*, p. 275). They had been despised by their heathen masters, but now, by the good hand of their God upon them, they had been lifted into a place of honor. They, rejected of men, were chosen of God as a chief stone of that new spiritual building which Jehovah was about to erect; the temple of the world, the foundation of which was to be laid in Zion. In Matt. xxi. 42-44 (Mark xii. 10, 11; Luke xx. 17), our Lord applies the words of this and the next verse to himself. The quotation was, it would seem, purposely taken from the same Psalm from which the multitude had just before taken their words of salutation (see on ver. 25, 26), as they went forth to meet him and conduct him in triumph into Jerusalem. But there is more than an application of the words. Israel is not only a figure of Christ; there is an organic unity between Him and them. Whatever, therefore, is true of Israel in a lower sense, is true in its highest sense of Christ. Is Israel God's "first-born son?" the name in its fulfilment belongs to Christ (Matt. ii. 15); if Israel is "the servant of Jehovah," he is so only as imperfectly representing him who said, "My meat is to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish his work." If Israel is the rejected stone made the head of the corner, this is far truer of him who was indeed rejected of men, but chosen of God and precious; the corner-stone of the one

great living temple of the redeemed, whether Jews or Gentiles. (Comp. Eph. ii. 20). See the use of the same figure in its application to our Lord by St. Peter, Acts iv. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 7. The passage which forms the connecting link between this Psalm and the N. T. quotations is Isa. xxviii. 16, "Behold, it is I who have laid securely in Zion a stone, a tried, precious corner-stone, most securely laid: he that believeth (i.e. *resteth thereon*) shall not flee (through fear of any evil)." In this passage the Messianic reference is still more direct, even if we suppose a primary reference to the house of David. (It is interpreted as Messianic both by the Targum, and amongst the Rabbinical commentators, by Rashi). In marked contrast with this, it is said of Babylon, Jer. li. 26, "They shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for a foundation."

23. The change in Israel's destiny, the restoration to their land, the rebuilding of their temple, the future that was opening before them — these things are a miracle; Jehovah's hand alone could have accomplished it. Comp. Josh. xi. 20.

24. THIS IS THE DAY, i.e. perhaps the great day of festival with reference to which the Psalm was composed. It is possible, however, that this verse is rather to be connected with the previous verse, so that "the day" is not the feast-day, but the day (the time) on which Jehovah had wrought for Israel: "This is Jehovah's doing . . . this is the day which he hath made." The prayer of the next verse falls in best with the latter interpretation.

25. WE BESEECH THEE. Comp. cxvi 4, 16.

- 26 Blessed be he that cometh in the name of Jehovah,  
 We have blessed you from the house of Jehovah.
- 27 Jehovah is God, and he showeth us light ;  
 Bind the sacrifice with cords,  
 Even unto the horns of the altar.
- 28 Thou art my God, and I will give thee thanks,  
 (Thou art) my God, (and) I will exalt thee.
- 29 O give thanks to Jehovah, for he is good,  
 For his loving-kindness (endureth) for ever.

SAVE NOW, or rather, "Save, I pray" (*Hosanna*). The particle of entreaty is repeated in each member of this verse, so that altogether it occurs four times, as if to mark the earnestness of the petition. The English word "now" is not, therefore, a particle of time, but a particle of entreaty, as in Eccl. xii. 1, "Remember now thy Creator," i.e. "Remember, I beseech thee, thy Creator." With this word "*Hosanna*," and words from the next verse, "Blessed be he that cometh," etc., the multitude welcomed Jesus as the Messiah, the Psalm being perhaps already recognized as a Messianic Psalm. According to the Midrash, in the words of ver. 26 the people of Jerusalem welcomed the caravans of pilgrims coming up to the feast.

26. According to the accents the rendering would be, "Blessed in the name of Jehovah be he that cometh," the formula being the same as in the priestly blessing, Num. vi. 27; Deut. xxi. 5; 2 Sam. vi. 18. Comp. Ps. cxxix. 8.

FROM THE HOUSE OF JEHOVAH, the priests standing there to bless those who entered.

27. SHOWETH US LIGHT, in allusion to the priestly blessing, "Jehovah make his face *shine* (lighten, the same verb as here) upon thee." Comp. iv. 6 [7].

THE SACRIFICE. The word commonly denotes *the feast*; here, in Ex. xxiii. 18; Mal. ii. 3, *the victim* offered at the feast. The E. V. gives this sense in Isa. xxix. 11.

UNTO THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR.

The expression is apparently a pregnant one, and the sense is, "Bind the victim with cords till it is sacrificed, and its blood sprinkled on the horns of the altar." Delitzsch, on the other hand, renders "as far as the horns of the altar." Supposing the Psalm to have been written for the dedication of the second temple, he refers to Ezra vi. 17, where mention is made of the vast number of animals slaughtered on the occasion; hence, he explains that the victims (taking the word *sacrifice* in a collective sense) were so numerous that the whole court of the priests was crowded with them, and that they reached as far as the horns of the altar. "The meaning is," he says, "bring your heatombs and have them ready for sacrifice." But on this interpretation there is nothing appropriate in the mention of *the horns* of the altar. These have always a reference to the blood of the sacrifice. Luther has "deck the feast with garlands (or boughs)," following the LXX, *συστήσασθε ἑορτήν ἐν τοῖς πυκάζουσιν*. Symm. has *συνδήσατε ἐν πανηγύρει πυκάζματα*, and Jerome *frequentate solennitatem in frondosis* — all renderings which imply a belief that the Psalm was intended for the Feast of Tabernacles. As regards this rendering, the word translated in the text *cords* may mean *thick boughs*, *πυκάζματα* (see Ezek. xix. 11; xxxi. 3, 4); but the verb *bind* cannot mean *deck* or *wreath*.

<sup>a</sup> מְבָרַךְ. This (and not מְבָרַךְ) is the usual vocalization, whether in pause or not; comp. 1 Sam. xxviii. 15, where it stands with *Munach*.

Baer says here that קָנַי is "with *Rebia Mugrash*, and the *Nun* has *Kamets* according to the best mss." The construction with בְּמִרְחֹב is an instance of what is called the *constructio praeagnans*. Comp. lxxiv. 7; 2 Sam. xviii. 19; Jer. xli. 7. Symm., ἐπὶ κούσέ μου εἰς εὐρυχωρίαν.

According to the Masora הָּ is not a separate word, but we are to read בְּמִרְחֹבְהָ, this being one of several instances in which the final syllable הָּ merely intensifies the form of the word, and the ה is expressly said to be without Mappik. Cf. Josh. xv. 28; 2 Sam. xii. 25; Jer. ii. 31; 1 Chron. iv. 18 (bis); viii. 24, 27; Song of Sol. i. 7; viii. 6, and see note on הללויה, Ps. civ. 35.

<sup>b</sup> אָמַרְלָם. Hiphil (only here) of מוּל, which means elsewhere to *circumcise*, in Kal and Niphal. Hengst. would retain the signification here, as if the victory over the heathen, "the uncircumcised," were described under the figure of a compulsory circumcision. Such a form of expression does occur in the later Jewish history (Joseph. *Arch.* xiii. 9, 1, 11, 3). Compare also the allusions in Gal. v. 12, Phil. iii. 2, and the forcible circumcision as a token of victory, 1 Sam. xviii. 25; 2 Sam. iii. 14. But it is better to give to the Hiph. the more general meaning *to cut off*, which is found in the Pilel, xc. 6, and in the Hith-pael, lviii. 8. Hupfeld would read אָמַרְלָם (from מוּל *sustinere*), "I will repel them," in accordance with the rendering of the LXX, ἠμυνάμενον.

As regards the punctuation, the correct texts of Nurzi, Heydenheim, and others, have אָמַרְלָם, and so Gesen. would read, the Pathach in pause being the representative of the Tsere. Delitzsch observes that such a change of vowel is remarkable, and he would account for it by supposing that, in such cases, as the vowel is already long and cannot be lengthened, it is sharpened (pointed) instead.

The affirmative כִּי stands before this verb (instead of at the beginning of the sentence), as in cxxviii. 2. Compare the position of אֵם, lxvi. 18. Its use may be explained by an ellipse = "know that," "be sure that," as in an oath, 1 Sam. xiv. 44.

<sup>c</sup> לִנְפֹל, with *Nun* expressed (as in Isa. xxix. 2) and *Pe dagess*., whereas with כ and ב the aspirate is left, with but few exceptions, such as Gen. xxxv. 22.

<sup>d</sup> וְזָכְרָה. See on xvi. note <sup>k</sup>.

<sup>e</sup> רוּמְמָה. Not an adj., as if from רָמַם, a root which does not exist, but either (1) 3 pret. Pal., or (2) Part. Pal. with loss of the ה (as שָׁמַם, Dan. viii. 13, עוֹלֵל, Isa. iii. 12, and elsewhere), and retention of the vowel ׀, as in pause. The objection to (1) is, that then the accentuation ought to be רוּמְמָה.

<sup>f</sup> נִפְלְאוּ. For other instances of this form comp. Gen. xxxiii. 11;

Deut. xxxi. 29; Jer. xlv. 23; Isa. vii. 14. מִלֵּל מִלֵּל, rhythmic *Milel* with *Dagesh* in the following word, as for instance in Gen. xix. 38; Ex. xvi. 24; 1 Sam. vi. 9; Prov. vii. 13, etc.

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## PSALM CXIX.

THIS is the longest and the most elaborate of the alphabetical Psalms. It is arranged in twenty-two stanzas, according to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Each stanza is composed of eight verses, each verse consisting of two members only, and each beginning with the same letter of the alphabet. Thus each of the first eight verses begins with the letter Aleph, each of the next eight with the letter Beth, and so on throughout the alphabet. In the third chapter of the Lamentations of Jeremiah a similar arrangement is adopted, but there the stanzas or groups consist only of three verses, each beginning with the same letter. Other instances of this acrostic arrangement occurring in the Psalter will be found enumerated in the introduction to Psalm xxv. (See also the introduction to Psalm cxi.)

The great subject of the Psalmist's praise is the law of God. In this respect the Psalm may be said to be an elaborate expansion of the latter part of Psalm xix. The Masoretes observe, that in every verse but one, the one hundred and twenty-second, there is direct reference to the law under some one of the ten names (supposed to allude to the Ten Commandments) *word, saying, testimonies, way, judgment, precept, commandment, law, statute, faithfulness* (or according to another reading, *righteousness*). In the one hundred and thirty-second verse, the word "judgment" occurs in the Hebrew, although apparently not as a synonyme of the law; see note on the verse. In verse 121, "judgment and righteousness," if not denoting the law immediately, are employed with reference to the requirements of the law.

The date of the Psalm cannot be fixed with anything like certainty, though it may probably be referred to a time subsequent to the return from the Babylonish captivity.

(a) The allusions to "princes" (ver. 23) and "kings" (ver. 46) who did not share the faith of the Psalmist, may be taken to denote that the Jews were subject at this time to foreign dominion.

(b) The law of which he speaks as his daily study, as his delight and his counsellor, must obviously have been the written law, and it

may be inferred that it was now in the hands of the people. Whether this was the case to any extent before the exile, we have now no means of ascertaining. After the exile, copies of the Scriptures were multiplied. The efforts of Ezra and Nehemiah, which were directed in the first instance to the collection of the sacred books (2 Mac. ii. 13), must have been directed eventually to their dissemination. Accordingly, we find that copies of the "books of the law," or of "the book of the covenant," were in the possession of the people at the time of the Maccabees (1 Mac. i. 55, 56). In the Psalm the writer, perhaps, includes in "the word" of God, not only the law, but other writings regarded as sacred. In Zech. vii. 12, "the former prophets" seem to be placed on a level with "the law."

(c) The general character of the Psalm, which is a meditation rather than a poem, as well as its place in the collection, favors the supposition that it is one of the later Psalms.

(d) The alphabetical arrangement, it has also been argued, forbids our assigning it to an earlier period: "adapted for didactic rather than for lyric expression, it belongs," it has been said, "to an age no longer animated by the soul of poetry, but struggling to clothe its religious thoughts in a poetic form."<sup>1</sup> It is, however, far from certain that this acrostic device is of itself evidence of the decline of the poetic spirit. Some of the oldest poems in our own language are constructed on the principle of alliteration. It is the same in Welsh poetry. And unless the different stages of Hebrew poetry were more clearly marked than they are at present, its acrostic character can hardly be taken as settling the question of the date of any single Psalm.

The circumstances of the Psalmist may be inferred in some measure from the language of the Psalm itself. He is suffering from persecution. His enemies are men of rank and authority (ver. 21, 23), having both the power and the will to crush him (ver. 61, 69). His constancy is severely tried. He is exposed to reproach and contempt on account of his religion, and has reason to fear lest his hope and trust in God should be put to shame (ver. 6, 22, 31). He is solicited to give up his faith for gain, and even, perhaps, invited to join in idolatrous worship (ver. 36, 37). These things make him sad (ver. 25, 28), but he stays himself upon the word and promise of God. That word in all its varied aspects of law and promise, of precepts and judgments, had been his comfort in his affliction, his most precious possession, dearer to him than all earthly treasures; he had meditated upon it day and night; it had been a lamp to his feet and a light to his path.

<sup>1</sup> The Psalms Chronologically Arranged, by Four Friends, p. 383.

He had taken it for his rule of life, he longed to know it better, he prayed to have the veil taken off his eyes that he might behold its hidden wonders. These thoughts, and thoughts like these, recur again and again. He is never wearied of declaring his love of God's law, or of praying for more light to understand it, more power to keep it — to keep it with his "whole heart." The frequency of this last expression is striking evidence of the earnestness of the writer; see on verse 2. But there does not seem to be anything like continuity, or progress of thought, or of recorded experience, in the several stanzas of the Psalm.<sup>1</sup>

Still, "if we would fathom the depth of meaning in the written law of Israel, if we would measure the elevation of soul, the hope, the confidence even before princes and kings, which pious Jews derived from it, we must turn to this Psalm. Here is an epitome of all true religion, as conceived by the best spirits of that time. To such a loving study and meditation on the law the alphabetical arrangement is not inappropriate, and if the poem be necessarily somewhat cramped, it is nevertheless pervaded by the glow of love, and abounds in spiritual love."<sup>2</sup>

Delitzsch thinks that the Psalm must have been written by a young man, and appeals to verse 9 and verses 99, 100, as supporting this view. But the language of verse 9 is rather that of one who, looking back on his own past life, draws the inference which he seeks to impress upon the young, that youthful purity can only be preserved by those who from their early years take God's word for their guide. Just so in Ecclesiastes xii. 1, it is the man of mature age and large experience who gives the wise and friendly counsel. "Remember, I beseech thee, thy Creator in the days of thy youth." The lesson in each case comes with double force, because it comes from the lips of one who speaks with the authority of experience. When it is said in verses 99, 100 of this Psalm, that the Psalmist is wiser than his teachers, wiser than the aged, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that he is not advanced in life. It is plain that the writer is not an old man, as Ewald would have us believe, or he would not compare his knowledge of the law with the knowledge of the aged. But it does not follow that he is a young man. The teachers whom he has outstripped may have been those whose disciple he once was, not those whose disciple

<sup>1</sup> Delitzsch thinks that he discovers a leading idea in each stanza, and thus endeavors to link the several stanzas together, but his analysis does not appear to me to be very successful. To a certain extent, freedom of thought and expression must have been fettered by the requirements of the alphabetical order. But, after all, what is rhyme but a fetter?

<sup>2</sup> The Psalms Chronologically Arranged, p. 385.

he still is ; or he may refer to authorized teachers, to whom he listened because they sat in Moses' seat, though he felt that they had really nothing to teach him. Indeed the whole strain of the Psalm, its depth and breadth of spiritual life, and the long acquaintance which is everywhere implied in it with the word of God, can leave us in no doubt that it was written by a man who was no longer young, who had at least reached the "middle arch of life."

*Aleph.*

- 1 ✠ BLESSED are the perfect in the way,  
Who walk in the law of Jehovah.
- 2 ✠ Blessed are they that keep his testimonies,  
That seek him with the whole heart,
- 3 ✠ (Who) also have done no iniquity,  
(Who) have walked in his ways.
- 4 ✠ Thou hast commanded thy precepts,  
That we should keep (them) diligently.
- 5 ✠ Oh that<sup>a</sup> my ways were established  
To keep thy statutes.
- 6 ✠ Then shall I not be ashamed,  
While I have respect unto all thy commandments.
- 7 ✠ I will give thanks to thee with uprightness of heart,  
When I learn thy righteous judgments.
- 8 ✠ I will keep thy statutes :  
Oh forsake me not utterly.

*Beth.*

- 9 ▢ Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his path ?  
By taking heed (thereto) according to thy word,<sup>b</sup>
- 10 ▢ With my whole heart have I sought thee :  
Oh let me not wander from thy commandments.

2. WITH THE WHOLE HEART. An expression characteristic of this Psalm. Comp. ver. 10, 34, 58, 69, 145.

6. ASHAMED, i.e. put to shame, my hope being frustrated. This is the shame meant, not shame of conscience in comparing a man's life with the requirement of the law.

HAVE RESPECT UNTO ; lit. "look up-

on," i.e. with care and thought, so as to make them the rule of life.

7. JUDGMENTS ; here and throughout this Psalm not used of God's acts of judgment, but merely as the equivalent of "law," "precepts," and the like, utterances as of a judge and lawgiver, and found in this sense even in the Pentateuch, Ex. xxi. 1 ; xxiv. 3 ; Lev. xviii. 4, 5.

- 11 ♪ In my heart have I laid up thy word,  
 (That) I might not sin against thee.
- 12 ♪ Blessed art thou, O Jehovah :  
 Teach me thy statutes.
- 13 ♪ With my lips have I told  
 Of all the judgments of thy mouth.
- 14 ♪ In the way of thy testimonies I have rejoiced,  
 As much as in all manner of riches.
- 15 ♪ I will meditate in thy precepts,  
 And have respect unto thy paths.
- 16 ♪ In thy statutes will I delight myself ;  
 I will not forget thy word.

*Gimel.*

- 17 ♪ Deal bountifully with thy servant that I may live,  
 So will I keep thy word.
- 18 ♪ Open thou mine eyes,  
 That I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.
- 19 ♪ I am a sojourner in the earth :  
 Hide not thy commandments from me.
- 20 ♪ My soul breaketh for (the) longing<sup>c</sup>  
 (That it hath) unto thy judgments at all times.
- 21 ♪ Thou hast rebuked the proud that they are cursed,  
 Which do wander from thy commandments.

11. **IN MY HEART.** See Luke ii. 19-51. It is to me no merely outward rule of conduct : it is a power and a life within.

**WORD,** or rather "saying," "speech," distinct from the word employed, for instance, in ver. 9, lxxvii. 18. Both words are constantly interchanged throughout the Psalm.

14. **ALL MANNER OF RICHES.** Comp. what is said of the incomparable worth of wisdom, Prov. ii. 4 ; iii. 13-15 ; viii. 10, 11, 19 ; xvi. 16 ; xxii. 1 ; Job xxviii. 15-19.

17. **THAT I MAY LIVE ;** or the construction may be, "Let me live (or, if I live), so will I," etc. The gift of life, if vouchsafed, shall be devoted to the keeping of God's word.

18. **WONDROUS THINGS ;** an acknowl-

edgment of treasures in the divine word not seen by common eyes, needing, indeed, spiritual discernment and heavenly unveiling ; hence "Open *thou*."

19. **A SOJOURNER ;** here, therefore, but for a short time (see on xxxix. 12), and needing for that time divine teaching. Hence the prayer, "Hide not," i.e. reveal, show me the inner sense and true application of, "thy commandments."

20. **BREAKETH ;** lit. "is broken," as expressive of the intensity of the desire, which seems to pervade the whole man, and leave him crushed and powerless in its grasp. Bp. Taylor speaks somewhere of "the violence of the desire, bursting itself with its fulness into dissolution."

21. **THAT THEY ARE CURSED.** The



- 22 3 Remove<sup>d</sup> from me reproach and contempt ;  
 For I have kept thy testimonies.
- 23 3 Princes have also sat and talked against me,  
 But thy servant meditateth in thy statutes.
- 24 3 Thy testimonies also are my delight,  
 And my counsellors.

*Daleth.*

- 25 7 My soul cleaveth unto the dust :  
 Quicken thou me according to thy word.
- 26 7 I have told my ways, and thou answeredst me ;  
 Teach me thy statutes.
- 27 7 Make me to understand the way of thy precepts,  
 So shall I meditate of thy wondrous works.
- 28 7 My soul melteth away for heaviness ;  
 Stablish thou me according unto thy word.
- 29 7 Remove me from the way of falsehood,  
 And with thy law be gracious unto me.
- 30 7 I have chosen the way of faithfulness ;  
 Thy judgments have I laid (before me).
- 31 7 I have stuck unto thy testimonies :  
 O Jehovah, put me not to shame.
- 32 7 I will run the way of thy commandments,  
 When thou shalt enlarge my heart.

adjective is a predicate marking the effect of God's rebuke. There is another division of the verse which has the support of the LXX and Jerome :

Thou hast rebuked the proud,  
 Cursed are they that, etc.

And so the Prayer-book version.

22. REMOVE FROM ME ; lit. "take off, strip from me," shame being regarded as a cloak or mantle covering the person. LXX, *περίελε*.

23. TALKED, or "spoken one with another." The verb (Niphal) is reciprocal, as in Ezek. xxxiii. 30.

25. CLEAVETH UNTO THE DUST. See on xlv. 25 [26].

26. I HAVE TOLD MY WAYS. I have laid before thee severally, numbering

them, as it were, all the acts and events of my life. Cf. xxii. 17 [18], "I may tell all my bones."

28. MELTETH ; lit. "droppeth," weeps itself away, so to speak.

STABLISH ; lit. "set me up again," the meaning being nearly the same as in the often-repeated prayer, "quicken me."

29. THE WAY OF FALSEHOOD, i.e. not falsehood in the common sense of the term, but "unfaithfulness" to God, to which, in the next verse, "the way of faithfulness" is opposed.

WITH THY LAW, or "Graciously impart thy law unto me." The construction is that of the double accusative. See Gen. xxxiii. 5.

32. ENLARGE MY HEART, i.e. expand

*He.*

- 33 ☞ Teach me, O Jehovah, the way of thy statutes,  
And I shall keep it unto the end.
- 34 ☞ Give me understanding, that I may observe thy law,  
That I may keep it with my whole heart.
- 35 ☞ Make me to walk in the path of thy commandments ;  
For therein do I delight.
- 36 ☞ Incline my heart unto thy testimonies,  
And not to covetousness.
- 37 ☞ Turn away mine eyes from seeing vanity ;  
In thy way quicken thou me.
- 38 ☞ Confirm thy promise unto thy servant,  
Who is (devoted) to thy fear.
- 39 ☞ Turn away my reproach which I am afraid of,  
For thy judgments are good.
- 40 ☞ Behold, I have longed after thy precepts :  
In thy righteousness quicken thou me.

*Vau.*

- 41 ʘ Let thy loving-kindness also come unto me, O Jehovah,  
Thy salvation, according to thy saying.

it with a sense of liberty and joy, as in Isa. lx. 5 ; 2 Cor. vi. 11, 13. See on ci. 6.

36. MY HEART, to which answers in the next verse "mine eyes," as representing the senses through which the forbidden desire is kindled in the heart. Comp. Isa. xxxiii. 15 ; Job xxxi. 1, 7.

COVETOUSNESS, or rather "gain unjustly acquired." LXX, *πλεονεξίαν*. Stanley, on 1 Cor. v. 10, thinks that from the connection of *πλεονεξία* with idolatry, it may be used in the sense of *sensuality*, which so often accompanied idolatry, and he sees a similar connection here, *vanity* in the next verse being a term for *idolatry*. However, the Hebrew word *בָּצַע* can only mean *plunder, rapine, unjust gain*.

37. TURN AWAY ; lit. "make to pass on one side" of the object.

FROM SEEING, i.e. being attracted by, and so finding pleasure in (Isa. xxxiii.

15), VANITY, all which, as being against God, or without God, is unreal and unstable ; but perhaps *idols* are especially meant.

38. PROMISE, or "saying." See on ver. 11. The second member of the verse might also be rendered : "Which (promise) is for thy fear," i.e. either (a) is given to them that fear thee, so the Chald. ; or (b) which has the fear of thee for its aim and object (cxxx. 4), tends to cherish a holy fear.

39. The train of thought seems to be : Keep me from the reproach of breaking thy commandments, for those commandments are not grievous, but good, sweet, and full of blessing to one who longs after them as I do. Or "the reproach" may be that of his enemies (ver. 42), who taunt him as the servant of God.

41. The vowel-points both of the verb

- 42 ¶ So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me ;  
 For I trust in thy word.
- 43 ¶ And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth ;  
 For I have waited for thy judgments.
- 44 ¶ So shall I keep thy law continually,  
 (Yea) for ever and ever.
- 45 ¶ And I shall walk at liberty ;  
 For I have sought thy precepts.
- 46 ¶ And I will speak of thy testimonies before kings,  
 And will not be ashamed.
- 47 ¶ And I will delight myself in thy commandments,  
 Which I love.
- 48 ¶ My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments,  
 which I love ;  
 And I will meditate in thy statutes.

*Zain.*

- 49 ¶ Remember the word unto thy servant,  
 Upon which thou hast caused me to hope.
- 50 ¶ This is my comfort in my affliction,  
 For thy word hath quickened me.

and the noun suggest a plural, although the *Yod* of the plural is wanting in the noun. Similarly in ver. 43 the vowels suggests the plur. "judgments." See Critical Note<sup>b</sup>.

43. The sense seems to be, "Give me the power faithfully to witness for thy truth, and so to answer him that reproacheth me" (ver. 42).

45. AT LIBERTY; lit. "in a wide space," where there is nothing to check or hinder freedom of action, as in cxviii. 5.

46. BEFORE KINGS. It may be inferred that the Psalm was written whilst Judea was in subjection to foreign rule. The viceroys of the Persian king may be meant.

48. MY HANDS WILL I LIFT UP.

The expression denotes the act of prayer, as in xxviii. 2; lxiii. 4 [5], cxxxiv. 2; cxli. 2. Comp. Lam. iii. 41: "Let us lift up our heart with our hands." Here it would seem to denote figuratively reverence, devotion of heart, and the like; unless we suppose it to be a *locutio praeagnans* = "I will pray to thee for grace to keep thy commandments."

49. THE WORD, apparently some special word of promise which had been his stay in his affliction, and had roused him to new hope and courage (ver. 50).

UPON WHICH, or, perhaps, "seeing that," "because."

50. MY COMFORT. Comp. Job vi. 10, the only other place where the word occurs. It is the "word" (ver. 49)

- 51 † The proud have had me greatly in derision ;  
 (Yet) have I not swerved from thy law.
- 52 † I remembered thy judgments of old, O Jehovah,  
 And have comforted myself.
- 53 † Burning indignation hath taken hold upon me,  
 Because of the wicked that forsake thy law.
- 54 † Thy statutes have been my songs  
 In the house of my pilgrimage.
- 55 † I have remembered thy name in the night, O Jehovah,  
 And have kept thy law.
- 56 † This I had,  
 Because I kept thy precepts.

*Cheth.*

- 57 ׀ "Jehovah is my portion,"  
 I said that I would keep thy words.
- 58 ׀ I entreated thy favor with (my) whole heart ;  
 Be gracious to me according to thy promise.

which is his comfort. Others render the verse "This is my comfort, etc. . . that thy word hath quickened me."

WORD; lit. "saying." See on ver. 11. Or the construction may be: "This is my comfort . . . that thy word, etc. Here, as is evident from the mention of "affliction"—and indeed throughout the Psalm—the verb "quicken" is used not merely in an external sense of "preservation from death" (Hupfeld), but of "reviving the heart," imparting fresh courage," etc.

51. HAD ME IN DERISION, i.e. probably both on account of his misery and his trust in God. The verb is from the same root as the noun "scorners," "mockers," in i. 1. Comp. for the same connection between the spirit of *pride* and the spirit of *irreligious scoffing*, Prov. xxi. 24.

52. JUDGMENTS, in the same sense as throughout the Psalm, God's righteous laws which he revealed OF OLD, which are ever true and ever in force.

53. BURNING INDIGNATION. See on xi. note c. Kay connects it with ׀ being inserted, "fainting," "droop-

ing," etc.; LXX, ἀθυμία; Vulg., *defectio*. The action of the Simûm may either be regarded as a *burning*, parching wind, or in its *effects*, as producing faintness.

54. PILGRIMAGE, or rather "sojourning," from the same root as the noun in ver. 9, where see note. In this earth I am but a passing guest, as at some way-side inn. Comp. Gen. xlvii. 9.

56. THIS I HAD. It is not clear to what "this" refers. If to what goes before, it may be to the remembrance of God's name. Otherwise we must render: "This has been (vouchsafed) to me, this has been my reward, *that* I have kept thy precepts," i.e. such has been the gift of thy grace.

57. This is the arrangement according to Baer's text. According to others, "I said" belongs to the first member: Jehovah is my portion, I said, that I might keep, etc., the verb "I said" being thrown in parenthetically, as in Isa. xlv. 24; Lam. iii. 24, and like *inquam* in Latin.

THAT I WOULD KEEP, or "in keeping."

58. I ENTREATED THY FAVOR. Comp. xlv. 12 [13].

- 59 ¶ I thought on my ways,  
And turned back my feet unto thy testimonies.
- 60 ¶ I made haste, and delayed not  
To keep thy commandments.
- 61 ¶ The cords of the wicked have been wound about me,  
(But) thy law have I not forgotten.
- 62 ¶ At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee,  
Because of thy righteous judgments.
- 63 ¶ I am a companion of them that fear thee,  
And of them that keep thy precepts.
- 64 ¶ The earth, O Jehovah, is full of thy loving-kindness :  
Teach me thy statutes.

*Teth.*

- 65 ▫ Thou hast dealt well with thy servant,  
O Jehovah, according unto thy word.
- 66 ▫ Teach me good perception and knowledge,  
For I have believed thy commandments.
- 67 ▫ Before I was afflicted I went astray,  
But now have I kept thy saying.
- 68 ▫ Thou art good, and doest good :  
Teach me thy statutes.
- 69 ▫ The proud have forged a lie against me ;  
I, with (my) whole heart, will keep thy precepts.
- 70 ▫ Their heart is gross as fat :  
As for me, (in) thy law do I delight.
- 71 ▫ It is good for me that I have been afflicted,  
That I might learn thy statutes.

61. WOUND ABOUT, or "entangled," so the LXX, *περιπλάκησαν*; Jerome, *implicaverunt*; Vulg., *circumplexi sunt*.

66. GOOD PERCEPTION; lit. "goodness of perception" or discernment; the fine taste and delicate feeling which are like a new sense. So St. Paul prays for the church at Philippi, that their "love may abound more and more in knowledge and in all perception," *ἐν ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πάσῃ αἰσθήσει*. The two words correspond to the two Hebrew words here; but the latter, *αἰσθησις*, marks in the Epis-

tle (chap. i. 9) the *delicate tact* by which Christian love should be characterized. Here the Psalmist prays rather for a *fine sense* or apprehension of God's words.

69. THE PROUD. The same overbearing, tyrannical oppression already mentioned, ver. 51, 61.

HAVE FORGED; lit. "have patched up." Comp. Job xiii. 4; xiv. 17.

70. FAT. For the figure as expressive of want of feeling, see xvii. 9 [10]; lxiii. 6 [7]; Isa. vi. 10.

71. IT IS GOOD FOR ME. See ver. 67.

72 ▢ The law of thy mouth is better unto me  
Than thousands of gold and silver.

*Jod.*

73 ▹ Thy hands have made me and fashioned me :  
Give me understanding, that I may learn thy com-  
mandments.

74 ▹ They that fear thee will be glad when they see me ;  
For in thy word have I hoped.

75 ▹ I know, O Jehovah, that thy judgments are righteous,  
And that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.

76 ▹ Let, I pray thee, thy loving-kindness be for my comfort,  
According to thy saying unto thy servant.

77 ▹ Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live ;  
For thy law is my delight.

78 ▹ Let the proud be ashamed, for they have subverted me  
by falsehood :  
As for me, I meditate in thy precepts.

79 ▹ They that fear thee will turn unto me,  
And they shall know thy testimonies.

80 ▹ Let my heart be perfect in thy statutes,  
That I be not ashamed.

*Caph.*

81 ▢ My soul hath failed for thy salvation ;  
In thy word have I hoped.

82 ▢ Mine eyes have failed for thy word,  
Saying, "When wilt thou comfort me?"

83 ▢ For I have become like a bottle in the smoke :  
(Yet) do I not forget thy statutes.

75. **RIGHTEOUS**; lit. "righteousness."

76. Even when a man recognizes that affliction is sent in "faithfulness," that God has a wise purpose of love in sending it, still it is in itself bitter, and therefore he prays that he may have God's "loving-kindness" and his "tender mercies" as his comfort in the midst of affliction. Comp. Heb. xii. 11.

79. **WILL TURN**, or there may be the

expression of a wish, "Let them turn."

**THEY SHALL KNOW**, i.e. by their own experience. Such is the reading of the present text; but if we accept the Masoretic correction the second member of the verse will be: "And they that know thy testimonies."

80. **PERFECT**, i.e. whole, undivided.

83. **A BOTTLE IN THE SMOKE**, i.e. a skin bottle for wine. The figure is

- 84 ▷ How many are the days of thy servant ?  
 When wilt thou execute judgment on them that  
 persecute me ?
- 85 ▷ The proud have digged pits for me,  
 Who are not after thy law.
- 86 ▷ All thy commandments are faithfulness :  
 They persecute me wrongfully ; help thou me.
- 87 ▷ They had almost consumed me upon earth ;  
 But as for me I forsook not thy precepts.
- 88 ▷ Quicken me after thy loving-kindness,  
 So shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.

*Lamed.*

- 89 ▷ For ever, O Jehovah,  
 Thy word is settled in heaven.
- 90 ▷ Thy faithfulness is unto all generations ;  
 Thou hast established the earth, and it standeth  
 fast.
- 91 ▷ For thy judgments, they stand fast unto this day ;  
 For all things are thy servants.
- 92 ▷ Unless thy law had been my delight,  
 I should then have perished in my affliction.
- 93 ▷ I will never forget thy precepts ;  
 For by them thou hast quickened me.
- 94 ▷ Thine I am, save me ;  
 For I have sought thy precepts.
- 95 ▷ The wicked have waited for me to destroy me ;  
 (But) thy testimonies do I consider.

generally supposed to denote the misery and affliction of the Psalmist who compares himself to one of these wine-skins blackened and shrivelled and rendered useless by the smoke of the fire in which it is hung. Rosenm., however, explains it as the custom of the ancients to hang skins full of wine in the smoke, in order to mellow the wine. In this case, the figure would denote the mellowing and ripening of the character by affliction.

84. HOW MANY. Comp. xxxix. 4 [5].

It is an argument why God should take *speedy* vengeance on his enemies, that he may see it executed before he dies.

89. IN HEAVEN, as marking its unchanging, everlasting character, as in lxxxix. 2 [3].

91. FOR THY JUDGMENTS, i.e. "with reference to thine ordinances or laws, they (i.e. heaven and earth) stand fast."

ALL THINGS; lit. "the whole," i.e. the universe.

96 ʘ I have seen an end of all perfection ;  
 Thy commandment is exceeding broad.

*Mem.*

97 ʘ Oh how I love thy law :  
 It is my meditation all the day.

98 ʘ Thy commandments make me wiser<sup>k</sup> than mine  
 enemies ;

For they are ever with me.

99 ʘ I have more understanding than all my teachers ;  
 For thy testimonies are my meditation.

100 ʘ I understand more than the aged ;  
 For thy precepts have I kept.

101 ʘ I have refrained my feet from every evil path,  
 That I might keep thy word.

102 ʘ From thy judgments have I not turned aside ;  
 For THOU hast taught me.

103 ʘ How sweet are thy sayings unto my taste,  
 (Yea, sweeter) than honey to my mouth.

104 ʘ Through thy precepts I get understanding ;  
 Therefore I hate every path of falsehood.

*Nun.*

105 ʘ Thy word is a lamp unto my foot,  
 And a light unto my path.

106 ʘ I have sworn, and am steadfastly purposed,  
 That I will keep thy righteous judgments.

96. ALL PERFECTION. If this rendering is correct, the meaning is obvious. There is nothing upon earth to which there does not cleave some defect. But perhaps the clause should rather be rendered : " I have seen an end, a limit to the whole range or compass of things " ; a meaning which may be defended by the use of the similar word in Job xxvi. 10 ; xxviii. 3, and which harmonizes with the next clause : " thy commandment is exceeding broad," has no limits, whilst all other things are bounded by a narrow compass.

BROAD. Comp. Job xi. 7-9.

98. MAKE ME WISER, i.e. teach me a

different wisdom and a better wisdom than theirs ; not one which consists in policy, or craft, or human prudence. So, too, as he is wiser than his enemies, he is wiser than his teachers (ver. 99), wiser than the aged (ver. 100), and his wisdom is that practical wisdom which consists in the fear of the Lord, and which leads him to eschew all evil (ver. 101).

FOR THEY, i.e. thy commandments.

102. THOU HAST TAUGHT ME. This is the secret of all the previous boast, this is the source of all his wisdom.

103. SAYINGS. The verb is plural, see on ver. 41, and note ʘ.



- 107 ♪ I am afflicted very greatly ;  
 Quicken me, O Jehovah, according unto thy word.
- 108 ♪ Accept, I beseech thee, O Jehovah, the freewill offerings  
 of my mouth,  
 And teach me thy judgments.
- 109 ♪ My soul is continually in my hand ;  
 Yet I do not forget thy law.
- 110 ♪ The wicked have laid a snare for me ;  
 Yet have I not strayed from thy precepts.
- 111 ♪ Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage forever ;  
 For they are the rejoicing of my heart.
- 112 ♪ I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes  
 Forever, (even unto) the end.

*Samech.*

- 113 ♪ I hate them that are of double mind,  
 But thy law do I love.
- 114 ♪ THOU art my hiding-place and shield :  
 I have hoped in thy word.
- 115 ♪ Depart from me, ye evil-doers,  
 That so I may keep the commandments of my God.
- 116 ♪ Uphold me according unto thy saying, that I may live,  
 And let me not be ashamed of my hope.
- 117 ♪ Hold thou me up, and so I shall be saved,  
 And have respect unto thy statutes continually.
- 118 ♪ Thou hast made light of all them that wander from thy  
 statutes ;  
 For their deceit is falsehood.
- 119 ♪ Thou hast put away all the wicked of the earth like dross ;  
 Therefore I love thy testimonies.

109. MY SOUL IS IN MY HAND. He has been faithful even in constant peril of death. Comp. Judg. xii. 13 ; 1 Sam. xix. 5 ; xxviii. 21 ; Job xiii. 14.

111. God's law is an everlasting possession (comp. ver. 98), more truly so than the land of Canaan itself, which was given to Israel for an everlasting heritage. Comp. xvi. 5, 6, where the Psalmist claims God himself as an heritage.

113. OF DOUBLE MIND. See the noun from the same root, 1 Kings xviii. 21, "How long halt ye between two opinions?" and comp. the ἀνῆρ διψυχος of St. James (i. 8).

118. FALSEHOOD, i.e. self-deception : they rely upon their deceitful artifices in vain, and only to their own confusion.

119. LIKE DROSS, i.e. by the fire of

- 120 ▫ My flesh trembleth for terror of thee,  
And because of thy judgments I am afraid.

*Ain.*

- 121 ▫ I have done judgment and righteousness;  
Leave me not to mine oppressors.
- 122 ▫ Be surety for thy servant for good;  
Let not the proud oppress me.
- 123 ▫ Mine eyes fail for thy salvation,  
And for thy righteous saying.
- 124 ▫ Deal with thy servant according to thy loving-kindness,  
And teach me thy statutes.
- 125 ▫ I am thy servant, give me understanding,  
That I may know thy testimonies.
- 126 ▫ It is time for Jehovah to act;  
(For) they have broken thy law.
- 127 ▫ Therefore I love thy commandments  
Above gold, yea, above fine gold.
- 128 ▫ Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all  
(things) to be right;  
(And) I hate every false way.

*Pe.*

- 129 ▫ Wonderful are thy testimonies;  
Therefore hath my soul kept them.
- 130 ▫ The revelation of thy words giveth light,  
It giveth understanding unto the simple.

thy judgment. Comp. Jer. vi. 28-30; Ezek. xxii. 18-20; Mal. iii. 2, 3.

120. TREMBLETH or "shuddereth," strictly used of the hair as standing erect in terror (comp. Job iv. 15).

121. JUDGMENT AND RIGHTEOUSNESS, apparently terms employed with reference to the law. It is equivalent to saying, "I have kept thy law."

122. BE SURETY, as in Isa. xxxviii. 14; Job xvii. 3. This and ver. 132 are the only two verses in the Psalm which contain no allusion to the law.

126. TO ACT. The verb is used absolutely of God's acts of judgment, as

in Jer. xviii. 23; Ezek. xxxi. 11. So the LXX, *καίρως τοῦ ποιῆσαι τῷ Κυρίῳ*, which has been rendered "it is time to sacrifice to the Lord," in defiance of all usage, as well as the whole character of the Psalm. It ought not to be necessary to say that *ποιεῖν* in Greek of itself no more means to sacrifice than "make" in English.

128. CONCERNING ALL THINGS. These words are doubtful. See Critical Note.

130. REVELATION; lit. "door," "opening," i.e. *unfolding* or *unveiling*, not *entrance*, as in E.V.

- 131 **D** I opened my mouth and panted ;  
 For I longed for thy commandments.
- 132 **D** Turn thee unto me, and be gracious to me,  
 As thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.
- 133 **D** Establish my steps in thy saying,  
 And let no iniquity have dominion over me.
- 134 **D** Redeem me from the oppression of man,  
 That I may keep thy precepts.
- 135 **D** Make thy face to shine upon thy servant,  
 And teach me thy statutes.
- 136 **D** In rivers of water mine eyes run down,  
 Because they keep not thy law.

*Tsaddi.*

- 137 **Σ** Righteous art thou, O Jehovah,  
 And upright are thy judgments.
- 138 **Σ** Thou hast commanded thy testimonies in righteousness  
 And exceeding faithfulness.
- 139 **Σ** My zeal hath consumed me ;  
 Because mine adversaries have forgotten thy words.
- 140 **Σ** Thy saying is tried to the uttermost,  
 And thy servant loveth it.
- 141 **Σ** I am small and despised ;  
 (Yet) do not I forget thy precepts.
- 142 **Σ** Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness,  
 And thy law is truth.

131. I OPENED MY MOUTH, an expression denoting eager desire, as in Job xxix. 23. Like one oppressed with burning heat, and longing for some cool spring of water, or some fresh breeze to fan his brow.

132. AS THOU USEST ; lit. " according to the judgment of (belonging to) them that love thy name," which may mean " as is just to them." But the word *mishpat*, " judgment " is frequently used in the sense of " custom," a sense readily derived from that of " law," " enactment," etc.

133. HAVE DOMINION, as in xix. 13 [14].

136. IN RIVERS OF WATER : see the same phrase, Lam. iii. 48, and for the construction, Gesen. § 138, 1, Obs. 9.

138. IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND FAITHFULNESS. The nouns may either be used adverbially, or they may be accusatives in apposition, " as righteousness," etc.

139. Comp. lxix. 9 [10].

140. TRIED ; lit. " fined," as metals are in the furnace, and hence pure, free from all admixture of dross, true. Comp. xii. 6 [7].

- 143  $\Sigma$  Distress and anguish have gotten hold upon me ;  
Thy commandments are my delight.
- 144  $\Sigma$  Thy testimonies are righteousness forever ;  
Give me understanding, that I may live.

*Koph.*

- 145  $\rho$  I called with (my) whole heart :  
“ Answer me, Jehovah, so will I keep thy statutes.”
- 146  $\rho$  I called upon thee : “ Save me,  
So will I keep thy statutes.”
- 147  $\rho$  Early in the morning twilight did I cry ;  
I hoped in thy word.
- 148  $\rho$  Mine eyes prevented the night-watches  
That I might meditate in thy promises.
- 149  $\rho$  Hear my voice according unto thy loving-kindness ;  
O Jehovah, quicken me according to thy judgment.
- 150  $\rho$  They draw nigh that follow after mischief ;  
They are far from thy law.
- 151  $\rho$  THOU art nigh, O Jehovah,  
And all thy commandments are truth.
- 152  $\rho$  Long since do I know from thy testimonies  
That thou hast founded them forever.

*Resh.*

- 153  $\gamma$  Look upon mine affliction, and deliver me ;  
For I do not forget thy law.
- 154  $\gamma$  Plead my cause and ransom me ;  
Quicken me according to thy word.
- 155  $\gamma$  Salvation is far from the wicked ;  
For they have not sought thy statutes.

147. EARLY ; lit. “ I was beforehand in the twilight.” The verb means “ to anticipate,” “ to go to meet,” with the accus. (as in xvii. 13) ; and used absolutely, as here, it must mean “ I rose early.” It is the same word as the word rendered “ prevented ” in the next verse. It is difficult to find an English expression suitable for both. We might say : “ I was beforehand with the dawn.”

“ Mine eyes were beforehand with the night-watches.”

151. They are *nigh* (ver. 150) to persecute and destroy me ; thou art *nigh* to help me.

154. ACCORDING TO. For the use of the preposition comp. Isa. xi. 3.

155. FAR. A masc. predicate prefixed, the noun being fem., as in 137 a singular predicate is prefixed when the noun is in

- 156 ᾠ Many are thy tender mercies, O Jehovah,  
Quicken me according to thy judgments.
- 157 ᾠ Many are my persecutors and mine adversaries ;  
I have not swerved from thy testimonies.
- 158 ᾠ I saw the faithless and was grieved,  
Because they kept not thy saying.
- 159 ᾠ See how I love thy precepts ;  
Quicken me, O Jehovah, according to thy loving-  
kindness.
- 160 ᾠ The sum of thy word is truth,  
And every one of thy righteous judgments (en-  
dureth) forever.
- Schin.*
- 161 ψ Princes have persecuted me without a cause ;  
But my heart standeth in awe of thy word.
- 162 ψ I rejoice because of thy saying,  
As one that findeth great spoil.
- 163 ψ As for falsehood, I hate and abhor it ;  
Thy law do I love.
- 164 ψ Seven times a day do I praise thee,  
Because of thy righteous judgments.
- 165 ψ Great peace have they which love thy law,  
And there is no stumbling-block unto them.
- 166 ψ I have hoped for thy salvation, Jehovah,  
And have done thy commandments.
- 167 ψ My soul hath kept thy testimonies,  
And I love them exceedingly.

the plural. For other instances of anomalous usage of gender see ver. 115, 151.

158. WAS GRIEVED (pausal aorist) ; lit. "felt loathing." Comp. cxxxix. 21. BECAUSE, or "who," viz. "the faithless."

160. THE SUM, as in cxxxix. 17. Jerome, "*Caput verborum tuorum.*" The LXX wrongly, ἀρχὴ τῶν λόγων σου. Still less defensible is the E. V., "from the beginning."

165. NO STUMBLING-BLOCK. LXX, οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῖς σκάνδαλον. Comp. the

words of St. John, σκάνδαλον οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς (1 John ii. 10). So we may supply here, "no stumbling-block *in them,*" or "in their path." When God's law is loved, instead of being struggled against, the conscience is at peace, and the inward eye is clear ; a man sees his duty and does it, free from those stumbling-blocks which are ever occasion of falling to others.

166. I HAVE HOPED. Comp. the words of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 18.

168 **ו** I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies ;  
For all my ways are before thee.

*Tau.*

169 **ח** Let my cry come near before thee, O Jehovah ;  
Give me understanding, according to thy word.

170 **ח** Let my supplication come before thee ;  
Deliver me according to thy promise.

171 **ח** Let my lips pour forth praise ;  
For thou teachest me thy statutes.

172 **ח** Let my tongue sing of thy promise,  
For all thy commandments are righteousness.

173 **ח** Let thine hand be a help unto me ;  
For I have chosen thy precepts.

174 **ח** I have longed for thy salvation, O Jehovah,  
And thy law is my delight.

175 **ח** Let my soul live, and praise thee,  
And let thy judgments help me.

176 **ח** I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek thy servant,  
For I do not forget thy commandments.

168. **FOR ALL MY WAYS.** In saying "I have kept thy precepts," I make no vain boast, I say it as in thy sight, who seest all my life.

170. **PROMISE**; lit. "saying," and again in ver. 172.

172. **SING OF**, or perhaps "repeat," "echo."

176. According to the accents, the rendering would rather be, "I have gone astray; seek thy servant as a lost sheep." In what sense can one who has so repeatedly declared his love of God's word, who has asserted that he has kept God's precepts, make this confession? The figure cannot be employed here in the same sense, for instance, in which it is

employed in our Lord's parable. He who is the lost sheep here is one who does not forget God's commandments. The figure, therefore, seems in this place to denote the helpless condition of the Psalmist, without protectors, exposed to enemies, in the midst of whom he wanders, not knowing where to find rest and shelter. But in the "I have gone astray," there is doubtless the sense of sin as well of weakness, though there is also the consciousness of love to God's law, "I do not forget thy commandments." Comp. with this xix. 12-14 [13-15]. The word rendered "lost" may be rendered "ready to perish."

<sup>a</sup> אָחֲזִי (whence אָחֲזִי, 2 Kings v. 3), compounded of אָחַז and יָי (לָיִי), = *o si*.

<sup>b</sup> פְּרִיָּהּ. Many mss. and edd. have the plural, and again ver. 16, 17, 25, 28, 42, 101. The same is the case with אֲמַרְהֶהּ, ver. 11, 103.

148, 162. But there is no doubt that the sing. is to be preferred. It is otherwise with  $\text{הִשְׁפִּיטָהּ}$ , which is clearly a defective form, instead of the plur.  $\text{הִשְׁפִּיטוּ}$ , 43 and 147. Comp. 37, 41, for similar forms.

The construction in  $\text{לְשִׁמְרֵי}$  is that of the gerund.

<sup>c</sup>  $\text{הִתְאַבְּהָ}$ , only here, instead of  $\text{הִתְאַוְּהָ}$ , and so also the verb  $\text{הִתְאַב}$  occurs only in this Psalm, ver. 40, 174.

<sup>d</sup>  $\text{גַּל}$ , not instead of  $\text{גָּל}$ , from  $\text{גָּלַל}$ , *to roll away*, as De Wette and others, referring to Josh. v. 9, but the same word as in ver. 18, from  $\text{גָּלָה}$  (Piel), to *uncover*, which occurs with a two-fold construction; either (1) with the accus. of the thing uncovered, as in ver. 18, “to uncover the eyes”; or (2) with accus. of the covering which is taken off, as in Isa. xxii. 8, Nah. iii. 5, and so here, “uncover,” i.e. take off from me, the reproach which lies upon me “as a cloak.”

<sup>e</sup>  $\text{הִתְחַכְּמֵי}$ , 3 sing. fem., not 2 masc. For this use of the sing. verb with the plur. noun see Gesen. § 143, 3. The following  $\text{הִיא}$  shows that the law is regarded *as a whole*: “it maketh me wiser.” However, the plur. punctuation of the noun may be an error. See note <sup>b</sup>. The versions generally take the verb as the E. V. does, as 2d pers. “Thou through thy commandments,” etc.

<sup>f</sup>  $\text{כָּל פְּקֻדֹתֶיךָ כָּל}$ . This is usually rendered, “All (thy) precepts concerning all (things),” and is defended by Ezek. xlv. 30, “All firstlings of all (sorts).” See a similar expression, Num. viii. 16. The case, however, is not really analogous, as the phrase here does not mean “all precepts of all sorts”; and, besides, the absence of the pronoun is awkward: we want “thy precepts.” Hence the reading ought probably to be  $\text{כָּל-פְּקֻדֹתֶיךָ}$ ; and so Houb., Ewald, Olsh., Hupfeld. And this is supported by the LXX,  $\text{\pi\rho\acute{o}s \pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\alpha\varsigma \tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\omicron\lambda\acute{\alpha}\varsigma \sigma\omicron\upsilon \kappa\alpha\tau\omega\rho\theta\omicron\iota\mu\eta\eta}$ , and Jerome, *in universa praecepta tua direxi*.

## PSALM CXX.

WITH this Psalm begins a series of fifteen Psalms, all bearing the same title, “Songs of the goings-up” (E. V. “Songs of degrees”), and constituting originally, no doubt, a separate hymn-book—a Psalter within a Psalter. The different interpretations which have been given of the name will be found mentioned in the Introduction, Vol. I. p. 69. Of these, the most probable is that which supposes that the Psalms to which this title is prefixed were intended to be sung by the caravans of pilgrims “going up” to keep the yearly feasts at Jerusalem. The

collection in its present form must have been made after the return from Babylon, some of the songs containing manifest allusions to the captivity as still fresh in the recollection of the writers. All these odes have certain features in common. With one exception (the one hundred and thirty-second) they are all short—the utterance of a single thought or feeling, a sigh, a hope, a joy. They are alike in tone, in diction, in rhythm, the climatic form of the last recurring so often as to have led Gesenius to suppose that the title “Song of ascents,” was given to them owing to this peculiarity. They are all pervaded by the same quiet, graceful, tender beauty, the charm of which was so felt by a Spanish commentator, that he does not hesitate to say that this collection is to the rest of the Psalms what Paradise was to the rest of the world at its first creation.

The first in the collection is a prayer against the lying tongues of treacherous neighbors, whom the poet compares, for their cruelty and perfidy, to the savage hordes of the Caucasus or of the Arabian desert. But whether the Psalmist thus pictures the heathen among whom he dwells in exile, or the wild tribes with whom no treaty can be kept, by whom he is beset on his way back from Babylon to Palestine, or the Samaritans,<sup>1</sup> Arabians, and others, who, after their return attempted, by false representations to the Persian monarch, to thwart the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra iv.) and the fortification of the city (Neh. ii.–iv.), it is impossible to say. The allusions are brief and obscure. Reuss says: “Ce psaume, le seul qui soit difficile à expliquer parmi ces chants de pèlerinage, peut être regardé comme l’un des plus obscurs de tout le Psautier. Les idées y sont à peine indiquées, les images sont peu transparentes, et les allusions historiques sont pour nous autant d’énigmes.”

[A Pilgrim Song.]

1 UNTO Jehovah, when I was in distress,<sup>a</sup>  
I called, and he answered me.

1. CALLED . . . ANSWERED. The refer merely to a past occasion. Past verbs are in the past tense, but do not experience and present are here com-

<sup>1</sup> It is, indeed, doubtful whether the Chaldee letters in Ezra iv. do relate to the obstacles offered by the Samaritans to the rebuilding of the temple, or whether they are not rather to be referred to the opposition made to the rebuilding of the city walls under Xerxes and Artaxerxes, at a much later period, Neh. ii. etc. The chief enemies of the Jews at this time were not the Samaritans, but persons of other tribes, — Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, all perhaps comprised under the general name of Arabians. See Neh. ii. 10, 19; iv. 7.



- 2 O Jehovah, deliver my soul from the lying lip,  
From the deceitful tongue.<sup>b</sup>
- 3 What shall he give<sup>c</sup> unto thee, and what shall he add  
unto thee,  
O thou deceitful tongue?
- 4 Sharp arrows of the mighty,  
With coals of broom.

bined. From the past he draws encouragement for the present.

3. GIVE . . . ADD. The phrase seems to mean, "What calamities shall he heap upon thee? How shall punishment upon punishment visit thee? Compare the somewhat similar expression in the formula of cursing, "God do so to me, and more also," 1 Sam. iii. 17; xx. 13, and often. In that formula, however, the first verb is *do*, not *give*. It is not necessary to regard Jehovah as the subject of the verbs in this verse. They may be taken impersonally: "What shall be given unto thee, what more shall be done unto thee?" See more in Critical Note.

4. The expressions of this verse may either (1) describe further the treacherous tongue ("thou that art as sharp arrows," etc.), as in lvii. 4 [5], "whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword," lxiv. 3 [4], "who have sharpened their tongue like the sword, and have aimed their arrow, even a bitter word" — see also lv. 21 [22], lix. 7 [8]; or (2) the punishment of the tongue, a punishment according with its character. As the lying tongue is a sharp sword (lvii. 4 [5]), as it is a sharp arrow (Jer. ix. 8 [7]), as it is set on fire of hell (James iii. 6), so shall the man who employs it be destroyed by the arrows and the fire of the mighty one, i.e. God. (But see below). So in the Talmud *Erachin* 15*b*, it is said, "The mighty is none other but God himself." Comp. exl. 9, 10 [10, 11], "Let the mischief of their own lips cover them, let burning coals fall upon them, let them be cast into the fire," etc. Such is the law of the eternal Nemesis: "What a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

It is in favor of the first interpretation that it falls in with the general scope of the Psalm, in which the poet complains that, loving peace himself, he meets with nothing but hostility and treachery. On the other hand, that he should burst forth into an imprecation of God's judgments on the head of these treacherous neighbors is quite in accordance with what we find in other Psalms, where the circumstances are similar. Compare, for instance, Ps. lviii. For other explanations see Critical Note.

THE MIGHTY. Even if we take this verse as describing the punishment of the lying tongue, we need not take "the mighty" to mean God, as the Talmud does. The expression may only mean "sharp arrows," as of a warrior. Comp. cxxvii. 4; Jer. i. 9.

BROOM, not as E. V., following Jerome, "juniper." The shrub meant is the *genista monosperma* (Arab. *retem*), the root of which, according to Burckhardt (*Itin.* ii. p. 791), is used for fires in the desert, and has the property of retaining the heat for a considerable time. The same shrub is mentioned 1 Kings xix. 4; Job xxx. 4. The latter passage may mean, not that the root of the *genista* was used for food, which seems unlikely, as it is very bitter, but perhaps that it was used for fire, "to warm them" (comp. Isa. xlv. 15). Wonderful stories are told by Jerome (*De mansionibus Israel ad Fabiolam* xv.), and in the Midrash *Tehillim*, how travellers, having cooked their food with a fire made of the juniper-wood (which they suppose to be the wood here meant), and returning a year after to the same spot, still found the embers alive. These COALS are an image either of the burn-

- 5 Woe<sup>d</sup> is me that I have sojourned in Meshech,  
That I have dwelt beside the tents of Kedar.
- 6 My soul hath too long<sup>e</sup> had her dwelling  
With him that hateth peace.
- 7 I (am for) peace,  
But when I speak,<sup>f</sup> they (are) for war.

ing, devouring character of the tongue, or of its punishment. "Arrows WITH (i. e. together with) coals," not, as others, "fiery arrows," or "arrows sharpened and made hard by means of fire," which would have been differently expressed.

5. MESHECH, probably the Moschi of Herodotus (iii. 94), mentioned, together with Tubal, Gen. x. 2; Ezek. xxvii. 13; a barbarous tribe situated southeast of the Caucasus, between the Black Sea and the Araxes; and

KEDAR, one of the predatory hordes roaming the Arabian Desert. By the names of these remote and barbarous tribes, the one to the north, the other to the south of Palestine, the Psalmist intends to mark the savage character of those who surround him. We might speak in the same way, says DeWette, of Turks and Hottentots.

7. The literal rendering of the first clause is, "I (am) peace," as in cix. 4, "I (am) prayer." The pronoun in each clause is emphatic.

<sup>a</sup> צָרָהָה, the fuller form for צָרָה, as in ii. 3; xlv. 27. Comp. xviii. 7.

<sup>b</sup> לְשׁוֹן ר', absol. instead of constr. (comp. lii. 6); unless we take לְשׁוֹן ר' (as Delitzsch suggests) as an adj. (see Mic. vi. 12). But the expression may be explained on the principle of apposition, "a tongue which is deceit," as in Prov. xxii. 21, אֲמָרִים אֲמָרָה, "words which are truth," Zech. i. 13.

<sup>c</sup> מִתְּתֵן. The interpretations of this verse are various.

Is the "giving," etc., to be understood in a good sense or a bad sense? Does it mean "What doth it profit thee?" or "What doth it harm thee?" And who is addressed,—the lying tongue, i. e. the liar, or God, or the Psalmist himself, or some third person indefinitely?

1. Supposing the words to be taken in a bad sense, they can mean harm, injury, which the deceitful tongue works to others, or punishment which it brings upon itself. In the first case "the tongue," in the second "Jehovah," is the subject. So far as the grammar goes, there is nothing against either interpretation; for the verb standing before the fem. noun can be masc. (Gesen. § 147), and thus "the tongue" may be the subject; and, on the other hand, the masc. pron. "to thee" may refer not immediately to the tongue, but to the person whose the tongue is (§ 121, Rem. 1).

(a) It is in favor, however, of the interpretation which makes the tongue addressed and Jehovah the subject ("What shall *he* give to

thee," etc.), that a very similar phrase is used several times in adjuration. "So Jehovah do unto me, and more also," i.e. so let him punish me (1 Sam. iii. 17; xiv. 44; xx. 13, and often). Then the punishment threatened is further described in the next verse: "What shall he give thee?" "Sharp arrows of the mighty," etc. Hupfeld objects to this interpretation, that here the formula is not employed in an oath, and that it is doubtful whether it denotes punishment, inasmuch as the principal verb here is not *יִשְׁפֹּט*, but *יִתֵּן*. Those who make Jehovah the subject are again divided when they come to the next verse; for, instead of seeing in that verse the manner of punishment, some see in it a further description of the character of the tongue itself, as elsewhere the tongue is compared to a sharp sword, etc.

(b) Hence others take *the tongue* as the subject, and suppose that the person whose the deceitful tongue is, is addressed. The sense will then be: "What does a false tongue profit thee (O thou liar)?" So far from that, thou only doest harm to others; and this harm is then expressed figuratively in the next verse "for thou art as sharp arrows," etc. So the Chald., Aben-Ezra, Kimchi, Calvin, De Dieu, most of the older interpreters, Ros., De Wette. Here the pron. "thee" is taken generally of any one who speaks deceit.

2. Others refer the pron. to Jehovah. "What can a deceitful tongue profit thee?" the argument being similar to that in such questions as in xxx. 9 [10], and ver. 4 again giving the reply: so far from profit, it is a pestilent mischief.

3. Once more, the pronoun may refer to the poet himself, or some third person indefinitely, "What can the false tongue give thee? i.e. what harm can it inflict upon thee?" the poet turning this question upon himself, and the answer being that in ver. 4: "Surely much harm, for it is as sharp arrows," etc. According to this, *נֹחַן* is = *עֲשָׂה*, to work, in a bad sense, as Lev. xxiv. 19, 20; Prov. x. 10; xiii. 10; xxix. 25. But it may be questioned if *נֹחַן* with *לְ* can have this meaning. In Lev. xxiv. it is followed by *לְ*, in the other passages it stands absol., to effect, and therefore proves nothing.

Hupfeld, rejecting all these interpretations, separates ver. 3 entirely from ver. 4. To the former he gives the meaning: "What (real) good can a false tongue bring thee, how can it help thee, O thou who employest its arts?" and supposes (1) that not a slanderer, but a false friend or neighbor is pointed at, and (2) that the poet is speaking not to himself so much as to a third person, and uttering a general sentiment. In ver. 4 he would read *אֶתְּלִי* instead of *אֶתְּלִי*, and would either understand *רִיבְיָאִים* as a proper name, the name of a tribe or a locality

in which the broom was plentiful (as Rithmah, Num. xxxiii. 18, 19, one of the stations of the Israelites, doubtless took its name from the broom which grew there), or else that by *tents of broom* are meant poor hovels formed of broom, as a shelter for some needy desert-horde. He takes the verse, not in appos. with the preceding, but as an independent sentence: "Sharp are the arrows of the warrior, by the tents of the Rethamim," which of course is to be understood figuratively as expressive of the hostility of the neighbors of the poet.

<sup>d</sup> אֲוִיָּהּ, only here with the termination הַ, used pathetically. There is no need in such an interjection as this to assume, with Hupfeld, that it is an accus. termination, like הַמִּיָּהּ, for instance (cxvi. 15), in accordance with later usage.

גִּוִּי, with the accus., as in v. 5; Isa. xxxiii. 15; Judges v. 17.

<sup>e</sup> רָבִיחַ. See the same form lxv. 10; cxxiii. 4; cxxix. 1, 2. It belongs chiefly to the later language. Comp. 2 Chron. xxx. 17, 18.

<sup>f</sup> יָדַי אֶרְבֵּי. The verb here stands absolutely, as in xxxix. 4; there is no need to supply the object, "when I speak of peace." Nor is Ewald's rendering, "As for me, when I speak of peace," at all probable; for even if כִּי can thus stand in the middle of the sentence, as in cxviii. 10, 11; cxxviii. 2 (comp. כִּי, cxli. 10), it is very unlikely that יָדַי should occupy such a position. The construction is the same as in cix. 4, where see note.

## PSALM CXXI.

THIS beautiful Psalm is the trustful expression of a heart rejoicing in its own safety, under the watchful eye of him who is both the Maker of heaven and earth, and the Keeper of Israel. The Creator of the universe, the Keeper of the nation is also the Keeper of the individual. The one ever-recurring thought, the one characteristic word of the Psalm, is this word *keep*. Six times it is repeated in the last five verses of this one short ode. The beauty of this repetition is unfortunately destroyed in the Authorized version by the substitution in the last three instances, in verses 7 and 8, of the verb "preserve" for the verb "keep." For the use of the same word in the original is evidently designed, — designed to mark by this emphasis of iteration the truth of God's loving care for the individual, and so to banish all shadow of doubt, fear, anxiety, lest in the vast sum the unit should be forgotten.

Under what circumstances the Psalm was written is doubtful. Some (as Ewald and De Wette) suppose it to have been written in exile. The Psalmist turns his longing eyes toward the hills of his native land, or the hills which bounded his sight in the direction in which it lay, as Daniel opened his windows toward Jerusalem when he prayed. Others (as Hupfeld) understand by "the mountains" in verse 1, not the mountains of Palestine at large, but the one mountain or mountain-group of Zion, as the dwelling-place of God, the plural being used as in cxxxiii. 3; lxxxvii. 1, and leave it an open question whether the Psalmist was in exile, or merely at a distance from the sanctuary.

Others, again, have conjectured that this was the song sung by the caravans of pilgrims going up to the yearly feasts, when first they came in sight of the mountains on which Jerusalem stands. At evening, as they are about to make preparations for their last night's encampment, they behold in the far distance, clear against the dying light of the western sky, the holy hill with its crown of towers. The sight fills them with a sense of peace and security, and from the midst of the band a voice begins; "I will lift up mine eyes to the mountains," etc. And another voice answers, "May he not suffer thy foot to be moved. May he that keepeth thee slumber not." And anon the whole company of pilgrims take up the strain: "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep; Jehovah shall keep thee," etc.

To-morrow, in the words of the next Psalm, they will sing, "Our feet are standing within thy gates, O Jerusalem."

It is not, however, absolutely necessary to assume different voices in the Psalm; there may be one voice only, the voice of the poet speaking to his own heart, — speaking to it, in words that are not his own, heavenly strength and courage. That he is at a distance from the sanctuary, if not from Palestine, is clear. It is almost equally certain that there is no reference to "the special dangers of the desert" as encountered by the exiles on their return. The baneful influence of the sun and the moon (ver. 6) would not be peculiar to the desert, and I can see no allusion to "perils from lawless tribes by night" in verses 3, 4. The expression "thy going out and thy coming in," would surely describe naturally, not the life of a traveller passing through the desert, but the settled home life, with its usual occupations, whether in Palestine or in Babylon. Beyond this, and the words of verse 1, we have nothing to guide us.

The Psalm has no marked divisions, but falls naturally into pairs of verses. The inscription, "A song *for* the goings-up," differs slightly from that which is prefixed to other odes of this collection.

## [A Pilgrim Song.]

- 1 I LIFT up mine eyes unto the mountains ;  
 Whence should my help come ?
- 2 My help (cometh) from Jehovah,  
 The Maker of heaven and earth.
- 3 May he <sup>a</sup> not suffer thy foot to be moved ;  
 May he that keepeth thee not slumber.
- 4 Behold, he doth neither slumber nor sleep  
 That keepeth Israel.
- 5 Jehovah is thy keeper,  
 Jehovah is thy shade upon thy right hand.

1. **THE MOUNTAINS**, as already remarked in the introduction, either those of Palestine, as in Nahum i. 15 [ii. 1], and in Ezekiel, "the mountains of Israel; or, the ridge on which lay Jerusalem and the temple. Comp. for the plural, lxxxvii. 1; cxxxiii. 3; and for the expectation of help from Zion, xiv. 7, "Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion;" xx. 2 [3], "Jehovah send thee help from the sanctuary, and uphold thee out of Zion."

**WHENCE.** It is better to take this as an interrogative than as a relative. In Josh. ii. 4, the only passage where the word occurs as a relative, it is really an indirect interrogative.

2. **MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH;** a name of God occurring especially in these Pilgrim odes, and other later Psalms, as in cxv. 15; cxxiv. 8; cxxxiv. 3; cxlvi. 6. God's creative power and majesty were, especially during the exile, impressed upon the heart of the nation, in contrast with the vanity of the gods of the heathen. Comp. Jer. x. 11, "Then shall he say unto them (i.e. the Jews to the Chaldeans): The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens."

3. The Psalmist turns to address himself. First he utters the wish that God's watchful care may be extended to him; then the conviction that the Keeper of Israel, he who has been the God of his

fathers, whose hand has led the nation through all its eventful history, doth not — will not, cannot — slumber or sleep. Comp. cxxxii. 4; 1 Kings xviii. 27; Isa. v. 27; Job vii. 20.

**MAY HE NOT, or perhaps better, "Surely he shall not"** as expressing the conviction of the speaker (see Critical Note). It must be confessed that the optative rendering is somewhat weak. It does not seem very pertinent to express the wish that God may not slumber. Or if we assume that the Psalm was designed for antiphonal singing, then ver. 4, is the answer to ver. 3, "you need not fear that HE should sleep. He cannot slumber."

4. **SLUMBER . . . SLEEP.** There is no climax in these words, as some have supposed. Etymologically, the first is the stronger word, and it occurs lxxvi. 5 [6] (where see note) of the sleep of death. In this instance there is no real distinction between the two. Possibly there may be an allusion to the nightly encampment, and the sentries of the caravan.

5. **THY SHADE**, as a protection against the burning rays of the sun. Comp. xci. 1, "shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty;" Isa. xxv. 4, "Thou hast been a shadow from the heat;" xxxii. 2, "As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

**UPON THY RIGHT HAND.** This is not part of the former figure; it does not

- 6 The sun shall not smite thee by day,  
Nor the moon by night.
- 7 Jehovah shall keep thee from all evil,  
He shall keep thy soul.
- 8 Jehovah shall keep thy going out and thy coming in  
From this time forth and for evermore.

denote the south side (as some would explain), as that on which the sun would be hottest, and therefore protection most necessary. It is rather a separate figure, denoting generally succor, help, etc. (as in cix. 31; cx. 5), i.e. Jehovah standing upon thy right hand to defend thee is thy shade.

6. Sun-stroke, a special danger of the East. See 2 Kings iv. 18-20; John iv. 8; and comp. Ps. cii. 4 [5], where the heart is said to be *smitten* like grass. In the same way the influence of the moon is considered to be very injurious to the human frame, in hot climates more particularly. De Wette refers to Anderson's *Eastern Travels*, Ewald to Carne's *Life and Manners in the East*, in proof that this opinion is commonly entertained. Delitzsch mentions having heard from Texas that the consequence

of sleeping in the open air when the moon was shining was dizziness, mental aberration, and even death. The names given to persons of disordered intellect, *σεληνιαζόμενοι*, *lunatici*, "lunatics," arose, of course, from the wide-spread belief in the effects of the moon on those who were exposed to its influence.

8. THY GOING OUT AND THY COMING IN; a phrase denoting the whole life and occupations of a man. Comp. Deut. xxviii. 6; xxxi. 2; 1 Sam. xxix. 6, etc. The three-fold expression, "shall keep thee . . . thy soul . . . thy going out and thy coming in" marks the completeness of the protection vouchsafed, extending to all that the man is and that he does. Comp. 1 Thess. v. 23, *καὶ ὁλόκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα, καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα . . . τηρηθείη.*

<sup>a</sup>  $\text{בָּנִי} = \mu\etá$ , and must not, therefore, be rendered as if it were merely *oñ*. Ewald takes it interrogatively, as  $\mu\etá$  is also used, "Surely he will not suffer thy foot to be moved?" Delitzsch takes it similarly, but without a question, as expressing the subjective view of the speaker. Such a rendering, "Surely he will not suffer," etc., is, I think, defensible, and perhaps even to be preferred. See on xxxiv. 5, and l., note <sup>b</sup> (Vol. I. p. 377). On the other hand, the optative rendering may be retained here, especially as we have a similar transition from one form of the negative to the other in xxv. 1-3, where see note.

## PSALM CXXII.

THIS Psalm, more emphatically than any in the collection to which it belongs, merits the title of a pilgrim song. It was evidently composed with immediate reference to one of the three yearly festivals, when the caravans of pilgrims "went up" to the holy city. The poet

is living in the country. As the time of the feast draws near, his friends and neighbors come to him, inviting him to join them in their visit to Jerusalem. It is with this picture that he begins his poem. He tells us how his heart filled with joy as they bade him come with them "to the house of Jehovah." We see the procession starting; we see beaming eyes and happy faces, and hear the music of gladness with which the pilgrims beguile the tediousness of the journey. The next verse transports us at once to the holy city itself. "Our feet have stood within thy gates"; the few words are enough. They have reached their journey's end; they are in the city which they love. Then the poet tells us, first, the impression made upon his mind by her stateliness and her beauty, and next, how there comes crowding upon his memory the scenes of her earlier grandeur, the thought of all she had been as the gathering-place of the tribes of Jehovah, the royal seat of David and of his house.

Filled with these thoughts, inspired by these memories, he bursts forth into hearty, fervent prayer—the prayer of one who loved his country as he loved his God, with no common devotion—for the welfare of that city so glorious in her past history, and with which all hopes for the future were so intimately bound up. And so the beautiful ode closes.

The Psalm is called in the title a Song of David. It is certainly possible that Psalms written by him might be comprised in a collection which formed a hymn-book for the pilgrims. It is possible, also, that David himself, although there was still a sanctuary at Gibeon, even after the ark was brought to Zion, may nevertheless have encouraged the people to regard Jerusalem as the true centre of worship, and that the custom of keeping the annual feasts there may have begun during his reign. In fact this seems most natural and most probable, when we remember how great and joyful an event was the bringing up of the ark to Zion. There, henceforth, must have been "the heart of the Israelitish religion." The expression in verse 3 might also be explained very naturally of Jerusalem as it was in David's time,—a city beautifully built, well compacted, adorned with palaces, and fortified." Still, in spite of Hengstenberg's remarks to the contrary, I cannot think that the expression "thrones of the house of David" would be a natural one in David's lips. The phrase points, surely, to a dynasty which has long been established; verses 4 and 5 are clearly a retrospect.

As most, if not all, of these Psalms belong to a period subsequent to the captivity, we turn more naturally to that time as furnishing the



occasion for the composition of this ode. But, even if we fix upon that as the most probable date, still the question arises, Is the whole Psalm a retrospect, or does it spring out of the new life of the people? Does it paint only the recollection of former pilgrimages in the days of Zion's first glory, or does it paint the feelings of one who sees the old state of things revived, and who joins the pilgrims going up now as they went up of yore?

Ewald supposes it to be a blessing on a party of pilgrims uttered by an old man returned from the exile, himself unequal to a journey across the desert. "The departure of his friends reminds him of the alacrity with which he too had once obeyed a similar summons; his spirit is fired by sympathy with their enthusiasm, and he pours forth the praises of that city which from the earliest times had been recognized as the key-stone of the national unity, the civil and religious metropolis of the tribes."<sup>1</sup> Delitzsch takes a somewhat similar view, except that he supposes the poet to be still in exile. But the Psalm is too bright, the pictures are too fresh, to lend any color to either interpretation. There is none of that "deep sighing" of the exile or the old man looking back on a departed glory which must have made itself felt, none of that melancholy which breathes, for instance, in such a Psalm as the forty-second, and even the eighty-fourth. The gladness of the first verse is a gladness still warm at the heart of the poet; the picture of the second is one the lines of which are not yet effaced from the eye of his mind. The reminiscences of the past, as he has heard the tale from others, or as he has read it in the words of other Psalmists and prophets, mingle with the present, and Jerusalem, rising from her ashes, seems to him fair and stately, her bulwarks strong, and her palaces magnificent, as of old.

[A Pilgrim Song. Of David.]

- 1 I WAS glad when they said <sup>a</sup> unto me,  
 Let us go into the house of Jehovah.  
 2 Our feet have stood <sup>b</sup>  
 Within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

1. THE HOUSE OF JEHOVAH. His joy was that he should worship *there* "in the presence of Jehovah." Ex. xxiii. 17.

2. HAVE STOOD. This may be a strict perfect, implying that they are *still standing*. It is the lively expression

of the satisfaction and delight of one who finds himself on this high day of festal joy within the sacred walls, mingling with the throng of worshippers who crowd the courts of the temple, and taking his part, with a full sense of his

<sup>1</sup> The Psalms Chronologically Arranged, by Four Friends, p. 292.

- 3 Jerusalem that art built,  
 As a city which is compact<sup>e</sup> together !  
 4 Whither the tribes went up, the tribes of Jah,  
 A testimony unto Israel,  
 To give thanks to the name of Jehovah.

privileges as an Israelite, in the solemn services of the feast. The rendering of the E. V., "shall stand," is clearly wrong. The only other possible rendering (see Critical Note) is one that would throw the whole scene into the past, "our feet once stood." It is the uncertainty attaching to this form which occasions so much difficulty in the interpretation of the Psalm.

3. BUILT. This has been explained in three different ways. (1) It has been closely joined with what follows, "built as a city which," etc. (2) It has been taken in the sense of "well-built, stately." (3) It has been understood emphatically to describe the city as *rebuilt* after the exile, "which is built again," or, "O thou that art built again." Of these, the last is preferable. (1) injures the parallelism, and (2) has no support in usage.

COMPACT. This has been understood by some to refer to the natural conformation of the ground on which the city stood. So Stanley, speaking of "those deep ravines which separate Jerusalem from the rocky plateau of which it forms a part," observes that they must have not only "acted as its natural defense, but must also have determined its natural boundaries. The city, wherever else it spread, could never overleap the valley of the Kedron or of Hinnom. . . . The expression of *compactness* was still more appropriate to the original city, if, as seems probable, the valley of Tyropæon formed in earlier times a fosse within a fosse, shutting in Zion and Moriah into one compact mass, not more than half a mile in breadth."—*Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 172, 173. Others, as Herder, suppose the epithet to mark the well-built city with its fine streets and long rows of contiguous houses, such an epithet being peculiarly appropriate and very

natural in the lips of one who, accustomed only to the scattered dwellings of country villages, is struck with the compact line of stately buildings which form so imposing a feature of the capital. "This," he exclaims, "is indeed a city":

"Urbem quam dicunt Romam, Meli-boee, putavi

Stultus ego huic nostrae similem."

Herder accordingly renders, —

"Jerusalem, du dicht-gebaute Stadt!

Wohnung an Wohnung ist in dir."

If, however, the Psalm refers, as is probable, to the city as rebuilt after the exile, then the epithet alludes to the reconstruction of walls and houses; the city is compact, because there are no more waste places, no more gaps and heaps of ruin.

4. The poet glances here, and in the next verse, at the earlier times, when Jerusalem had been the great religious and political centre of the nation, the dwelling-place of Jehovah, to whose temple all the tribes were gathered at the three great feasts, and the seat of government of kings of the house of David. This had been its double glory. It may be inferred that he was living at a time when all was changed. There was still one sanctuary, but all Israel was not united under one sceptre. It was no longer all the tribes who went up, as they had done of old; there was now no throne of the house of David. In fact, even after the disruption of the kingdom under Jeroboam, the tribes did not go up to keep the yearly feasts in Jerusalem. It was a part of "the Machiavelian policy" of that prince to put a stop to this custom, lest such occasions should be made the means of restoring the national unity (1 Kings xii. 26).

TESTIMONY. The word seems almost equivalent to "law" or "statute," but

- 5 For there were set thrones for judgment,  
The thrones of the house of David.
- 6 Oh pray for the peace of Jerusalem :  
They shall prosper that love thee.
- 7 Peace be within thy bulwarks,  
Prosperity within thy palaces.
- 8 For my brethren and friends' sakes,  
Let me now wish<sup>d</sup> thee peace.
- 9 For the sake of the house of Jehovah our God  
I will seek thy good.

there is in it also the sense of a "witness" to the people of their covenant relation to God. The "law" is that according to which all males were to appear before the Lord three times in the year: Ex. xxiii. 17; xxxiv. 23; Deut. xvi. 16; comp. Ps. lxxxii. 4, 5 [5, 6]. The words "a testimony for Israel," are grammatically in apposition with the previous clause, "the tribes went up," etc.

5. FOR. Jerusalem had become the religious capital of the nation, because it was already the civil capital. The law had enjoined that the supreme tribunal should be in the same place as the sanctuary (Deut. xvii. 8, 9). But Jerusalem was first the civil metropolis, "the city of David" (2 Sam. v. 9; vi. 12, 16), before it became "the city of God." To a Jewish mind, however, the religious and the political importance of the city were not so much contrasted as identical; church and state were not two, but one.

WERE SET; lit. "sit," more commonly used of those who sit on the throne, but the verb may be used of things without life to describe their position, as of mountains, cxxv. 1; in many

passages, of cities, and even of countries (Jer. xvii. 6; Joel iv. 20).

THRONES FOR JUDGMENT. The king was also the judge; see on lxxii. 1. Comp. 2 Sam. xv. 2; 1 Kings iii. 16, 17.

THE HOUSE OF DAVID. The expression plainly points to successors of David, not to members of his family associated with himself in government, administration of justice, etc.

6. PEACE . . . PROSPER, and in the next verse PEACE . . . PROSPERITY, with a play of words in the original (*shâtôm, shalvah*), perhaps also with an allusion to the name of Jerusalem.

7. BULWARKS . . . PALACES, as in xlvi. 13 [14].

8. The last four verses of the Psalm breathe a spirit of the noblest, most unselfish patriotism. Not for his own sake, but for the sake of his brethren — the people at large — and for the sake of his God, his temple and his service, he wishes peace to Jerusalem, and calls upon others to wish her peace. With love to Israel and love to Jehovah there is naturally united a warm affection for Jerusalem, a hearty interest in her welfare.

<sup>a</sup> בְּאֶמְרֵיהֶם. Strictly, this means, "I rejoiced *in, over, because of* them that were saying unto me." There is little difference in sense between this and בְּאֶמְרָם, "when they said," except that with the part. the *persons* who speak become more prominent. The LXX, rightly, ἐπὶ τοῖς εἰρηκόσι μου.

שָׁמַחְתִּי may be either past (as all the older interpreters) or present.

<sup>b</sup> עֲמַדוֹת הָיָה. This compound tense may either be an imperfect, “were standing,” “used to stand”; or a strict perfect, “have been standing, and now are standing.” In this last case it may even be rendered as a present.

(1) הָיָה, with the part., is an imperfect, either (a) of habit, as Gen. xxxii. 22, “Whatever they did (part.) there, he *was doing*, i.e. was in the habit of doing; Judges i. 7, “seventy kings *were gathering*, (i.e. were in the habit of gathering) their meat under my table”; or (b) of continued past action simply, as Job i. 14, “the herd *were ploughing*.”

(2) הָיָה, with the part., is a strict perfect in Isa. lix. 2, “Your sins *have been separating*,” i.e. have separated, and still do separate; Jer. v. 8, where מִשְׁבִּירֵיהֶם probably means either “they have strayed,” or “they have been fed to the full” (see Neumann, *in loc.*). In Isa. xxx. 20 the same construction is used to express a *prophetic future*, i.e. a perfect transferred into the future, in which case it is followed by a future: “Your eyes have *been seeing* (i.e. assuredly shall see), . . . and your ears shall hear (fut.)”

<sup>c</sup> שִׁחֲבָרָה. The word is used of the *putting together* of the coverings of the tabernacle, Ex. xxvi. Comp. חָבַשׁ in Isa. iii. 7, and נִקְשָׁר, Neh. iii. 38. The prefixed שִׁ is not a later form of the pron., for it is found in the song of Deborah. לָהּ is the reflexive pron. used emphatically, as in cxx. 6.

<sup>d</sup> אֲדַבֵּרָה בְּ. This has been rendered (1) “Let me speak peace concerning thee,” as lxxxviii. 3; LXX, περὶ σοῦ. So Delitzsch who compares Luke xix. 42, τὰ πρὸς εἰρήνην αὐτῆς. (2) As Hupfeld, “let me speak peace in thee,” i.e. in all my words, prayers, etc., wish that peace may be in thee; and God is said “to speak peace,” lxxxv. 9; comp. Esther x. 3, where the prep. בְּ or לְ is used; “to speak good,” Jer. xii. 6; 2 Kings xxv. 28. (3) “Let me speak: ‘Peace be in thee.’” Hengst., Olsh.

## PSALM CXXIII.

ALSTED beautifully entitles this Psalm *Oculus Sperans*, “The Eye of Hope.” “This,” says Luther, “is a deep sigh of a pained heart, which looks round on all sides, and seeks friends, protectors, and comforters, but can find none. Therefore it says, ‘Where shall I, a poor despised man, find refuge? I am not so strong as to be able to preserve myself; wisdom and plans fail me among the multitude of

adversaries who assault me; therefore I come to thee, O my God, to thee I lift my eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.' He places over against each other the Inhabitant of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth, and reminds himself that, though the world be high and powerful, God is higher still. What shouldst thou do, then, when the world despises and insults thee? Turn thine eyes thither, and see that God, with his beloved angels and his elect, looks down upon thee, rejoices in thee, and loves thee."

This Psalm is either the sigh of the exile, towards the close of the captivity looking in faith and patience for the deliverance which he had reason to hope was now at hand; or it is the sigh of those who, having already returned to their native land, were still exposed to "the scorn and contempt" of the Samaritans and others, who, favored by the Persian government, took every opportunity of harassing and insulting the Jews. Comp. Neh. ii. 19, "They laughed us to scorn and despised us," with verse 4 of the Psalm, "The scorn of them that are at ease, the contempt of the proud."

[A Pilgrim Song.]

- 1 UNTO thee do I lift up mine eyes,  
 O thou that art throned <sup>a</sup> in the heavens!
- 2 Behold, as the eyes of slaves unto the hand of their  
 masters,  
 As the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress;  
 So our eyes (look) unto Jehovah our God,  
 Until he be gracious unto us.
- 3 Be gracious unto us, O Jehovah, be gracious unto us,  
 For we are exceedingly <sup>b</sup> filled with contempt.

1. Comp. cxxi. 1.

2. AS THE EYES OF SLAVES, watching anxiously the least movement, the smallest sign of their master's will. The image expresses complete and absolute dependence. Savary (in his *Letters on Egypt*, p. 135), says: "The slaves stand silent at the bottom of the rooms with their hands crossed over their breasts. *With their eyes fixed upon their master* they seek to anticipate every one of his wishes." Comp. the Latin phrases, *a nutu pendere*, *a vultu ore*, etc. Plautus (*Aulul.*) uses the expression of a slave

"oculos in oculis heri habere"; and Terence (*Adelph.*) "oculos nunquam ab oculis dimovere." In those passages, however, the ready *obedience* of the slave may also be denoted by his attitude. In the Psalm the eye directed to the hand of God is the *oculus sperans*, the eye which waits and hopes and is patient, looking only to him and none other for help.

3. EXCEEDINGLY FILLED, or perhaps "has long been filled." (Comp. cxx. 6.) This expression, together with the earnestness of the repeated prayer, "Be

4 Our soul is exceedingly filled  
 With the scorn<sup>c</sup> of them that are at ease,  
 With the contempt of the proud.<sup>d</sup>

gracious unto us," shows that the "scorn" and "contempt" have long pressed upon the people, and their faith, accordingly, has been exposed to a severe trial. The more remarkable is the entire absence of anything like impatience in the language of the Psalm. From the expression of trustful dependence with which it opens, it passes to the earnest, heartfelt *kyrie eleison* in which it pours out in a few words the trouble whence springs the prayer.

<sup>a</sup> הַיִּשְׁכָּרִי. On this form, with the *Chirek compaginis*, see cxiii. note <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> רַב = רַב־רַב, ver. 4. and cxx. 6, and is the older form of this word in its adverbial use. See Gen. xlv. 28; 2 Sam. xxiv. 16; 1 Kings xix. 4.

<sup>c</sup> הַלְּבָבִי. The noun apparently in stat. constr. with the art., which is incorrect, though according to Gesen. § 108, 2, *a.c.*, Ewald, § 290, *d.e.*, this is allowable in certain instances, viz. either when the demonstrative power of the article is required, or when the connection between the noun and the following genitive is somewhat loose, so that the first forms a perfect idea by itself, while the second conveys only a supplemental idea relating to the material or purpose. It is on this later principle that the art. stands here.

<sup>d</sup> גִּאֲוִינִים. According to the K'ri, this is to be read as two words, גִּאֲוִי יוֹדֵים, "proud ones of oppressors" (which, however, as גִּאֲוִי does not occur, ought rather to be גִּאֲוִי, from גִּאֲוִה), but quite unnecessarily. It is one word, a plur. from a form גִּאֲוִיוֹן (from גִּאֲוִה), as Gesen., or גִּאֲוִיוֹן, as Ewald takes it, like רַקִּיוֹן. The adjective, however, occurs nowhere else. According to Hupfeld, this is substantially the same form as the שִׁאֲוֶן above, the terminations וֹן and וֹן being originally adverbial, and formed from a nunnated accusative.

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## PSALM CXXIV.

THE last Psalm was the sigh of an exile in Babylon, waiting in absolute trust and dependence upon God for the deliverance of himself and his people from captivity. This Psalm is the joyful acknowledgment that the deliverance has been vouchsafed. The next Psalm, the one hundred and twenty-fifth, describes the safety of the new colony, restored to its native land, and girt round by the protection of

Jehovah. Here, then, we have three successive pictures, or rather three parts of one and the same picture; for they are not only linked together, as representing successive scenes in one history, but they are also pervaded by one great master thought, which lends its unity to the whole group. In each there is the same full recognition of Jehovah's grace and power as working both for the deliverance and the security of his people. In the one hundred and twenty-third Psalm, "The eye waits upon Jehovah, till he be gracious." In the one hundred and twenty-fourth, "If Jehovah had not been on our side, men had swallowed us up alive. . . . Our help is in the name of Jehovah." In the one hundred and twenty-fifth, "The mountains are about Jerusalem, and Jehovah is round about his people.

There can be little doubt that this Psalm (the one hundred and twenty-fourth) records the feelings of the exiles when the proclamation of Cyrus at length permitted them to return to their native land. Yet the figures employed are somewhat startling. The swelling waters rising till they threaten to sweep all before them is an image expressing, far more strongly than anything in the history would seem to warrant, the hostility of their conquerors to the Jews. The bird escaped from the broken snare is an image rather of sudden, unlooked for deliverance, than of a return so deliberate, so slow, in some instances apparently so reluctant, as that of the Jews from Babylon. The figures remind one rather of the earlier deliverance from Egypt. The Egyptians did "rise up" against them. Pharaoh and his chariots and his horsemen followed hard after them, and did seem as if about to swallow them up, when they were entangled in the wilderness. The waves of the Red Sea overwhelming their enemies might have suggested naturally the figure by which the might of those enemies was itself compared to swelling waters. The hasty flight might well be likened to the escape of the bird from the broken snare; the blow struck in the death of the first-born to the breaking of the snare.

Still the language of poetry must not be too closely pressed. Individuals may have felt strongly their oppression in Babylon. How keenly some had reason to remember their captive condition, we see from the one hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm. And the providential means by which their deliverance was at last effected were unlooked for, and may have well taken them by surprise. The power of Babylon had been broken by Cyrus, and the conqueror had set them free. "When Jehovah turned again the captivity of Zion, then were we like unto them that dream." Moreover, we know how constantly both prophets and psalmists are in the habit of comparing the return

from Babylon to the deliverance from Egypt. Twice had the nation been in bondage to other nations, in a strange land; twice had the yoke of its masters been broken; and, unlike as the circumstances may have been under which the two great acts of national redemption were accomplished, still the one was naturally associated in the minds and thoughts of the people with the other. And hence a poet celebrating the one might almost unconsciously borrow his imagery from the other.

The title, which gives the Psalm to David, is probably of no authority. Delitzsch conjectures that the recurrence of certain words found in the genuine Davidic Psalms may have led the collector to assign this ode to him. In the LXX and the Syriac it is anonymous.

[A Pilgrim Song. Of David.]

- 1 If Jehovah had not<sup>a</sup> been on our side,—  
Let Israel now say —
- 2 If Jehovah had not been on our side,  
When men rose up against us ;
- 3 Then<sup>b</sup> had they swallowed us up alive,  
When their anger was kindled against us ;
- 4 Then had the waters overwhelmed us,  
The stream<sup>c</sup> had gone over our soul ;
- 5 Then there had gone over our soul  
The proudly-swelling<sup>d</sup> waters.
- 6 Blessed be Jehovah,  
Who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.
- 7 Our soul is escaped as a bird from the snare of the  
fowlers ;  
The snare is broken, and we are escaped.
- 8 Our help is in the name of Jehovah.  
The maker of heaven and earth.

3. SWALLOWED US UP ALIVE. Comp. lv. 15 [16]; Prov. i. 12; with Num. xvi. 32, 33, where the phrase is used of the company of Korah.

4. THE STREAM, i.e. the mountain-torrent as swollen by the rains and the melting of the snow in spring. For the

figure compare xviii. 16 [17]; lxix. 1, 2 [2, 3]; cxliv. 7; and the still more exact parallel, Isa. viii. 7, 8; Hab. i. 11.

5. PROUDLY-SWELLING, Comp. xlv. 3 [4]; lxxxix. 9 [10], and the *πόταμος ὑβρίστης* of Aeschylus. *Prom.* V. 717.



• **לְיָמֵי**, followed both in protasis and apodosis by the preterite. See xxvii., note <sup>b</sup>.

**שִׁחֲוֶהָ**. The use of the relative here is commonly accounted for by an ellipse of the verb **הָיָה**, "If (it had not been) Jehovah who was on our side," etc. But Hupfeld observes that such an ellipse of the verb after a conjunction is unheard of (in xciv. 17 it is virtually supplied in the predicate), and supposes therefore that **ש** is here used pleonastically after **לְיָמֵי** as a conjunction, in the sense of "that." He compares the use of the English *if that* and the pleonastic use of **ש** in Cant. iii. 4; Eccl. vi. 3. The LXX, too, render *εἰ μὴ ὄντι*. Delitzsch compares the Aram. **שִׁחֲוֶהָ**, *o si* (lit. *o si quod*).

<sup>b</sup> **אֶזְרָא**. According to Hupfeld, the genuine old Hebrew (not Aram.) form, instead of the more common **אָזַר**, here introducing the apodosis (as in cxix. 92), and rightly rendered by the LXX, *ἀρα*. Delitzsch, on the other hand (following Ewald § 103, *e*), holds it to be a shortened form of the Aram., **אֶזְרָא**. It here introduces the apodosis instead of the affirmative **כִּי**, which is employed in the older language to introduce the apodosis after **לְיָמֵי**, Gen. xxxi. 42; xliii. 10.

<sup>c</sup> **נַחֲלָה**, in many mss. and edd., with the accent on the last syllable, as if it were fem., but properly on the antepenultimate (as the Masora and Kimchi, and the majority of mss.), to distinguish it from the same word as *Milra*, meaning "an inheritance," and thus masculine, as the verb requires, with the old accus. termination, as cxvi. 15 (comp. cxx. 6), which, however, has lost its meaning. In Num. xxxiv. 5, on the other hand, it is a real accusative, *to the stream*.

<sup>d</sup> **זִרְדִּימִים**, only here a later adjective form for the more common **זִרְדִּים** (but not Aramaic), bearing the same relation to **זָרְדִּים** that **זִרְדִּים** (see note <sup>d</sup> on last Psalm) does to **זָרְדִּים**.

## PSALM CXXV.

THE exiles had been restored to their own land (see introduction to last Psalm), but fresh perils awaited them there. Not only were they perpetually molested by the Samaritans and others in the rebuilding of the temple and of the city walls, but they were troubled with internal dissensions; Ezra found the "abominations of the heathen" countenanced by the intermarriages of the Jews who returned from the captivity with "the people of those lands," and was dismayed when he learnt that "The hand of the princes and the rulers had

been chief in this trespass." Nehemiah, at a later period, had to contend against a faction within the city who had taken the bribes of the Samaritans. In rebuilding the walls, he did not trust the priests, the nobles, or the rulers, till he had begun the work (Neh. ii. 16; vi. 17). Even the prophets took part with his enemies against him. Shemaiah, he found had been hired by Tobiah and Sanballat, and "the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets" had joined the plot, and sought "to put him in fear," and so to hinder his work (vi. 10-14).

To these plots and this defection on the part of many of the Jews themselves there is probably an allusion in verses 3 and 5. On the other hand, the faith of the Psalmist rises above all these dangers. There is One who is the sure defence of his people, who is their bulwark as the mountains are the bulwark of Jerusalem.

[A Pilgrim Song.]

- 1 **THEY** that trust in Jehovah are as Mount Zion  
Which cannot be moved,  
(But) is seated forever.
- 2 **As** for Jerusalem, the mountains are round about her,  
And Jehovah is round about his people,  
From this time even for evermore.

1, 2. Two images of the security of those who trust in Jehovah: (1) they stand firm as Zion itself, they are like a mountain which cannot be shaken; (2) they are girt as by a wall of mountains — a natural bulwark against all enemies.

1. **IS SEATED**; lit. "sitteth"; as spoken of a mountain "lieth" or "is situated," but here, with the following "forever," used in a still stronger sense. Milton:

"From their foundations loosening to and fro,

They plucked the *seated* hills."

See on the use of this verb cxxii. 5.

2. **MOUNTAINS ARE ROUND ABOUT HER.** "This image is not realized," says Dean Stanley, "as most persons familiar with our European scenery would wish and expect it to be realized. Jerusalem is not literally shut in by mountains, except on the eastern side, where it may be said to be inclosed by the arms of Olivet, with its outlying

ridges on the northeast and southeast." Viewed from any other direction, Jerusalem always appears "on an elevation higher than the hills in its immediate neighborhood. Nor is the plain on which it stands inclosed by a continuous though distant circle of mountains like that which gives its peculiar charm to Athens and Innsbruck. The mountains in the neighborhood of Jerusalem are of unequal height, . . . only in two or three instances . . . rising to any considerable elevation. Even Olivet is only 180 feet above the top of Mount Zion. Still they act as a shelter; they must be surmounted before the traveller can see, or the invader attack, the holy city; and the distant line of Moab would always seem to rise as a wall against invaders from the remote east." It is of these distant mountains that Josephus speaks (*Bell. Jud.* vi. v. 1) as "the surrounding mountains." *συνήχει δὲ ἡ περὶ αὐτὴν καὶ τὰ πέριξ ὄρη.* — *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 174-5.

- 3 For the rod of wickedness shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous,  
That the righteous put not forth their hands unto iniquity.
- 4 Do good, O Jehovah, to them that are good,  
And to them that are upright in their hearts.
- 5 But as for those who turn aside to their crooked paths,  
Jehovah shall make them go their way with the workers of iniquity.  
Peace be upon Israel.

AND JEHOVAH, instead of "so Jehovah," etc., the comparison being formed by merely placing the two objects side by side, as so frequently in the Proverbs.

IS ROUND ABOUT HIS PEOPLE. Comp. Zech. ii. 4, 5 [8, 9], "Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls, for I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about."

3. FOR introduces an example of God's protecting care—an example not taken from the past, but which faith anticipates and is sure of, as if already accomplished.

THE ROD OF WICKEDNESS. The expression may refer to the Persian rule under favor of which the Samaritans and others annoyed the Jews. The *rod* or *sceptre*, De Wette urges, could not apply to the Samaritans, for they did not *rule* over the Jews. But it was through them that the tyranny of the Persian court made itself felt; and they contrived, moreover, to gain over a considerable part, and that the most influential part, of the Jews to their side. The fear was, as the next clause shows, lest in this state of things the defection should spread still more widely.

REST, i.e. "lie heavy," so as to oppress, as in Isa. xxv. 10, with a further sense of continuance of the oppression.

THE LOT OF THE RIGHTEOUS is the Holy Land itself; comp. xvi. 5, 6. The consequence of a long continuance of this oppressive rule would be that THE RIGHTEOUS, the sound and true part of the nation, would itself be tempted to

despair of God's succor, and so be drawn away from its steadfastness (comp. xxxvii. 7, 8; xlix. 13 [14]; lxxiii. 13, 14 [14, 15]; Job xv. 4).

4, 5. The Psalm ends with a confident assertion of righteous requital—first in the form of a prayer, and then in the utterance of a hope, both springing from the same faith, in the righteousness of God.

5. TURN ASIDE TO THEIR CROOKED PATHS. This may be, if we take the participle transitively, "bend their crooked paths," i.e. turn their paths aside so as to make them crooked. Comp. Judges v. 6. But in Num. xxii. 23; Isa. xxx. 11, the participle is used intransitively, and so here we may explain "who turn aside in or to crooked paths." The expression does not necessarily denote a going over to heathenism; it would describe the conduct of those who, in the time of Nehemiah, made common cause with the enemies of Israel (Neh. vi. 10-14; xiii. 28-31).

MAKE THEM GO THEIR WAY, i.e. so as to perish. Comp. the use of the same verb in lviii. 8 [9] (Hithpael), cix. 22 [23] (Niphal). Those who begin with being crooked, double, deceitful, will at last walk openly with the wicked, and this is Jehovah's doing, because it is his law of righteous retribution.

PEACE UPON ISRAEL. Comp. the conclusion of exxxviii. So LXX, εἰρήνη ἐπὶ τῷ 'Ι. Jerome and Vulg., *pax super Israel*, but in the one hundred and twenty-eighth Psalm, *pacem*.

## PSALM CXXVI.

THE first colony of exiles had returned to Palestine. The permission to return had been so unexpected, the circumstances which had led to it so wonderful and so unforeseen, that when it came it could hardly be believed. To those who found themselves actually restored to the land of their fathers it seemed like a dream. It was a joy beyond all words to utter. God, their father's God, had indeed wrought for them, and even the heathen had recognized his hand.

It is with these thoughts that this beautiful Psalm opens. But, after all, what was that little band of settlers which formed the first caravan? It was but as the trickling of a tiny rill in some desert waste. Hence the prayer bursts from the lips of the Psalmist, Bring back our captives like mighty streams, which, swollen by the wintry rains, descend to fertilize the parched and desolate wilderness. Then comes the thought of the many discouragements and opposition which the first settlers had to encounter; it was a time of sowing in tears (Ezra iv. 11-24). Still faith could expect a joyful harvest. He who had restored them to the land would assuredly crown his work with blessing.

[A Psalm of David.]

- 1 WHEN Jehovah brought back the returned \* of Zion,  
We were like unto them that dream.
- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter,  
And our tongue with songs of joy.
- 3 Then said they among the nations,  
"Jehovah hath done great things for them."
- 4 (Yea) Jehovah hath done great things for us;  
(Therefore) were we glad.
- 5 Bring back, O Jehovah, our captives,  
As the streams in the South.

1. LIKE UNTO THEM THAT DREAM, i.e. so unexpected and so wonderful was our redemption from the exile, that we could scarcely believe it was true, and not a dream.

2. FILLED WITH LAUGHTER, as in Job viii. 21.

3. JEHOVAH HATH DONE GREAT

THINGS; lit. "hath magnified to do with (towards) these," as in Joel ii. 20. THEM; lit. "these," δεικτικῶς.

4. WERE WE GLAD. Or perhaps present, "we *are* glad"; the construction of the verb and participle is the same as in cxxii. 2.

5. STREAMS, or rather "channels"

- 6 They that sow in tears  
 Shall reap with songs of joy.  
 7 He may go weeping as he goeth,  
 Bearing (his) store of seed ;  
 8 He shall come, he shall come with songs of joy,  
 Bearing his sheaves.

(watercourses). THE SOUTH, i.e. the south country, the Negeb is the image of a dry and thirsty land, which wanted springs. Comp. Judges i. 15.

Palestine without her people has been like the south country parched with the drought of summer; the return of her inhabitants will be grateful as the return of the mountain torrents when, swollen by the wintry rains, they flow again along the beds of the watercourses, carrying with them life and verdure and fertility. We find the expression of the same feeling under a different figure, Isa. xlix. 18, where the land, like a bereaved mother, waits for her children, whose return will fill her heart with joy. . . . The verse is a prayer that *all* may be brought back. There is a great past, may the future be great also.

6. THEY THAT SOW IN TEARS. The sowing is a season of trouble and anxiety, but the rich harvest makes amends for all. So though the new colonists were exposed to many trials, yet a glorious future was before them. That time of labor and trouble and opposition and discouragement and anxious waiting

should by no means lose its reward. The weeping should be changed into joy; the weeping should be the path of joy. Comp. for the contrast between the sowing and the reaping, Haggai ii. 3-9, 17-19.

7, 8. These verses are merely an expansion of the image in ver. 6, with the common substitution of the singular for the plural, to bring out more clearly the figure of the individual sower.

7. This verse might perhaps be more exactly rendered: "He who beareth the handful of seed may indeed weep every step that he goes."

7. GO ALONG WEeping, or, yet more strongly, "take no step of his way without weeping," the double infinitive being employed to mark the continued nature of the action. Comp. 2 Sam. iii. 16; Jer. i. 4; Gesen. § 131, 3 b.

STORE OF SEED; lit. "that which is drawn" out of the storehouse, and placed in the vessel or fold of the robe to be scattered on the field. Hence a sower is called "a drawer of seed." Amos ix. 13.

<sup>a</sup> שִׁבְּרָ צ' generally rendered, after the LXX, τὴν αἰχμαλωσίαν Σίων, though perhaps unnecessarily. For the construction, comp. Deut. xxx. 3; Ps. xiv. 7.

שִׁבְּרָ is formed from שׁוּב, as קְרִיבָה from קוּם (Lam. iii. 63), and signifies "the return," and so "those who return," just as שְׁבוּיָהּ or שְׁבוּיָהּ, "the captivity," and hence "the captives," גְּלוּיָהּ, "the exile," and so "the exiles." To this Hupfeld objects that it is hardly likely that a form שִׁבְּרָ should be found as well as שׁוּבָהּ, which occurs in the same sense "return," Isa. xxx. 15. Hence he maintains that שִׁבְּרָ is an old mistake for שְׁבוּיָהּ or שְׁבוּיָהּ.

That שִׁבְּרָ refers to the past is quite certain, from the following הָיִינוּ, and Jerome is right, "quum converteret . . . facti sumus."

וַי introduces emphatically the apodosis, and the verbs which follow are proper *imperfects*: “then our mouth *began to be filled*,” etc. . . . “*then they were saying*,” etc.

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### PSALM CXXVII.

THIS and the next Psalm form two bright companion pictures of social and domestic life, and of the happiness of a household which, trained in the fear of God, is blessed by his providence. “These pictures,” says Isaac Taylor, “are mild and bright; humanizing are they in the best sense; they retain certain elements of Paradise, and yet more the elements of the patriarchal era, with the addition of that patriotism and of that concentration in which the patriarchal life was wanting. The happy religious man, after the Hebrew pattern, possessed those feelings and habitudes which, if they greatly prevail in a community, impart to it the strength of a combination which is stronger than any other; uniting the force of domestic virtue, of rural, yeoman-like, agricultural occupations, of unaggressive defensive valor, and of a religious animation which is *national* as well as authentic and true. Our modern learning in Oriental modes of life and its circumstances and scenery may help us to bring into view either of two gay pictures,—that of the Hebrew man in mid-life, at rest in his country home, with his sturdy sons about him; his wife is still young; her fair daughters are like cornices sculptured as decorations for a palace; or else the companion picture, with its group on their way Zionward, resting for the sultry noon-hour under the palms by the side of a stream, and yet home, happy home, is in the recollection of the party; but the hill of God, ‘whereunto the tribes of the Lord go up,’ is in the fervent purpose of all; and while they rest they beguile the time with a sacred song and with its soothing melody. Happy were the people while their mind was such as this, and such their habits, and such their piety!” — *Spirit of the Hebrew Poetry*, pp. 165, 166.

There is not a word in either Psalm to guide us as to the time of its composition. The title gives the one hundred and twenty-seventh to Solomon (only one other in the entire Psalter, the seventy-second, being ascribed to him), but it may be doubted whether with sufficient reason. In form, in rhythm, in general tone and character, it resembles all the others in this collection. It has been conjectured that the proverb-like structure of the Psalm, the occurrence in it of several

words and phrases also occurring in the Proverbs, and possibly a supposed allusion to the name Jedediah in verse 2, "his beloved" (*y'dido*), and to the building of the temple in verse 1, may have led some collector to conclude that the Psalm was Solomon's. In the Septuagint it is anonymous. In the Syriac it is said to have been spoken by David concerning Solomon; but also concerning Haggai and Zechariah, who urged the building of the temple. Many, both ancient and modern, interpreters have, in the same way, discovered in the Psalm an allusion to the circumstances of the people after the return from the captivity, to the rebuilding of the temple, and the guarding of the newly erected walls in verse 1, and to the numerical increase of the people in verses 4, 5, which at such a time would possess especial importance in the eyes of a patriotic Hebrew. But the "house" in verse 1 is clearly not the temple, but any house which men build, for the whole Psalm is a picture of daily life, social and domestic; and, as De Wette very truly observes, to build houses, to guard the city, to be diligent in labors, would be just as important at any other period as after the return from the exile; and the Jews at all times of their history esteemed a large family one of the chief of blessings.

The great moral of the Psalm is, that without God's blessing all human efforts and human precautions are in vain; that man can never command success; that God gives and man receives. There is a passage in Tennyson's "Lotos Eaters," the strain of which is not unlike that of verse 3 of the Psalm, except that there is a shadow of sadness and weariness on the words of the modern poet which finds no response in the spirit of the Hebrew bard:

"Why are we weighed upon with heaviness,  
 And utterly consumed with sharp distress,  
 While all things else have rest from weariness?  
 All things have rest: why should we toil alone?  
 We only toil who are the first of things,  
 And make perpetual moan,  
 Still from one sorrow to another thrown;  
 Nor ever fold our wings,  
 And cease from wanderings;  
 Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;  
 Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,  
 'There is no joy but calm!'

Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?"

## [A Pilgrim Song. Of Solomon.\*]

- 1 EXCEPT Jehovah build the house,  
 They labor thereat in vain that build it ;  
 Except Jehovah watch over the city,  
 (The) watchman waketh (but) in vain.
- 2 Vain is it for you, ye that rise up early, ye that late take  
 rest,<sup>b</sup>  
 That ye eat the bread of toil :  
 So<sup>c</sup> he giveth his beloved sleep.<sup>d</sup>

1, 3. The truth seems obvious and undeniable that all success is from God, "An Gottes Segen ist alles gelegen": yet practically this is by most men forgotten. The spirit of the Chaldean invader of whom the prophet says, "This his strength is his God," the *Dextra mihi Deus*, is in the heart, if not on the lips, of others besides the atheist.

1. THE HOUSE, not "the temple," as some explain, nor "the family," as others, but the structure itself, as is evident from the context. WATCHMAN; lit. "keeper," i.e. by night, as in cxxi. 3, 4.

THEY LABOR, or rather "they have labored." It is the strict perfect; the writer places himself at the end of the work, sees its result, "they have spent their labor in vain"; and so in the next verse, "the watchman hath waked."

2. YE THAT RISE. The Hebrew expression runs literally: "making early to rise, making late to sit (down)," i.e. going forth early to labor, and returning late at night to take rest. It is an artificial lengthening of the natural day. Others render the latter clause as in the E. V. "sit up late," appealing to Isa. v. 11, where, however, the construction is different, the participle being followed not as here by the infinitive, but by a noun with the preposition, and the expression being lit., "that make late in the evening," i.e., no doubt, that prolong their revels into the night.

BREAD OF TOIL, or perhaps rather "of wearisome efforts." Comp. Prov.

v. 10, "and thy wearisome efforts (i.e. what thou hast gotten with labor and toil) be in the house of a stranger." There is an allusion, no doubt, to Gen. iii. 17, "in sorrow (or weariness) thou shalt eat of it all the days of thy life."

GIVETH SLEEP. Most follow Luther in rendering "He giveth it, i.e. bread, the necessaries of life, in sleep." What others obtain only with such wearing toil, such constant effort, with so much disappointment and so much sorrow, God gives to the man whom he loves as it were *while he sleeps*, i.e. without all this anxiety and exertion. This is the interpretation now perhaps commonly adopted, but it seems to me very questionable (though I accepted it in the first edition) for the following reasons: (1) it is necessary to supply "bread," not "bread of toil," in this clause; and (2) I am not satisfied that the rendering of the accusative "*in sleep*," is justifiable. The alleged parallel instances (see Critical Note) expressing parts of time are not really parallel. I am inclined, therefore, to prefer the rendering, "So he giveth his beloved sleep," though it is no doubt difficult to explain the reference of the particle "so." I suppose it refers to the principle laid down in the previous verse, there being a tacit comparison, "as all labor is vain without God's providence, as he builds the house, as he watches the city, so he gives the man who loves him and leaves all in his hands calm, refreshing sleep." There is no discouragement here, it



- 3 Behold, sons are a heritage from Jehovah,  
The fruit of the womb is (his) reward.
- 4 Like arrows in the hand of a mighty man,  
So are the sons of (a man's) youth.

is needless to say, to honest labor. It is undue anxiety, a feverish straining, a toiling, as if toil of itself could command success, the folly of which is condemned. Comp. for a similar sentiment Prov. x. 22, "The blessing of Jehovah maketh rich, and toil can add nothing thereto." The teaching is that of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount, "Wherefore I say unto you, Be not anxious (*μὴ μεριμνᾶτε*) for your life, what ye shall eat and what ye shall drink, neither for your body, wherewith ye shall be clothed," etc., Matt. vi. 25-34. See also Luke x. 41; 1 Pet. v. 7. God's "beloved" are not exempted from the great law of labor which lies upon all, but the sting is taken from it when they can leave all results in a Father's hand, with absolute trust in his wisdom and goodness.

3. BEHOLD, as drawing particular attention to one marked example of God's good gifts; which none can question is emphatically his *gift*; on this the poet lingers, "allured by the charm of the subject," for such there was, especially to an Oriental, to whom a numerous progeny was the first of blessings, giving value and stability to all others.

A HERITAGE, or perhaps here, in a wider sense, "a possession."

4. SONS OF YOUTH, i.e. sons of early married life (as in Prov. v. 18; Isa. liv. 6, "a wife of youth" is one married when a man is young). On the other hand, in Gen. xxxvii. 3, "a son of old age" is one born when his father is old. These sons of a man's youth are particularly mentioned, because they would naturally grow up to be a support and protection to their father in his old age, when he would most need their support.

5. THEY. The pronoun cannot be referred, with Calvin and many expositors, to the sons, for it is clearly the

father whose cause is supposed to be at stake, and who in the emergency finds his sons ready to defend him. Others, with more probability, suppose it to include both father and sons. But it may refer only to the father. Hupfeld calls the change of number harsh (from singular to plural), but it is not more so than in cvii. 43, "who is wise that *he* should observe . . . and that *they* should understand," etc.

THEIR ENEMIES. The pron. is included by the LXX, *τοῖς ἐχθροῖς αὐτῶν*, Jerome, *inimicis suis*. Cf. Job v. 4.

IN THE GATE, here mentioned chiefly as the place of judgment (Deut. xxi. 19; Isa. xxix. 21; Amos v. 12), as well as of all public acts. See on ix. 14. The allusion is to lawsuits, in which, if unjustly accused or brought before an unrighteous judge a man need not fear lest he should be "put to shame," i.e. lose his cause; his stalwart sons would not suffer might to prevail against right. The phrase "speak with their enemies," in the sense of defending their cause, may be illustrated by Josh. xx. 4; Gen. xlv. 15, "and he (the manslayer who has fled) shall stand in the entrance of the gate of the city, and shall *speaking his words* (i.e. plead his cause) in the ears of the elders of that city." Comp. 2 Sam. xix. 30; Jer. xii. 1. Others understand by speaking with enemies in the gate a battle fought with besiegers at the gates. So apparently Ewald, who refers to Gen. xxii. 17, "thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies"; and xxiv. 60, "let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them." This certainly harmonizes better with the warlike figure of the quiver full of arrows: but can "to speak with enemies" mean to fight with them? If so, it must be an idiom something like that of "looking one another in the face," 2 Kings xiv. 8, 11. But it may be understood of

5 Happy is the man who hath filled his quiver with them,  
They shall not be ashamed, when they speak with (their)  
enemies in the gate.

“parleying with them,” as Rabshakeh for instance with the captains and ministers of Hezekiah. With the sentiment of ver. 4, 5, compare Soph. *Antig.* 641-644 :

τούτου γὰρ οὐνεκ' ἄνδρες εὔχονται γονὰς  
κατηκόους φύσαντες ἐν δόμοις ἔχειν,  
ὡς καὶ τὸν ἐχθρὸν ἀνταμύνονται κακοῖς,  
καὶ τὸν φίλον τιμῶσιν ἐξ Ἰσοῦ πατρί.

So too, in Ecclus. xxx. 5, 6, it is said of a father that “while he lived, he saw and rejoiced in him (his son); and when he died, he was not sorrowful. He left behind him an avenger against his enemies, and one that shall requite kindness to his friends.” The coincidence of expression in the last two passages is remarkable.

<sup>a</sup> The following coincidences of expression have been supposed to justify the title. עֲצָבִים, *wearisome efforts*, ver. 2, occurs also Prov. v. 10; מְאַחֲרֵי, *making late*, in Prov. xxiii. 30. As in ver. 4 of the Psalm בְּנֵי יְהוָה, *sons of youth*, so in Prov. v. 18 אֵשֶׁת נַעֲמָן, *wife of youth*. Ver. 5, *in the gate*, as in Prov. xxii. 22; xxiv. 7. And the whole Psalm may be considered an expansion of Prov. x. 22.

<sup>b</sup> שָׁפַח, opposed to קִים as cxxxix. 2; Lam. iii. 63, as also are the two participles in the stat. constr. Aquila, rightly, βραδυνούσι καθῆσθαι.

<sup>c</sup> כֵּן, *so*, i.e. with just the same result. So in the passages cited by Delitzsch: Num. xiii. 33, “we were *so*, i.e. just the same in their sight”; Isa. li. 6, כְּמִוֶּכָּן, *as so*, i.e. in like manner; Job ix. 35, “for it is not so with me (as you think),” i.e. I am not guilty, as you assert; 2 Sam. xxiii. 5 may be interrogative, “For is not my house so with God that he hath made an everlasting covenant with me?” In all these instances Delitzsch would take כֵּן as meaning *small*, or *as nothing* (*gering, wie nichts*), which can only be justified if we suppose the word to be used δεικτικῶς.

<sup>d</sup> שָׁנָא, with Aramaic termination, for שָׁנָה, here it is said not acc. of the object, but of time, as frequently in other words, such as בְּקָרִי, זָרָב, etc., Gesen. § 118, 2; but, as I have said in the note on ver. 2, I do not think these can be regarded as really parallel instances because שָׁנָא is not a word of time.

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## PSALM CXXVIII.

THE introduction to the preceding Psalm may be consulted on this, which is a sunny picture of the family happiness of one who fears God, and leads a holy life.

Luther says: "In the former Psalm the prophet treated of both kinds of life, that is, both of national life and domestic life (*politia et oeconomia*). The same thing almost he doth in this Psalm, but yet after another sort. For although here also he joineth the two together, and wisheth the blessing of God and peace unto them both, yet hath he more respect to household government or matrimony, because it is as it were, the fountain and source of civil government. For the children whom we bring up and instruct at home, these will, in time to come, be the governors of the state. For of houses or families are made cities, of cities provinces, of provinces kingdoms. Household government, then, is with reason called the fountain of policy and political government, for if you destroy the one, the other cannot exist.

"Wherefore to this Psalm we will give this title, that it is an Epithalamium or Marriage Song, wherein the prophet comforteth them that are married, wishing unto them and promising them from God all manner of blessings."

The Psalm consists of two parts :

I. The description of the happy life (ver. 1-4).

II. The good wishes and promises for him who has entered upon ii (ver. 5, 6).

[A Pilgrim Song.]

- 1 HAPPY is every one that feareth Jehovah,  
That walketh in his ways.
- 2 For<sup>a</sup> the labor of thy hands shalt thou eat ;  
Happy art thou, and it (shall be) well with thee.
- 3 Thy wife<sup>b</sup> (shall be) like a fruitful vine, in the inner part of  
thy house ;  
Thy children, like olive-plants, round about thy table ;

2. THE LABOR OF THY HANDS This is the first part of the blessing, — the quiet, peaceful life of a thriving, prosperous yeoman in the country, with no fear that the harvest will be trodden down by the invader before it is ripe, or the cattle swept off by some roving predatory tribe. The opposite condition is threatened as a curse in the Law: "Ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it," Lev. xxvi. 16; "Thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein; thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the

grapes thereof," etc., Dent. xxviii. 30-33, 39, 40. See also Amos v. 11; Micah vi. 15; Eccl. vi. 1, 2; and for a contrast in this respect, between the lot of the righteous and that of the wicked, Isa. iii. 10, 11.

3. The comparison would perhaps be brought out more clearly by arranging the verse as follows:

Thy wife shall be in the inner part of  
thy house  
Like a fruitful vine;  
Thy children round about thy table  
Like the shoots of the olive.

4 Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth Jehovah.

5 Jehovah bless thee out of Zion,

And (mayest thou) see the prosperity of Jerusalem

All the days of thy life,

6 And see thy children's children.

Peace be upon Israel.

IN THE INNER PART; lit. "the sides of the house," as in Amos vi. 10, i.e. the women's apartments, as marking the proper sphere of the wife engaged in her domestic duties, and also to some extent her seclusion, though this was far less among the Jews than among other Orientals. The VINE is an emblem chiefly of *fruitfulness*, but perhaps also of dependence, as needing support; the OLIVE of vigor, healthy, joyous life. The same figure is employed by Euripides, *Herc. Fur.* 839, *Med.* 1,098.

5. Looking on the beautiful family picture, the poet turns to greet the father of the household, and to wish him the blessing of which he has already spoken in such glowing terms.

OUT OF ZION, as the dwelling-place

of God, his earthly throne and sanctuary, whence all blessing comes, cxxxiv. 3; xx. 2 [2]. Then follows the truly patriotic sentiment—the wish that he may see *the prosperity of Jerusalem*, as well as that he may live long to see his children and grandchildren. The welfare of the family and the welfare of the state are indissolubly connected.

(MAYEST THOU) SEE; lit. "look thou," an imperative following the optative, and therefore to be understood as expressing a wish, and even more, a promise, as in xxxvii. 3, where see note *b*.

6. CHILDREN'S CHILDREN. So Virgil: "Adspicies . . . natos natorum et qui nascentur ab illis."

<sup>a</sup> כִּי is sometimes thus placed after other words instead of standing first in the sentence: comp. cxviii. 10–12; Gen. xviii. 20. Hupfeld contends that it retains its usual meaning *for*, but he would transpose the two clauses of the verse; "Happy art thou, and it is well with thee, *For* thou shalt eat," etc. Delitzsch, on the other hand, following Ewald, takes it as emphatic, *surely*; in German *ja*. Hupfeld says כִּי never has this sense; but surely it may be used elliptically, = "be assured *that*," on the same principle as in the fuller phrases הִנֵּה כִּי, ver. 4, *behold that*, etc.; הִנֵּה לֵאמֹר, 1 Sam. x. 1; כִּי אֲמַנְּךָ, Job xii. 2; and the common expression כִּי אֵנִי, etc.

<sup>b</sup> אֲשֶׁתֶּיךָ; only here with this punctuation, instead of אֲשֶׁתֶּיךָ. פְּרִיָהּ is for פְּרִיָה, as בְּכִיָה, Lam. i. 6, for בְּכָה, Ewald § 189, *e*.

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## PSALM CXXIX.

THE nation, delivered from the Babylonish captivity, may well look back to all her past history, and trace in it the same great law of suffering, and the same ever-repeated tokens of God's mercy. The

record is a record of conflict, but it is also a record of victory (ver. 2). The great principle on which Israel's final deliverance rests is the *righteousness* of Jehovah (ver. 4). That has been manifested, as often before, so now in cutting asunder the cords by which the people had been bound in Babylon. Full of thankfulness at this deliverance, the poet draws thence an augury and a hope for the overthrow, complete and final, of their oppressors.

The Psalm consists, accordingly, of two stanzas, each of four verses; the first containing the record of the past, the second the prayer (which is also a hope, and almost a promise) for the future.

In subject, style, and rhythmical structure, it most nearly resembles Psalm cxxiv.

[A Pilgrim Song.]

- 1 GREATLY have they fought against me, from my youth  
up —  
Let Israel now say —
- 2 Greatly have they fought against me, from my youth up,  
(But) they have not also <sup>a</sup> prevailed against me.
- 3 The ploughers ploughed upon my back,  
They made long their furrows.<sup>b</sup>
- 4 Jehovah is righteous,  
He hath cut asunder the cord of the wicked.
- 5 Let them be ashamed and turned backward,  
As many as hate Zion.
- 6 Let them be as the grass on the housetops,  
That withereth afore <sup>c</sup> it be plucked up:<sup>d</sup>

1. GREATLY, or "long"; the same word as in cxx. 6; cxxiii. 4.

FOUGHT AGAINST ME; lit. "have been adversaries unto me."

FROM MY YOUTH UP. The youth of the nation was in Egypt, at which time God speaks of his relations to Israel as "love of youth," "espousals of youth," etc. Hos. ii. 15; Jer. ii. 2; xxii. 21; Ezek. xxiii. 3.

2. HAVE NOT PREVAILED. This is the point of the Psalm. The New Testament parallel is 2 Cor. iv. 8-10, and the whole history of the Christian church is an echo of the words.

3. FURROWS. Deep wounds, such as those made by the lash on the back of slaves. Comp. Isa. i. 6, and a different but not less expressive image, li. 23.

4. THE CORD. The figure probably is taken from the yoking of oxen: when the traces are cut, the bullock is free. Or "the cord" may be, in a wider sense, an image of slavery, as in ii. 3.

6. GRASS ON THE HOUSETOPS, easily springing up, but having no root. The flat roofs of the Eastern houses "are plastered with a composition of mortar, tar, ashes, and sand," in the crevices of

7 Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand,

Nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom ;

8 Neither do they which go by say,

“The blessing of Jehovah be upon you.”

“We bless you in the name of Jehovah.”

which grass often springs. The houses of the poor in the country were formed of a plaster of mud and straw, where the grass would grow still more freely: as all the images are taken from country life, it is doubtless to country dwellings that the poet refers. Comp. 2 Kings xix. 26 ; Isa xxxvii. 27.

7, 8. These two verses are a poetic expansion of the figure, an imaginative excursus, exactly parallel to that which

occurs in ver. 4, 5 of the one hundred and twenty-seventh Psalm. “The charm of the subject allures” the poet in each instance. The picture of the harvest-field is like that in Ruth ii. 4, where in like manner we have the greeting and counter-greeting. “And behold Boaz came from Bethlehem and said unto the reapers, Jehovah be with you. And they answered him, Jehovah bless thee.”

<sup>a</sup> ׁ. According to Ewald § 354 *a*, in this and other passages, such as cxix. 24 ; Ezek. xvi. 28 ; Eccl. vi. 7, the particle is equivalent to the Greek *ὁμως*, *nevertheless*. Hupfeld denies this, and argues that there is no need to depart from the usual signification in any case: thus here, “They have fought . . . they have not *also* prevailed.” Comp. Gen. xxx. 8 ; xxxviii. 24 ; Job ii. 10.

<sup>b</sup> ׁ. So the K'th'ibh, rightly, the word being plur. of מַנְהֵם, which occurs besides only in 1 Sam. xiv. 14. The ׁ marking the object, is not necessarily an Aramaism, though found more frequently in the later Psalms. Comp. lxix. 6 ; cxvi. 16. Here, however, the construction may be explained by the form of the verb, as = “*have made length to their furrows.*”

<sup>c</sup> מַנְהֵם, a doubly Aramaic form ; for (1) the relative ׁ belongs to the verb, *which withereth*, and (2) מַנְהֵם, occurs elsewhere only in Chald., Ezra v. 11 ; Dan. vi. 11, but not as here, immediately before a verb.

<sup>d</sup> מַנְהֵם, *to draw out*, used of drawing out a weapon, etc., here impersonal for the passive, *before one pulls up*, i.e. *before it is pulled up*. So the LXX, Tholock, and the Quinta, *πρὸ τοῦ ἐκσπασθῆναι*, and so Gesen. *Thesaur. in v.*, Hupfeld, De Wette, etc. Others render *before it shoot up*, or *be grown* so as to blossom (the blossom coming out of the sheath, as it were). So according to Theodoret, some copies of the LXX, *ἐξανθῆσαι*, Aq., *ἀνέθαιεν*. But it is extremely doubtful whether מַנְהֵם can be taken thus intransitively: no other instance of such usage has been alleged. Symm. has *ἐκκαυλῆσαι*, which may mean *has come to a stalk*, or perhaps be equivalent to *ἐκκαυλιζειν*, *root up*.

## PSALM CXXX.

THIS Psalm is a cry to God for the forgiveness of sin. The Psalmist pleads that he has long waited upon God, trusting in his word. Out of his own experience, he exhorts all Israel in like manner to hope and wait and look for God's mercy and redemption, which will assuredly be vouchsafed.

"When Luther, in the year 1530, was in the fortress of Coburg, on four occasions, during the night, there seemed to pass before his eyes burning torches, and this was followed by a severe headache. One night he saw three blazing torches come in at the window of his room, and he swooned away. His servant, coming to his assistance, poured oil of almonds into his ear and rubbed his feet with hot napkins. As soon as he recovered, he bade him read to him a portion of the Epistle to the Galatians, and during the reading fell asleep. The danger was over, and when he awoke he cried out joyfully: 'Come, to spite the devil, let us sing the Psalm *De profundis*, in four parts.'

"Being asked on one occasion which were the best Psalms, he replied, 'The Pauline Psalms' (*Psalmi Paulini*), and being pressed to say which they were, he answered: 'the thirty-second, the fifty-first, the one hundred and thirtieth, and the one hundred and forty-third; for they teach us that the forgiveness of sins is vouchsafed to them that believe, without the law and without works; therefore are they Pauline Psalms; and when David sings, "with thee is forgiveness, that thou mayest be feared," so Paul likewise saith, "God hath concluded all under sin, that he may have mercy on all." Therefore none can boast of his own righteousness; but the words, "That thou mayest be feared," thrust away all self-merit, teach us to take off our hat before God, and confess, *gratia est, non meritum, remissio non satisfactio*, it is all forgiveness, and no merit.' — *Delitzsch*.

This is the sixth of the seven Penitential Psalms, as they are called.

Delitzsch notices that several of the words and phrases of this Psalm occur also in Psalm lxxxvi., but there are few of them of a marked kind. It may be taken as evidence of the late date of the Psalm that the word rendered "attentive," verse 2, occurs besides only in 2 Chron. vi. 40; vii. 15, and the word "forgiveness," verse 4, only in Dan. ix. 9; Neh. ix. 17.

## [A Pilgrim Song.]

1 OUT of the depths have I called upon thee, O Jehovah!

2 Lord, hear my voice :

Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

3 If thou, O Jah, shouldest mark iniquities,

O Lord, who shall stand ?

4 But with thee is forgiveness,

That thou mayest be feared.\*

1. **OUT OF THE DEPTHS.** Deep waters, as so often, being an image of overwhelming affliction : comp. lxix. 2 [3], 14 [15]; Isa. li. 10. "Unde clamat?" says Augustine, "De profundo. Quis est ergo qui clamat? Peccator. Et qua spe clamat? Quia qui venit solvere peccata, dedit spem etiam in profundo posito peccatori. . . . Clamat sub molibus et fluctibus iniquitatum suarum. Circumspexit se, circumspexit vitam suam; vidit illam undique flagitiis et facinoribus co-operatum: quacunque respexit, nihil in se bonum invenit, nihil illi justitiae serenum potuit occurrere."

**HAVE I CALLED,** a strict perfect (not a present), as marking a long experience continued up to the present moment; comp. ver. 5.

2. **LET THINE EARS BE ATTENTIVE.** The same expression occurs 2 Chron. vi. 40.

3. **MARK;** lit. "keep," or "watch," so as to observe: the same word as in ver. 6, but used in the sense of *marking, observing*, Job x. 14; xiv. 16 (comp. for the sense Ps. xc. 8), and with the further sense of *keeping in memory*, i.e. in order to punish, Jer. iii. 5; Amos i. 11.

**WHO SHALL (OR CAN) STAND?** Comp. lxxvi. 7 [8]; Nah. i. 6; Mal. iii. 2. "Non dixit, ego non sustinebo; sed, quis sustinebit? Vidit enim prope totam vitam humanam circumlatrari peccatis suis, accusari omnes conscientias cogitationibus suis, non inveniri cor eastum praesumens de sua justitia."—Augustine.

4. **BUT,** or rather **FOR,** the conjunction

referring to what is *implied* in the previous verse. The sentiment expanded would be: "If thou shouldest mark iniquities, none can stand; but thou dost not mark them, *for* with thee is forgiveness."

**FORGIVENESS;** lit. "the forgiveness" (either the common use of the article before abstract nouns, or possibly with reference to something not expressed, e.g. "the forgiveness we need"). This noun occurs besides only in two later passages, Neh. ix. 17; Dan. ix. 9; and the adjective from the same root only in Ps. lxxxv. 5 [6]; but the verb occurs frequently, both in the Pentateuch and the later books.

**THAT THOU MAYEST BE FEARED.** God freely forgives sin, not that men may think lightly of sin, but that they may magnify his grace and mercy in its forgiveness, and so give him the fear and the honor due unto his name. So in xxv. 11, the Psalmist prays, "For thy name's sake pardon mine iniquity"; and lxxix. 9, "Purge away our sins for thy name's sake," i.e. that God's name may be glorified as a God who pardoneth iniquity, transgression, and sin. This forgiveness is a far more powerful motive than any other to call forth holy fear and love and self-sacrifice. Luther says: "Why doth he add, 'That thou mayest be feared'? . . . It is as if he should say, I have learned by experience, O Lord, why there is mercy with thee, and why of right thou mayest challenge this title unto thyself, that thou art mer-



5 I have waited for Jehovah, my soul hath waited ;

And in his word have I hoped.

6 My soul (looketh) for the Lord,

More than watchmen (look) for the morning,

(I say, more than) watchmen (look) for the morning.

ciful and forgivest sins. For in that thou shuttest all under free mercy, and leavest nothing to the merits and works of men, therefore thou art feared. But if all things were not placed in thy mercy, and we could take away our sins by our own strength, no man would fear thee, but the whole world would proudly contemn thee. For daily experience shows that where there is not this knowledge of God's mercy, there men walk in a presumption of their own merits. . . . The true fear of God, the worship, the true reverence, yea, the true knowledge of God resteth on nothing but mercy, that through Christ we assuredly trust that God is reconciled unto us. . . . Christian doctrine doth not deny or condemn good works, but it teacheth that God willet not to mark iniquities, but willet that we believe, that is, trust his mercy. For with him is forgiveness, that he may be feared, and continue to be our God. Whoever, then, do believe that God is ready to forgive, and for Christ's sake to remit, sins, they render unto God true and reasonable service; they strive not with God about the law, works, and righteousness, but, laying aside all trust in themselves, do fear him because of his mercy, and thus are made sons who receive the Holy Ghost, and begin truly to do the works of the law. So in these two lines, David sets forth to us the sum and substance of all Christian doctrine, and that sun which giveth light to the church."

5. I HAVE WAITED. This has been the attitude of soul in which God's mercy has come to me.

IN HIS WORD, on the ground of his promises I have claimed that mercy, and now my soul "is unto the Lord," that I may ever find fresh mercy, and grace for all my need. This waiting,

hoping attitude is the attitude of a true heart, of one not easily discouraged, of one that says, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Luther, taking the verbs as presents, "I wait," etc., traces the connection somewhat differently. "The Psalmist," he observes, "first prays to be heard (ver. 2), then, obtaining mercy, he perceiveth that he is heard. Now, therefore, he addeth an exhortation whereby he stirreth himself up constantly to persevere in this knowledge of grace. As if he had said, I know that there is mercy with the Lord. This principle article I have in some part now learned. Now this remaineth for me to do, to wait upon the Lord, that is, to trust in the Lord, that I may continue in this knowledge, and hold fast this hope of mercy forever."

6. MY SOUL (LOOKETH) FOR; lit. "my soul is unto the Lord" (as in exliii. 6, "my soul is unto thee"), as the eyes of watchers through the long and weary night look eagerly for the first streaks of the coming day. Delitzsch quotes in illustration of the expression the words of Chr. A. Crusius on his death-bed, when, lifting up his eyes and hands to heaven, he exclaimed: My soul is full of the grace of Jesus Christ, *my whole soul is unto God.*"

WATCHMEN, as in cxxvii. 1. The allusion here is probably to the night-watch of the temple (see introduction to Ps. cxxxiv.) anxiously expecting the moment when they would be released from their duties. But sentinels watching a city or an encampment might also be included in the term, and indeed all who, from whatever cause, are obliged to keep awake. No figure could more beautifully express the longing of the soul for the breaking of the day of God's loving mercy.

- 7 O Israel, hope in Jehovah ;  
 For with Jehovah is loving-kindness,  
 And with him is plenteous redemption.
- 8 And HE will redeem Israel  
 From all his iniquities.

7. He has not been disappointed of his hope, and therefore he can bid Israel hope. "Here he hath respect," says Luther, "to that great conflict wherein the mind, oppressed with calamities, beginneth to doubt of the mercy of God. In this conflict, because the mind doth not so soon feel those comforts which the word promiseth and faith believeth, as it would do, it is ready to despair. Against this temptation David armeth us, and warneth us to be mindful that we must wait upon the Lord, and never depart from the word or believe anything against the word, and he showeth the cause why. For with the Lord is mercy. . . . In myself I perceive nothing but wrath, in the devil nothing but hatred, in the world nothing but extreme fury and madness. But the Holy Ghost cannot lie, which willeth me to trust

because there is mercy with the Lord, and with him is plenteous redemption."

PLENTEOUS REDEMPTION, or more literally, "redemption plenteously" (the inf. absol. being used as an adverb). He call it plenteous, as Luther says, because such is the straitness of our heart, the slenderness of our hopes, the weakness of our faith, that it far exceeds all our capacity, all our petitions and desires.

8. HE, emphatic, he alone, for none other can.

FROM HIS INIQUITIES, not merely from the punishment (as Ewald and Hupfeld). The redemption includes forgiveness of sins, the breaking of the power and dominion of sin, and the setting free from all the consequences of sin.

<sup>a</sup> אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה. The words seem to have been a stumbling-block to the Greek translators. The LXX render as if it were אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה, joining these words with what follows, ἕνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματός σου ὑπέμεινά σε, Κύριε. Aq., Th., ἕνεκεν τοῦ φόβου; Symm., ἕνεκεν τοῦ νόμου (possibly taking the *fear* of Jehovah to be a name of the law, as in xix. 10). Another has ἕνεκεν τοῦ γνωσθῆναι τὸν λόγον σου; and another ὅπως ἐπίφοβος ἔσῃ, this last alone being a rendering of the Hebrew. Jerome goes equally astray: "Quia tuum est propitiatio, cum *terribilis sis*, sustinui Dominum." The Fathers, of course, following the Greek or the Vulgate, "propter legem tuam sustinui te, Domine," miss the whole scope of the passage.

<sup>b</sup> This is clearly the construction: "My soul is unto the Lord," Aq., ψυχὴ μου εἰς Κύριον. The construction in the E.V., "more than they that watch for the morning," is not supported by usage: שָׂמַר followed by לְ never means *to watch for*.

## PSALM CXXXI.

WHETHER written by David, to whom the title gives it, or not, this short Psalm, one of the most beautiful in the whole book, assuredly breathes David's spirit. A childlike simplicity, an unaffected humility, the honest expression of that humility as from a heart spreading itself out in conscious integrity before God—this is what we find in the Psalm, traits of a character like that of David. Delitzsch calls the Psalm an echo of David's answer to Michal, 2 Sam vi. 22: "And I will become of still less account than this, and I will be lowly in mine own eyes." At the same time, with the majority of interpreters, he holds it to be a post-exile Psalm, written with a view to encourage the writer himself and his people to the same humility, the same patient waiting upon God, of which David was so striking an example.

[A Pilgrim Song. Of David.]

I JEHOVAH, my heart is not haughty,  
 Nor mine eyes lifted up;  
 Neither do I busy myself in things too great,<sup>a</sup>  
 And in things too wonderful for me.  
 2 But<sup>b</sup> I have stilled and hushed my soul;  
 As a weaned child with his mother,  
 As the weaned child<sup>c</sup> (I say) is my soul within me.

1. "All virtues together," it has been said, "are a body whereof humility is the head." It is this chief, crowning virtue to which the poet lays claim; "for Jehovah hath respect unto the lowly," cxxxviii. 6; and "dwelleth with him that is of an humble spirit," Isa. lvii. 15.

MINE EYES LIFTED UP, as in xviii. 27 [28]; ci. 5; therefore a Davidic expression. Pride has its seat in the heart, looks forth from the eyes, and expresses itself in the actions.

I BUSY MYSELF; lit. "walk," a common figure for the life and behavior. The perfects denote strictly past action continued to the present moment (as in cxxx. 1, 5), and the intensive form of the verb (Piel) the busy, continual action.

TOO GREAT . . . TOO WONDERFUL; here probably in a practical sense: "I have not aimed at a position above me, involving duties and responsibilities too heavy for me." Comp. for the phrase, Gen. xviii. 14, "Is anything too wonderful for Jehovah?" Deut. xvii. 8, "When a matter is too wonderful [too hard] for thee for judgment"; xxx. 11, "For this commandment . . . is not too wonderful for thee, it is not far off."

2. I HAVE STILLED MY SOUL, i.e. the pride and passions which were like the swelling waves of an angry sea. The word is used in Isa. xxviii. 25, of *levelling* the ground after the clods have been broken by the plough. The E. V. uses "behaved" in the old sense of restraining, managing, as, for instance, in Shake-

3 O Israel, hope in Jehovah,  
From henceforth, even forever.

speare's *Timon of Ath.*, "He did behave his anger ere 'twas spent." The next two clauses would be more exactly rendered :

"As a weaned child upon his mother" (i.e. as he lies resting upon his mother's bosom);

"As the weaned child (I say), lies my soul upon me."

The figure is beautifully expressive of the humility of a soul chastened by disappointment. As the weaned child, when its first fretfulness and uneasiness are past, no longer cries and frets and longs for the breast, but lies still and is content, because it is with its mother; so my soul is weaned from all discontented thoughts, from all fretful desires for earthly good, waiting in stillness upon God, finding its satisfaction in his presence, resting peacefully in his arms. "The weaned child," writes a mother, with reference to this passage, "has for the first time become *conscious of grief*. The piteous longing for the sweet nour-

ishment of his life, the broken sob of disappointment, mark the trouble of his innocent heart. It is not so much the *bodily* suffering; he has felt that pain before, and cried while it lasted; but now his *joy and comfort are taken away*, and he knows not why. When his head is once more laid on his mother's bosom, then he trusts and loves and rests; but he has learned the first lesson of humility; he is cast down, and clings with fond helplessness to his one friend." At a time when the devices of our modern civilization are fast tending to obliterate the beauty of this figure, mothers no longer doing their duty by their children, it seems the more necessary to draw attention to it.

3. Prayer, as at the close of the last Psalm, that the experience of the individual may become the experience of the nation, that they too may learn to lie still and trust and wait, in that hope which, like faith and love, abideth forever (1 Cor. xiii. 13).

<sup>a</sup> It is doubtful whether the comparison יְהוָה יְהוָה belongs to both the adjectives. Perhaps the rendering of the E.V. "in great things, and in things too wonderful" is to be preferred.

<sup>b</sup> לֹא אֵין, not conditional. with the apodosis beginning at לֹא אֵין, nor interrogative, as if = אֵין אֵין, but either an asseveration, *surely* (commonly so used after words of swearing, but also without the adjuration, Num. xiv. 35; Isa. v. 9. and often in Job), or serving to introduce an opposition to what precedes, as in Gen. xxiv. 38; Jer. xxii. 6; Ezek. iii. 6; but even in these instances, the force of the particles is rather that of emphatic assertion than of mere opposition. "God do so to me, if I do *not* this or that," is the formula always implied in their use.

<sup>c</sup> לֹא אֵין. The article is clearly the article of reference, i.e. it resumes the word in the previous line: "As a weaned child. . . as the weaned child, I say." And this resumption of the previous expression is in entire accord with the common rhythmical structure of so many of these Pilgrim Songs. Hupfeld most unnecessarily takes the double אֵין as correlative, and explains, "As a weaned child, so is that which is weaned in me, viz. my soul." There is, I think, a designed

parallel in the use of the prep. *by* in the two lines (though Delitzsch denies this) : As the weaned child lies *upon* its mother's breast, so my soul lies *upon* me ; the soul being for the moment regarded as separate from the man, as that part which is the seat of the affections, passions, etc.

## PSALM CXXXII.

THIS Psalm is a prayer that God's promises made to David may not fail of fulfilment, that he will dwell for ever in the habitation which he chose for himself in Zion, and that the children of David may forever sit upon his throne. It opens with a recital of David's efforts so bring the ark to its resting-place ; it ends with a recital of the promises made to David and to his seed.

There has been much difference of opinion as to the occasion for which the Psalm was written.

1. The majority of the ancient interpreters regard it as a prayer of David's, either at the consecration of the tabernacle after the removal of the ark thither, or at the time when he formed the design of building the temple, and received in consequence the promise in 2 Sam. vii., or at the dedication of Araunah's threshing-floor, 2 Sam. xxiv. But the petition in verse 10, " For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of thine anointed," does not seem natural in the mouth of David. In the mouth of one of his descendants, whose confidence and hope rested on the promise made to his ancestor, and who could plead David's faithfulness to the covenant, such a petition becomes much more intelligible. In any case, it is clear that the Psalm could not have been composed till after the promise had been given to David in 2 Sam. vii., to which it contains a distinct reference, and therefore was not intended to be sung at the consecration of the tabernacle on Mount Zion.

2. Others, with more probability, have thought that the Psalm was written in commemoration of the completion and dedication of the temple, either by Solomon himself, or by some poet of his time. On such a view, this ode is seen to be harmonious and consistent throughout. It is perfectly natural that Solomon, or a poet of his age, writing a song for such an occasion, should recur to the earlier efforts made by his father to prepare a habitation for Jehovah. On the completion of the work, his thoughts would inevitably revert to all the steps which had led to its accomplishment. It is no less natural that at such a time the promise given to David should seem doubly precious, that it

should be clothed with a new interest, a fresh significance, when David's son sat upon his throne, and when the auspicious opening of his reign might itself be hailed as a fulfilment of the promise. It is, moreover, in favor of this view that verses 8-10 of the Psalm form, with one slight variation, the conclusion of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, according to the version of that prayer given in the Chronicles (2 Chron. vi. 41, 42).<sup>1</sup>

3. Many of the more recent expositors, starting with the prejudice that all these Pilgrim Songs belong to a period subsequent to the exile, suppose the Psalm to have been written for the dedication of the second temple, or in order to encourage Zerubbabel, the chief representative at that time of David's family, "whose spirit God had stirred to go up to build the house of the Lord" (Ezra i. 5). But the title of "the anointed" would hardly have been given to Zerubbabel. He never sat on the throne. The crowns which Zechariah was directed to make were to be placed not on the head of Zerubbabel, but on the head of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high-priest: the sovereignty was to be with him; "he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne" (Zech. vi. 10-13). It is possible, of course, that a poet in these later times might have transported himself in imagination into the times of David, and that his words might borrow their coloring and glow from the brighter period which inspired his song. Yet it is hardly probable that there should have been no allusion to the existing depression of David's house, no lamentation over its fallen fortunes, as in Ps. lxxxix., for instance, no hint of any contrast between its past and its present condition.<sup>2</sup> Such entire sinking of the present in the past is hardly conceivable.

<sup>1</sup> It is at least evident that the compiler of the book supposed the Psalm to have been written with reference to that event. The passage does not occur at all in Solomon's prayer as given in 1 Kings viii. This, of itself, makes it probable that the Chronicler borrows from the Psalmist, not the Psalmist from the Chronicler. Besides, the variations in the Chronicles are such as would be made in changing poetry into prose, especially the *explanation* given in ver. 10 in the Psalm: "Remember the mercies of David thy servant." We have already seen, in the introduction to Ps. cv., that the writer of that book allows himself some liberty in quoting from the Psalms.

<sup>2</sup> I confess I can see no indication in the Psalm of any such contrast, though it has been assumed by many interpreters, both ancient and modern. The mention of the ark does not prove that the Psalm was not intended for the dedication of the second temple, for although it may be inferred from Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* v. § v. 5), and from the Mishna (*Yoma*, 5, 2) — where we are told that in the place of the ark was an altar-stone three fingers' height above the ground, on which the high-priest placed the censers on the Day of Atonement — that the ark had perished in the destruction of the first temple, still the exiles might have used, without changing them, the words which were sung at Solomon's dedication.

Still less probable does it appear to me that some prince of the house of David, at a still later period of the history, should be the "anointed" of the Psalm, or that it is to be brought down to the age of the Maccabees.

4. It may be mentioned that Origen, Theodoret, and some other of the Greek Fathers, hold the Psalm to be a prayer of the exiles in Babylon, longing for the rebuilding of the temple, and the restoration of David's dynasty.

5. Finally, Maurer would refer the Psalm to the time of Josiah, and conjectures that it may have been written after the reformation which he introduced in accordance with the law of Moses.

[A Pilgrim Song.]

- 1 O JEHOVAH, remember for David  
 All his anxious cares ;  
 2 How he sware unto Jehovah,  
 (And) vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob :  
 3 "I will not come into the tent of my house,  
 I will not go up to the couch of my bed,  
 4 I will not give sleep<sup>a</sup> to mine eyes,  
 Nor slumber to my eyelids,

1. REMEMBER, i.e. so as to fulfil thy promise made to him. Comp. 2 Chron. vi. 42.

ALL HIS ANXIOUS CARES; lit. "all his being afflicted" (the infin. Pual used as a noun). See the same word, cxix. 71; Isa. liii. 4. David had *tormented* himself with his anxiety to prepare a suitable earthly dwelling-place for Jehovah. First, the building of the tabernacle on Mount Zion, and the solemn bringing up of the ark there, had engaged his thoughts. The prayer in ci. 2, "Oh, when wilt thou come unto me?" is the best comment on David's *afflictions* and *anxious cares* till his purpose was accomplished. In contrast with this, he says himself, "We did not seek it (did not trouble ourselves about it) in the day of Saul," 1 Chron. xiii. 3. Next, if we suppose the Psalm to take a wider range, there may also be included in these "anxious cares" his earnest

desire to build the temple, and the great preparations which he made with that object, by collecting the materials, furnishing the design to his son, and making provision for the service and worship of God on a scale of unexampled magnificence.

2. HOW HE SWARE; lit. "who sware." MIGHTY ONE OF JACOB. This name of God (repeated in ver. 5) occurs first in Gen. xlix. 24, in the mouth of the dying Jacob. It is found besides only in three passages: in Isa. i. 24 ("Mighty One of *Israel*"); xlix. 26; lx. 16.

3. TENT OF MY HOUSE, i.e. "the tent which is my house" (as in the next clause, "the couch which is my bed"), a good instance of the way in which the associations of the old patriarchal tent-life fixed themselves in the language of the people.

4. SLEEP TO MINE EYES. See the same proverbial expression, Prov. vi. 4.

5 Until I find a place for Jehovah,

A dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob.”

6 Lo, we heard of it in Ephrathah,

We found it in the field of the wood :<sup>b</sup>

5. A DWELLING; lit. “dwellings”; but see on the plur. lxxxiv. 1. This has been referred (1) to David’s intention of building the temple (2 Sam. vii.), and the preparatory consecration of the threshing-floor of Araunah (2 Sam. xxiv.); (2) to the placing of the ark in a fixed abode on Zion, after its many wanderings: comp. lxxviii. 68, 69. The latter is the more probable.

6. This verse is extremely obscure; but it seems, at any rate, to describe in some way the accomplishment of David’s purpose. There are three principal points in it to be considered:

(1) To what does the feminine pronoun “it,” which is the object of the two verbs “heard,” “found,” refer? Either (a) it is an indefinite neuter, “We heard of the matter”; or, as Bunsen more precisely explains, “We heard it, — viz. the joyful cry in ver. 7, — Let us go to the temple on Zion.” The objection to taking the pronoun in this way is, that the second verb “we found,” is not very suitable on either explanation. Or (b) the pronoun refers to the ark, which has already been tacitly brought before us in ver. 5 (where “a dwelling for Jehovah” is a dwelling for the ark, as the symbol of his presence), and is expressly mentioned in ver. 7. The noun is fem. as well as masc., and, by a not uncommon Hebrew usage, the pronoun anticipates the mention of the object to which it points. G. Bauer (in a note to De Wette) objects that Hebrew usage will not allow of the rendering “We heard of it,” and that the only proper translation is, “We heard it,” viz. the rumor. But in Jer. xlvi. 12 we have the same construction (the verb with the accus.), “The nations have heard of thy shame.”

(2) In the use of the verbs “heard . . . found,” is the parallelism synonymous or antithetical? Do they describe two parts of the same action: “We

heard it was,” etc., “and there we found it”? or do they mark two distinct and opposed actions: “We heard it was in one place; we found it in another”; The answer to this question must depend on the interpretation we give to the proper names which follow.

(3) What are we to understand by “Ephrathah” and “the field of the wood”?

(a) To take the latter expression first.

This may be either an appellative or a proper name. In the last case, it may be rendered “fields of Jaar,” *Jaar* being a shortened form of Kirjath-jearim, “the city of woods”; for Jearim, “woods,” is only the plural of Jaar, “wood.” The name of this city, as it happens, appears in a variety of different forms; in Jer. xxvi. 20, as Kirjath-hajearim (i.e. with the article), and apocopated, Kirjath-arim, Ezra ii. 25 (comp. Josh. xviii. 28); it is also called Kirjath-baal, Josh. xv. 60; and Baalah, xv. 9, 1 Chron. xiii. 6 (comp. Josh. xv. 10, “the mountain of Jearim.” with 11, “the mountain of Baalah”); and apparently Baale-Judah, 2 Sam. vi. 2. There is no reason why, poetically, it should not be called Jaar; and when we further remember that the ark, after having been captured by the Philistines and restored by them, remained for twenty years at Kirjath-jearim (1 Sam. vii. 2), it is at least probable that, in a passage which speaks of the removal of the ark to Zion, there may be some allusion to the place of its previous sojourn.

(b) Ephrathah, as the name of a place, only occurs elsewhere as the ancient name of Bethlehem, Gen. xxxv. 16, 19; xlvi. 7; Ruth iv. 11. In Micah v. 2 [1] the two names are united, Bethlehem-Ephrathah. Hengstenberg maintains that the usage is the same here, “We, being in Bethlehem, heard.” There, he says, David spent his youth, while as yet he had only heard of the invisible



## 7 "Let us come into his dwelling ;

Let us bow ourselves before his footstool.

ark of the covenant. It was known only by hearsay ; no one went to see it ; it was almost out of mind. Comp. Job xlii. 5 ; Ps. xviii. 44, 45 (and David's words in 1 Chron. xiii. 3). But the pronoun "we" must surely refer not to David, but to the people at large. And besides, although the construction "We in Beth-lehem heard it" may possibly be defended by Matt. ii. 2, "We in the East saw his star," yet here the parallelism seems rather to require the sense, "We heard that it was at Ephrathah ; we found it at Kirjath-Jearim."

Other explanations have accordingly been given of the name.

(α) Although *Ephrathah* is only an ancient name for Bethlehem, yet as Ephrathite as frequently denotes an Ephraimite as a Bethlehemite, so it is possible that Ephrathah here may be a name for Ephraim. In that case the allusion is to the first resting-place of the ark in Shiloh, which was the capital of Ephraim : "We heard in ancient story that the ark was placed in Shiloh ; we found it, when at last it was to be removed to its new abode, at Kirjath-jearim." The word *found* would naturally suggest the many vicissitudes and wanderings of the ark in the interval.

(β) It has been supposed that Ephrathah is not a proper name, but denotes, in accordance with its etymology, the *fruitful land*, by way of contrast with the *fields of the wood*, i.e. the forest district ; the former denoting the southern part of Palestine, as the more cultivated ; the latter the northern, and especially the woody ranges of Lebanon. Thus the whole land would be poetically summed up under the two heads of the fertile and the woody regions, and the meaning would be, "From all parts of the land we flocked at the summons of our king, to bring up the holy ark to its dwelling-place in Zion." In this case, the verbs "heard . . . found" cannot be taken as describing different and contrasted acts, but as referring to one and the same event.

(γ) Ephrathah has been conjectured (also with reference to its etymological meaning of "the *fruitful country*") to be a name for Beth-shemesh, the spot where the ark was first deposited by the Philistines, and whence it was subsequently removed to "the fields of the wood," i.e. Kirjath-jearim. According to this interpretation, which is that of Hupfeld, the verse would mean, "We heard that the ark was brought to Beth-shemesh first ;

We found it at Kirjath-jearim."

(δ) Lastly, Delitzsch identifies Ephrathah with the district about Kirjath-jearim, and on these grounds : Caleb had by Ephrath, his third wife, a son named Hur (1 Chron. ii. 19). By the descendants of this Hur Bethlehem was peopled (1 Chron. iv. 4) ; and from Shobal, a son of this Hur, the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim were descended (2 Chron. ii. 50). Kirjath-jearim, then, is, as it were, a daughter of Bethlehem. Bethlehem was originally called Ephrathah, and this latter name was afterwards given to the district about Bethlehem, whence in Micah v. 2 [1] we find the compound name Bethlehem-Ephrathah. Kirjath-jearim belonged to Caleb-Ephrathah (1 Chron. ii. 24), which is probably to be distinguished as the northern part of the territory from Negeb Caleb, "the south of Caleb" (1 Sam. xxx. 14).

On the whole, whichever interpretation we adopt, the general scope of the passage seems to be : Remember thy servant David ; remember all his efforts to build thee an habitation for thy name ; he gave himself no rest till he had brought the ark to Zion. We heard where the ark was ; we went to fetch it, saying one to another as we brought it to its new abode, "Let us come into his dwelling," etc. And now, by the memory of David, by the memory of thy covenant with him and his faithfulness to that covenant, we plead with thee. Reject not the prayer of our king, who is David's son ; grant him the request

- 8 Arise, O Jehovah, into thy resting-place,  
Thou, and the ark of thy strength.
- 9 Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness,  
And let thy saints shout for joy."
- 10 For thy servant David's sake,  
Turn not away the face of thine anointed.
- 11 Jehovah hath sworn unto David, —  
It is truth,<sup>c</sup> he will not depart from it, —  
"Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.
- 12 If thy sons will keep my covenant,  
And my testimony<sup>e</sup> that I shall teach them,  
Their sons also forevermore  
Shall sit upon thy throne."

of his lips; fulfil all his desires. (Comp. xx. 1-4.

7. HIS DWELLING, or "tabernacles," the house which David calls "curtains," 2 Sam. vii. 2, purposely repeated from ver. 5. On the plural form of the word, see on lxxxiv. 1.

HIS FOOTSTOOL. See on xcix. 5.

8. As in ver. 7 we have the expression of the feelings of the congregation in David's time, so in ver. 8 there may be a transition to the language of the people in Solomon's time. To the poet's thoughts the congregation is one, and the utterance of their feelings is one. He blends together the song which was raised when the ark was carried up to Zion with the song which was raised when it was again moved from Zion to its final resting-place in the temple, 2 Chron. v. 2-5; vi. 41.

ARISE. The words are taken from the old battle-cry of the nation, when the ark set forward "to search out a resting-place for them" (Num. x. 33-36). Comp. Ps. lxxviii. 1 [2].

ARK OF THY STRENGTH. The only place in the Psalms where the ark is mentioned. This designation occurs only here and in 2 Chron. vi. 41.

9. LET THY PRIESTS. The blessing of God's presence in its effects both upon the priests and the people.

RIGHTEOUSNESS. In the promise (ver. 16) which corresponds to this

prayer, SALVATION is the equivalent word; see on lxxi. 15.

SAINTS, or "beloved," as also in ver. 16. See on xvi. 10. From this verse are taken the petitions in our liturgy: "Endue thy ministers with righteousness. And make thy chosen people joyful."

10. TURN NOT AWAY THE FACE, i. e. refuse not the prayer. See the same phrase 1 Kings ii. 16, 17, 20; 2 Kings xviii. 24, where the E. V. renders, "deny me not, say me not nay."

THINE ANOINTED. This cannot be David (as Hengst., Hupfeld, and others). It would be extremely harsh to say, "For David's sake refuse not the prayer of David." Obviously the anointed here must be Solomon (or some one of David's descendants), who pleads David and the promises made to David as a reason why his prayer should not be rejected. In 2 Chron. vi. 42, the verse stands somewhat differently: "O Jehovah God, turn not away the face of thine anointed; remember the loving-kindnesses of David thy servant." The last clause most probably means, "Thy loving kindnesses to David"; but others render "the goodness or piety of David thy servant," the meaning of the Hebrew word *chesed* being ambiguous. The prayer is a prayer for the fulfilment of the promise. Hence the promise is

- 13 For Jehovah hath chosen Zion ;  
 He hath desired it as an abode for himself.
- 14 This is my resting-place forevermore ;  
 Here will I abide, for I have desired it.
- 15 I will abundantly bless her provision ;  
 Her poor I will satisfy with bread.
- 16 Her priests also will I clothe with salvation,  
 And her saints shall shout aloud for joy.
- 17 There will I make the horn of David to bud ;  
 I have prepared a lamp for mine anointed.
- 18 His enemies will I clothe with shame,  
 But upon himself shall his crown shine.

quoted, ver. 11, 12. Others suppose that the subject of the prayer is to be found in ver. 8, 9.

11. HATH SWORN . . . WILL NOT DEPART; marking the unchangeableness of the promise, as in ex. 4, "Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent." Comp. lxxxix. 34-37 [35-38]. The substance of the promise follows, as given in 2 Sam. vii.

13. The choosing of Zion as the seat of the sanctuary is mentioned as being closely and intimately connected with the choosing of David as king and the tribe of Judah as the ruling tribe. The connection is: Jehovah has given the sovereignty to David and to David's house; for he hath chosen Zion to be his own dwelling-place. The religious centre and the political centre of the people are one and the same: exactly as in exxii. 4, 5. Comp. lxxviii. 67-71, "He chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which he loved. . . He chose David also his servant," etc.

14. MY RESTING-PLACE. Shiloh had been abandoned; for a time the ark was

at Bethel, Judges xx. 27; then at Mizpah, Judges xxi. 5; afterwards, for twenty years, at Kirjath-jearim, 1 Sam. vii. 2; and then for three months in the house of Obed-Edom, before it was finally brought to its last resting-place.

16. A promise that the petition in ver. 9 should be granted.

17. MAKE THE HORN . . . TO BUD. Giving ever new strength to his house and victory over all enemies. See on lxxv. 5 [6], and comp. Ezek. xxix. 21. We might render, "I will make an horn to bud for David (as in ver. 1 "remember for David"; but "David" is here put for the house of David, and therefore the rendering in the text is perhaps preferable.

A LAMP. See on xviii. 28 [29]. Comp. 1 Kings xi. 36, "And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a lamp always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there."

18. SHINE; lit. "blossom." On the etymological connection between the two ideas, see Gesenius, *Thesaur. in v.*

<sup>a</sup> שָׁנָה for שָׁנָה, according to Hupfeld apocopated from the fuller form שָׁנָהּ, like שָׁנָהּ, שָׁנָהּ (see on xvi. note <sup>k</sup>), as he says is plain from the rejection of the first vowel, which cannot otherwise be explained. Delitzsch, following Ewald (*Lehrb.* § 173 *d*), regards the termination as Aramaic. שָׁנָהּ, he observes, is always said of the

*eyelids*, Gen. xxxi. 40; Prov. vi. 4; Eccl. viii. 16, never of the *eyes*, and this distinction is carefully maintained even in the post-biblical T<sup>h</sup>illah style; but the word only occurs in one passage which he quotes, Prov. vi. 4, and this is the only place where it is found with the word *eyelids*.

<sup>b</sup> עָרַי. This may be the construct state *singular*, from the poetic form עָרַי; and except the LXX (*ἐν τοῖς πεδίοις*) most of the ancient versions have the *sing.*; Aq. and Symm., ἐν χόρα, with which Kay compares the ἐν τῇ χόρα used of the same locality in Luke ii. 8. The Quinta, ἐν ἀγγῶ; Jerome, *in regione*.

<sup>c</sup> אָפָּת. This is not the object of the verb נִשְׁבַּע, "He hath sworn a faithful oath." Delitzsch makes it an adverbial accus., and claims the support of the accents, the *Pazer* (distinctive) marking the close of the first member of the verse. But it is better to take אָפָּת independently, as standing at the beginning of a parenthetical clause: "It (i.e. the oath) is truth, he will not depart from it."

<sup>d</sup> עָרַי, either *sing.* for עָרַי, like תְּהַלְלֵהוּ for תְּהַלְלֵהוּ, 2 Kings vi. 8, or plur. with the suffix of the singular, as, for instance, Deut. xxviii. 59; Gesen. § 89, 3.

## PSALM CXXXIII.

HERDER says of this exquisite little song, that "it has the fragrance of a lovely rose." Nowhere has the nature of true unity — that unity which binds men together, not by artificial restraints, but as brethren of one heart — been more faithfully described, nowhere has it been so gracefully illustrated, as in this short ode. True concord is, we are here taught, a holy thing, a sacred oil, a rich perfume, which, flowing down from the head to the beard, from the beard to the garment, sanctifies the whole body. It is a sweet morning dew, which lights not only on the lofty mountain-peaks, but on the lesser hills, embracing all, and refreshing all with its influence.

The title of the Psalm gives it to David. Hence it has been conjectured that it may refer to the circumstances attending his coronation at Hebron, when, after eight years of civil war, "all the tribes of Israel," laying aside their mutual animosities, came to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, "Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh" (2 Sam. v. 1). The picture of a united nation is given still more vividly in the narrative of the Chronicles: "All these men of war

that could keep rank came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king. And there they were with David three days, eating and drinking; for their brethren had prepared for them. Moreover, they that were nigh them, even unto Issachar, and Zebulun, and Naphtali, brought bread on asses and on camels and on mules and on oxen, and meat, meal, cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep abundantly; for there was joy in Israel" (1 Chron. xii. 38-40).

Others have supposed that the Psalm was suggested by the sight of the multitudes who came up from all parts of Palestine to be present at the great national feasts in Jerusalem.

Again, others, and perhaps the majority of commentators, refer the Psalm to the time of the return from the captivity, when, there being no longer any division of the kingdom, the jealousies of the tribes had ceased, and all who returned, of whatever tribe, were incorporated in one state. That at this time there was a real unity of heart and mind in the nation may be inferred from the narratives in Ezra and Nehemiah. Thus, for instance, we read in Ezra iii. 1, that "when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together *as one man* to Jerusalem." And in Nehem. viii. 1: "And all the people gathered themselves together *as one man* into the street that was before the Water Gate, and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel."

But in truth there is not a syllable in the Psalm which can lead us to any conclusion respecting its date. Such a vision of the blessedness of unity may have charmed the poet's heart and inspired the poet's song, at any period of the national history. And his words, though originally, no doubt, intended to apply to a state, would be equally true of a smaller circle, a family or a tribe.

[A Pilgrim Song. Of David.]

1 BEHOLD how good and how pleasant (it is)

For brethren to dwell together (in unity).

1. BEHOLD draws attention to an important truth. Augustine says of this first verse, that the very sound of it is so sweet that it was chanted even by persons who knew nothing of the rest of the Psalter. He also says that this verse gave birth

to monasteries; it was like a trumpet-call to those who wished to dwell together as *brethren* (*fratres* or *friars*).

FOR BRETHREN TO DWELL TOGETHER. The exact force of the Hebrew is, "for them who are brethren *also* to dwell to-

2 It is like the precious oil upon the head,  
Which descended upon the beard, (even) Aaron's beard,  
Which descended to the edge of his garments ;

gether, i.e. that those who are of one race and one stock should live in peace and harmony together as living members of the same body, filled with the same spirit, seeking, in mutual forbearance and sympathy, the same ends."

2. The first figure is taken from the oil which was poured on the head of the high-priest at his consecration (Ex. xxix. 7; Lev. viii. 12; xxi. 10). The point of the comparison does not lie in the *preciousness* of the oil, or in its *all-pervading fragrance*; but in this — that being poured on the head, it did not rest there; but flowed to the beard, and descended even to the garments, and thus, as it were, consecrated the whole body in all its parts. *All the members participate in the same blessing.* Comp. 1 Cor. xii. This is the point of the comparison. Other thoughts may be suggested by it, as that the spirit of concord, both in a state and in a family, will descend from those who govern to those who are governed; or, again, that concord is a holy thing, like the holy oil, or that it is sweet and fragrant, like the fragrant oil; but these are mere accessories of the image, not that which suggested its use. If, as is commonly assumed, the point of comparison lay in the all-pervading fragrance of the oil, the addition to the figure, "which descended upon the beard, . . . which descended to the edge of his garments," would be thrown away. But understand this as typifying the consecration of the whole man, and the extension of the figure at once becomes appropriate and full of meaning. Luther remarks: "In that he saith 'from the head,' he showeth the nature of true concord. For like as the ointment ran down from the head of Aaron the high-priest upon his beard, and so descended unto the borders of his garment, even so true concord in doctrine and brotherly love floweth as a precious ointment, by the unity of the Spirit, from Christ the High-Priest and Head of the church,

unto all the members of the same. For by the beard and extreme parts of the garment he signifieth, that as far as the church reacheth, so far spreadeth the unity which floweth from Christ her head."

THE PRECIOUS OIL; lit. the good oil, the sacred oil, for the preparation of which special directions were given, and which was to be devoted exclusively to the consecration of holy things and persons, Ex. xxx. 22-33. Hence the image implies not only the whole body is united, but that the whole body is consecrated.

AARON, named not because he only was thus anointed, but as the representative of all priestly anointing: see Ex. xxviii. 41; xxx. 30; xl. 15.

WHICH DESCENDED. I have followed the Hebrew in retaining the same word in the three successive lines. The LXX have throughout *καταβαίνειν*; Jerome and the Vulgate, *descendere*. In the second line, "Which descended to the edge of his garments," there is considerable doubt to what the relative refers. Is it *the oil* (as in the previous line), or is it *the beard*, which descends to the edge of the garments? Some of the recent interpreters understand it of *the beard*, as a kind of connecting link between the head and the garments: the oil descended on the beard; the beard touched the garments, and so imparted to them the sanctification which it had itself received from the oil (so DeWette, Stier, Hengst., Delitzsch, Hupfeld). But the other interpretation, which has the support of all the ancient versions and the majority of interpreters, is certainly to be preferred, and is even required by the rhythmical structure of the Psalm. We have here, as in so many of the Pilgrim Songs, the repetition of the same word in connection with the same subject. See the repetition of the word "keep" in cxxi., and the same rhythmical figure in cxxiii. 3, 4; xxiv. 1, 3, 4, etc.

3 Like the dew of Hermon which descended upon the mountains of Zion ;

For there Jehovah commanded the blessing,

(Even) life forevermore.

EDGE, or rather "collar"; lit. "mouth," "opening," as the mouth of a sack. The word is used Ex. xxviii. 32; xxxix. 23, of the opening at the top of the robe of the ephod. The image does not represent the oil as descending to the skirts, the lower edge of the garment. It is enough that it touch the robe to sanctify it. [According to the law, the garments of the priests were sprinkled with the holy oil, Ex. xxix. 21; Lev. viii. 30].

3. The second image expressive of the blessing of brotherly concord is taken from the dew. Here, again, it is not the *refreshing* nature of the dew, nor its *gentle, all-pervading* influence, which is the prominent feature. That which renders it to the poets eye so striking an image of brotherly concord is the fact that *it falls alike on both mountains*—that the same dew which descends on the lofty Hermon descends also on the humbler Zion. High and low drink in the same sweet refreshment. Thus the image is exactly parallel to the last—the oil descends from the head to the beard, the dew from the higher mountain to the lower. (Hermon in the north, and Zion in the south, may also further suggest the union of the northern and southern tribes.) Luther says: "Whereas the mountains often seem, to those that behold them afar off, to reach up even unto heaven, the dew which cometh from heaven seemeth to fall from the high mountains unto the hills which are under them. Therefore

he saith that the dew descendeth from Hermon unto Mount Zion, because it so seemeth unto those that do behold it afar off. And this clause, after my judgment, pertaineth to civil concord, like as the former similitude pertaineth to the church, because God through peace and concord maketh commonwealths and kingdoms to flourish; even as seeds, herbs, and plants are fresh and flourish through the morning dew. The beginning of this peace cometh from the princes and magistrates, as from Mount Hermon, from whom it floweth unto every particular person, and to the whole commonwealth, which is refreshed thereby."

THERE. In Zion the blessed fruits of this brotherly concord may chiefly be looked for, for Jehovah himself has made it the great centre of all blessing and all life. This last verse lends some color to the view that the Psalm was intended to be sung at the gathering of the tribes for the great national feasts. Comp. cxxviii. 6; cxxxiv. 4. The similitude of the dew has taken shape in a legend. An old pilgrim narrates that every morning at sunrise a handful of dew floated down from the summit of Hermon, and deposited itself upon the church of St. Mary, where it was immediately gathered up by Christian leeches, and was found a sovereign remedy for all diseases. It was of this dew, he declares, that David spoke prophetically in this Psalm.—*Itinerary of St. Anthony.*

## PSALM CXXXIV.

“THREE things are clear with regard to this Psalm,” says Delitzsch. “First, that it consists of a greeting (ver. 1, 2), and a reply (ver. 3). Next, that the greeting is addressed to those priests and Levites who had the night-watch in the temple. Lastly, that this Psalm is purposely placed at the end of the collection of Pilgrim Songs in order to take the place of a final blessing.”

That the address is not to any persons in the habit of frequenting the temple is evident, because it was only in rare and exceptional cases (Luke ii. 37) that such persons could be found in the temple at night. And, further, the word “stand” in verse 1 is the common word to express the service of the priests and Levites, who had their duties by night as well by day (1 Chron. ix. 33).

The Targum, too, explains the first verse of the temple watch.

“The custom in the second temple appears to have been this. After midnight the chief of the door-keepers took the key of the inner temple, and went with some of the priests through the small postern of the fire gate (שַׁעַר בַּיִת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ). In the inner court this watch divided itself into two companies, each carrying a burning torch; one company turned west, the other east, and so they compassed the court to see whether all were in readiness for the temple service on the following morning. In the bakehouse, where the *Mincha* (‘meat-offering’) of the high-priest was baked, they met with the cry, ‘All well.’ Meanwhile the rest of the priests arose, bathed themselves, and put on their garments. They then went into the stone chamber (one half of which was the hall of session of the Sanhedrim), and there, under the superintendence of the officer who gave the watchword and one of the Sanhedrim, surrounded by the priests clad in their robes of office, their several duties for the coming day were assigned to each of the priests by lot (Luke i. 9).”

Accordingly it has been supposed by Tholuck and others that the greeting in verses 1, 2, was addressed to the guard going off duty by those who came to relieve them; and who in their turn received the answer in verse 3. Others conjecture that the greeting was interchanged between the two companies of the night-watch, when they met in making their rounds through the temple. Delitzsch, however, thinks that the words of verses 1, 2, are addressed by the congregation to the priests and Levites who had charge of the night service, and that verse 3 is an answer of blessing from them to the congregation, who were gathered on the temple-mountain.



## [A Pilgrim Song.]

*(The Greeting.)*

- 1 BEHOLD, bless ye Jehovah, all ye servants of Jehovah,  
Which by night stand in the house of Jehovah.
- 2 Lift up your hands to the sanctuary,<sup>a</sup>  
And bless ye Jehovah.

*(The Answer.)*

- 3 Jehovah bless thee out of Zion,  
(Even he who is) the Maker of heaven and earth.

1. BEHOLD. The word draws attention here to a duty, as at the beginning of the last Psalm it drew attention to a truth at once important and attractive.

SERVANTS OF JEHOVAH. The expression of itself might denote the people at large; but the next clause limits it (as in cxxxv. 2) to the priests and Levites.

BY NIGHT; lit. "in the nights." This cannot mean merely "night as well as day," and therefore "at all times," as Hupfeld maintains. In xlii. 8 [9], and xcii. 2 [3], to which he refers, "the morning" is expressly mentioned, as well as "the night," and in v. 3 [4], where "the morning" only is mentioned, the morning only is meant. Even if

there were no other mention of a night-service in the temple, considering how meagre the notices are, we should not be justified in setting this aside; but we have express reference to a night-service in 1 Chron. ix. 33.

STAND. A common word for the service of the priests and Levites, Deut. x. 8; xv. 2, 7; 1 Chron. xxiii. 30; 2 Chron. xxix. 11.

3. BLESS THEE. The singular, instead of the plural "bless you," because the words are taken from the form used by the high-priest in blessing the people, Num. vi. 24.

OUT OF ZION. See on cxxxv. 21.

MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. As in cxxi. 2; cxxiv. 8.

<sup>a</sup> קָרַשׁ. The accusative of direction, as frequently; and so the LXX, εἰς τὰ ἁγία; Jerome, *ad sanctum*; Vulg., *in sancta*. In v. 8; xxviii. 2, we have the full phrase. For the constr. Delitzsch compares Hab. iii. 11. But it may be rendered "in holiness." So Symm., ἁγίως. יְהוָה is merely an incorrect form for יְהוָה.

## PSALM CXXXV.

A PSALM intended for the temple service, and one of the Hallelujah Psalms, though not placed in the same series with the rest. It is, like Ps. cxxxiv., an exhortation to the priests and Levites who wait in the sanctuary to praise Jehovah, both because of his goodness in choosing Israel to be his people, and because of his greatness and the

almighty power which he has shown in his dominion over the world of nature, and in the overthrow of all the enemies of his people. Then his abiding majesty is contrasted with the nothingness of the idols of the heathen. The Psalm is almost entirely composed of passages taken from other sources. Compare verse 1 with cxxxiv. 1; verse 3 with cxlvii. 1; verses 6 and 15-20 with cxv; verse 7 with Jer. x. 13; verse 14 with Deut. xxxii. 36; verses 8-12 with cxxxvi. 10-22.

Delitzsch not inaptly describes the Psalm, on this account, as a species of mosaic, applying to its structure the expression of the old Roman poet Lucilius: "Quam lepide lexeis compostae ut tesserulae omnes." The prophecies of Jeremiah furnish many instances of a similar composite diction. Zephaniah takes his words and phrases almost entirely from Jeremiah. Many sentences in the Book of Proverbs would naturally appear in other writers, and a collector of proverbial wisdom must by the very nature of the case compose a mosaic instead of painting a picture. Several of the Psalms are specimens of this composite work. The diction of the ninety-seventh and ninety-eighth Psalms in particular is a series of colored fragments, as it were, from the later chapters of Isaiah. The *tesserulae* of this Psalm, on the other hand, are gathered from the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa.

### HALLELUJAH!

- 1 Praise ye the name of Jehovah,  
Praise (it), O ye servants of Jehovah.
- 2 Ye that stand in the house of Jehovah,  
In the courts of the house of our God,
- 3 Praise ye Jah, for Jehovah is good;  
Sing psalms unto his name, for it is lovely.

1. The opening of the Psalm resembles the opening of cxxxiv.

2. IN THE COURTS. See on lxxxiv. 2 [3]. The mention of these "courts" is no evidence that the exhortation is addressed not merely to the priests, but to the people. Nor can this be inferred from the formula in ver. 19, 20, which is common to these liturgical Psalms; comp. cxv. 9-11. The address is, as in cxxxiv. 1, to the Levites who sang Psalms and played on the different musical instruments which were used in the service of God, and to the priests who blew with the trumpets and repeated

the liturgical prayers and the blessings. The thrice-repeated Jehovah, followed by Jah ... Jehovah ... Jah, may have a reference to the form of the priestly blessing in which they "put the name of Jehovah upon the children of Israel," Num. vi. 22-27. Thrice the priests uttered the name; thrice, and yet thrice again, the congregation echoed it back in their song.

3. JEHOVAH IS GOOD. "Breviter uno verbo," says Augustine, "explicata est laus Domini Dei nostri: *bonus Dominus*. Sed bonus, non ut sunt bona quae fecit. Nam fecit Deus omnia bona

- 4 For Jah hath chosen Jacob to himself,  
Israel for his peculiar treasure.
- 5 For I know that Jehovah is great,  
And that our Lord is above all gods.
- 6 Whatsoever Jehovah pleaseth that hath he done,  
In heaven and in earth,  
In the seas and in all deeps.
- 7 He bringeth up vapors from the end of the earth ;  
He hath made lightnings for the rain ;  
He sendeth forth <sup>a</sup> the wind out of his treasures.
- 8 Who smote the firstborn of Egypt,  
Both of man and beast ;

valde; non tantum bona, sed et valde. Coelum et terram et omnia quae in eis sunt bona fecit, et valde bona fecit. Si haec omnia bona fecit, qualis est ille qui fecit? Et tamen, cum bona fecerit, multoque sit melior qui fecit quam ista quae fecit non invenis melius quod de illo dicas nisi *quia bonus est Dominus*: si tamen intelligas proprie bonum, a quo sunt caetera bona. Omnia enim bona ipse fecit: ipse est bonus quem nemo fecit. Ille bono suo bonus est, non aliunde participato bono: ille seipso bono bonus est, non adhaerendo alteri bono. . . . Ineffabili dulcedine tencor cum audio *bonus Dominus*; consideratisque omnibus et collustratis quae forinsecus video, quoniam ex ipso sunt omnia, etiam cum mihi haec placent, ad illum video a quo sunt, ut intelligam *quoniam bonus est Dominus*."

IT IS LOVELY. According to the parallelism, this will refer either to the name of Jehovah, or to Jehovah himself, "for he is lovely." But according to the analogy of cxlvii. 1 (comp. Prov. xxiii. 8) the subject is the song: "for it is pleasant, viz. thus to sing praise."

4. Then follow the several grounds of this praise. First, because he has chosen Israel. Next, because he is higher than all the gods of the heathen, as he has shown in his absolute supremacy over the world of nature, ver. 5-7. Then, because he redeemed his people from

Egypt, ver. 8, 9. Lastly, because, vanquishing all their enemies, he gave them the promised land, ver. 10-12.

5. I KNOW. The pronoun is emphatic, and the phrase marks a strong personal conviction (sometimes, as in xx. 6 [7], one newly gained).

6. WHATSOEVER HE PLEASETH. This absolute supremacy of God over all the forces and phenomena of the natural world is stated in the same way as in cxv. 3, with reference more particularly to the weakness of the gods of the nations, as also in this Psalm, ver. 15-18.

7. The verse occurs almost word for word in Jer. x. 13; li. 16.

VAPORS, or perhaps "clouds," as formed of masses of vapor.

FROM THE END OF THE EARTH, i.e. either from the horizon on which they seem to gather, or from the sea; or, perhaps, as Augustine says, because "unde surrexerint nescis."

FOR THE RAIN, i.e. so that the rain follows the lightning; see Isa. x. 13; li. 16. The lightning is supposed to precede the rain. A common Arabic proverb says of a man who turns out other than was expected of him, that he lightens, but does not rain. The LXX, ἀστραπὴς εἰς ὑετὸν ἐποίησεν.

HIS TREASURES. Cf. Job xxxviii. 22. "Occultis causis, unde nescis."—Augus.

8. BOTH OF MAN AND BEAST; lit. "from man unto beast."

- 9 (Who) sent signs and wonders into the midst of thee,<sup>b</sup>  
 O Egypt,  
 Upon Pharaoh and upon all his servants ;
- 10 Who smote many nations,  
 And slew mighty kings, —
- 11 Sihon,<sup>c</sup> king of the Amorites,  
 And Og, the king of Bashan,  
 And all the kingdoms of Canaan ;
- 12 And gave their land as an heritage,  
 An heritage unto Israel his people.
- 13 O Jehovah, thy name (endureth) forever ;  
 Thy memorial, O Jehovah, to all generations.
- 14 For Jehovah judgeth his people,  
 And repenteth himself concerning his servants.
- 15 The idols of the nations are silver and gold,  
 The work of men's hands.
- 16 They have a mouth, and speak not ;  
 Eyes have they, and see not.
- 17 They have ears, and (yet) they hear not ;  
 Yea, they have no breath at all<sup>d</sup> in their mouths.
- 18 They that make them shall be like unto them.  
 Every one that putteth his trust in them.
- 19 O house of Israel, bless ye Jehovah :  
 O house of Aaron, bless ye Jehovah :
- 20 O house of Levi, bless ye Jehovah :  
 Ye that fear Jehovah, bless Jehovah.
- 21 Blessed be Jehovah out of Zion,

13. Comp. Ex iii. 15.

14. Borrowed from Dent. xxxii. 36.  
 Comp. for the second clause of the verse,  
 Ps. xc. 13.

FOR. Here is the proof and evidence  
 that Jehovah's name and memorial abide  
 forever ; that he will manifest, as in the  
 past, so in the future, his righteousness  
 and his mercy to Israel.

JUDGE, i.e. see that they have right,  
 which is, in fact, the consequence of his

“repenting concerning,” or “having  
 compassion of,” his servants.

15-18. Borrowed with some variation  
 from cxv. 4-8.

19, 20. Precisely as in cxv. 9-11 ;  
 cxviii. 2-4, only that here “the house  
 of Levi” is added.

21. As in cxxviii. 5 ; cxxxiv. 3, Je-  
 hovah blesses out of Zion, so here, on  
 the other hand, his people bless him out  
 of Zion. For there they meet to worship

Who dwelleth in Jerusalem.  
Hallelujah!

him; there not only he, but they, may thence, accordingly, his praise is sounded be said to dwell (Isa. x. 24); and abroad.

<sup>a</sup> מִי־צִא, either incorrect for מוֹצִיא, the accent being drawn back after the analogy of the fut. conv., or, as the participle is somewhat lame after קָשָׁה, perhaps it is merely an error for מוֹי־צִא, which is found in the parallel passages, Jer. x. 13; li. 16.

<sup>b</sup> בְּהוֹדוֹתָי. For this form see on ciii. note <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>c</sup> The הֶ after הִירִג is not necessarily due to Aramaic influence. It occurs not only in 2 Sam. iii. 30 (where Delitzsch alleges that ver. 30, 31, and 36, 37, are a later addition, and therefore not exempt from Aramaic tendencies), but also in Job v. 2. We have it also again in cxxxvi. 19, 20. Maurer explains that with the accus. it is *interficere aliquem*, and with הֶ *caedem facere alicui*. For other instances of the הֶ after the active verb see xxxv. 7; lxix. 6; cxvi. 16; cxxix. 3; cxxxvi. 23. With the exception of this use of the הֶ and the שֶׁ, the whole coloring and language of ver. 10–12 is that of Deuteronomy.

<sup>d</sup> אֵיךְ, constr., and quite superfluous after אֵיךְ. It occurs also 1 Sam. xxi. 9, where, however, according to Delitzsch, the punctuation should be אֵיךְ אֵיךְ and אֵיךְ אֵיךְ = Aram. אֵיךְ אֵיךְ, *num (an) est*, אֵיךְ being a North Palestine Aramaising form of the Heb. interrog. אֵיךְ.

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PSALM CXXXVI.

THIS Psalm is little more than a variation and repetition of the preceding Psalm. It opens with the same liturgical formula with which the one hundred and sixth and one hundred and eighteenth Psalms open, and was evidently designed to be sung antiphonally in the temple worship. Its structure is peculiar. The first line of each verse pursues the theme of the Psalm; the second line, "For his loving-kindness endureth forever," being a kind of refrain or response, like the responses, for instance, in our Litany, breaking in upon and yet sustaining the theme of the Psalm; the first would be sung by some of the Levites, the second by the choir as a body, or by the whole congregation together with the Levites. We have an example of a similar antiphonal arrangement in the first four verses of the one

hundred and eighteenth Psalm; but there is no other instance in which it is pursued throughout the Psalm. The nearest approach to the same constant repetition is in the "Amen" of the people to the curses of the law as pronounced by the Levites, Deut. xxvi. 14.

In the Jewish liturgy this Psalm, with its twenty-six responses, is called "the Great Hallel," by way of distinction from "the Hallel," simply so called, which comprises Psalms cxiii.-cxviii., though there is some uncertainty as to the former designation; for according to some "the Great Hallel" comprises cxxxv. 4-cxxxvi., and according to others, cxx.-cxxxvi.

According to an old rule of writing observed in some of the most ancient mss., the two lines of the verses ought to be arranged each in a separate column, or, as the phrase runs, "half-brick upon half-brick, brick upon brick."

It may be observed that the verses are grouped in threes as far as verse 18, and then the Psalm concludes with two groups of four verses each. It is possible (as Delitzsch suggests) that verses 19-22 did not originally belong to this Psalm, being introduced from the previous Psalm, and that there were thus, in the first instance, twenty-two lines, corresponding to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet.

- 1 Oh give thanks unto Jehovah, for he is good,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 2 Oh give thanks unto the God of gods,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 3 Oh give thanks unto the Lord of lords,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 4 To him who alone doeth great wonders,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 5 To him who by understanding made the heavens,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 6 To him that stretched out the earth above the waters,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 7 To him who made great lights,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.

2, 3. GOD OF GODS ... LORD OF LORDS, from Deut. x. 17.

5. BY UNDERSTANDING, as in Prov. iii. 19. Comp. civ. 24; Prov. iii. 19; Jer. x. 12; li. 15.

6. STRETCHED OUT; from the same root as the word *firmament* or *expanse* in Gen. i. Comp. Isa. xlii. 5; xlii. 24. ABOVE THE WATERS; cf. xxiv. 1 [2].  
7. LIGHTS. The word is employed

- 8 The sun to rule the day,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 9 The moon and (the) stars to rule the night,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 10 To him that smote Egypt in their first-born,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 11 And brought forth Israel from the midst of them,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 12 With a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 13 To him who divided the Red Sea into parts,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 14 And made Israel to pass through the midst of it,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 15 And overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 16 To him who led his people through the wilderness,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 17 To him who smote great kings,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 18 And slew mighty kings,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 19 Sihon, king of the Amorites,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 20 And Og the king of Bashan,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 21 And gave their land for an heritage,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.

here strictly, instead of the corresponding word in Gen. i. 14-16, which means not *lights*, but *luminaries*; the bodies, that is, which hold the light.

9. *TO RULE*; lit. "for dominions over"; the plural, poetically, instead of the singular, as in the preceding verse, and in Gen. i.

10-22. Almost word for word as in cxxxv. 8-12.

13. *DIVIDED*. The same word as in

1 Kings iii. 25, and the noun *PARTS* (lit. "divisions," from the same root), as in Gen. xv. 17. A different word is used of the dividing of the Red Sea, Ex. xiv. 16, 21. See also Ps. lxxviii. 12 [13].

15. *OVERTHREW*; lit. "shook out," as in Ex. xiv. 27.

19. The occurrence of the preposition *בְּ* at the beginning of this verse before the object is the more remarkable because hitherto throughout the Psalm it has

- 22 An heritage unto Israel his servant,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 23 Who remembered us in our low estate,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 24 And set us free from our adversaries,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 25 He giveth food to all flesh,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.
- 26 Oh give thanks to the God of heaven,  
For his loving-kindness (endureth) forever.

been employed at the beginning of the thanks) unto him who doeth great wonders"; in ver. 5, "(Give thanks) to work of God with the verb "give thanks" him who made the heavens"; and so in the first verse. So in ver. 4, "(Give on, ver. 6, 7, 10, 13, 16.

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PSALM CXXXVII.

THERE can be no doubt whatever as to the time when this Psalm was written. It expresses the feeling of an exile who has but just returned from the land of his captivity. In all probability the writer was a Levite, who had been carried away by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar when Jerusalem was sacked and the temple destroyed, and who was one of the first, as soon as the edict of Cyrus was published, to return to Jerusalem. He is again in his own land. He sees again the old familiar scenes. The mountains and the valleys that his foot trod in youth are before him. The great landmarks are the same, and yet the change is terrible. The spoiler has been in his home, his vines and his fig-trees have been cut down, the house of his God is a heap of ruins. His heart is heavy with a sense of desolation, and bitter with the memory of wrong and insult from which he has but lately escaped.

He takes his harp, the companion of his exile, the cherished relic of happier days,—the harp which he could not string at the bidding of his conquerors by the waters of Babylon; and now with faltering hand he sweeps the strings, first in low, plaintive, melancholy cadence pouring out his griefs, and then with a loud crash of wild and stormy music, answering to the wild and stormy numbers of his verse, he raises the paean of vengeance over his foes.



He begins by telling in language of pathetic beauty the tale of his captivity. He draws first the picture of the land — so unlike his own mountain land — the broad plain watered by the Euphrates and intersected by its canals, their banks fringed with willows, with no purple peak, no deep, cool glen to break the vast, weary, monotonous expanse; and then he draws the figure of the captives in their deep despondency, a despondency so deep that it could find no solace even in those sacred melodies which were dear to them as life — “As for our harps, we hanged them up on the willows by the water-side.” Next, his verse tells of the mocking taunt of their captors, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion”; and the half sad, half proud answer of the heart, strong in its faith and unconquerable in its patriotism, “How shall we sing Jehovah’s song in a strange land?” It were a profanation, it were a treachery. Sooner let the tongue fail to sing than sing to make the heathen mirth; sooner let the hand lose her cunning than tune the harp to please the stranger.

No wonder that then, brooding over the memory of the past, brooding over his wrongs, and seeing around him in blackened ruins and wasted fields the footsteps of the invader, the poet should utter his wrath. No wonder that the Psalm concludes with that fierce outburst of natural resentment, a resentment which borrows almost a grandeur from the religious fervor, the devoted patriotism, whence it springs. Terrible have been the wrongs of Jerusalem: let the revenge be terrible. Woe to those who in the day of her fall took part with her enemies and rejoiced in her overthrow, when they ought rather to have come to her aid. Woe to the proud oppressors who have so long held her children captive, and made their hearts bitter with insult and wrong. “Blessed shall he be who taketh thy little ones, and dasheth them against the rock.”

What a wonderful mixture is the Psalm of soft melancholy and fiery patriotism! The hand which wrote it must have known how to smite sharply with the sword, as well as how to tune his harp. The words are burning words of a heart breathing undying love to his country, undying hate to his foe. The poet is indeed

“Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,  
The love of love.”

- 1 BY the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept  
When we remembered Zion.
- 2 Upon the willows in the midst thereof  
We hanged up our harps.

- 3 For there they that led us captive demanded of us songs,  
 And they that spoiled us <sup>a</sup> (demanded of us) mirth,  
 (Saying) "Sing us (one) of the songs of Zion."
- 4 How should we sing Jehovah's song  
 In a strange land?
- 5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,  
 Let my right hand forget (her cunning).
- 6 Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,  
 If I remember thee not;  
 If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chiefest joy.
- 7 Remember, O Jehovah, the children of Edom  
 In the day of Jerusalem,  
 Who said, Raze <sup>b</sup> it, raze it, even to the foundation  
 thereof.

3. SONGS; Heb. "words of song," or subjects of song, as in lxx. 3 [4] דְּבַרֵי ט' "words of iniquities."

4, 5. How sing a *holy* song on a strange, *profane* soil? How sing a song of *joy* when the city and temple of our God lay in ruins? Compare the words of Nehemiah, "Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? And I said, Let the king live forever. Why should not my countenance be sad when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" (Neh. ii. 2, 3).

5. FORGET. Probably there is an aposiopesis; or we may supply either, as the E.V., "her cunning," i.e. her skill with the harp, or, more generally, "the power of motion."

6. MY CHIEFEST JOY; lit. "the top of my joy." Comp. Ex. xxx. 23; Song of Sol. iv. 14. Others, "the sum of my joy."

7. This verse may also be rendered:

Remember for (against) the children of Edom.

The day of Jerusalem;  
 the construction being the same as in cxxxii. 1. As he broods over his wrongs, as he looks upon the desolation of his

country, as he remembers how with peculiar bitterness they who ought to have been allies took part with the enemies of Jerusalem in the fatal day of her overthrow, there bursts forth the terrible cry for vengeance — vengeance, first, on the false kindred, and next on the proud conquerors of his race. "Deepest of all was the indignation roused by the sight of the nearest of kin, the race of Esau, often allied to Judah, often independent, now bound by the closest union with the power that was truly the common enemy of both. There was an intoxication of delight in the wild Edomite chiefs, as at each successive stroke against the venerable walls they shouted, 'Down with it! down with it, even to the ground!' They stood in the passes to intercept the escape of those who would have fled down to the Jordan valley; they betrayed the fugitives; they indulged their barbarous revels on the temple hill. Long and loud has been the wail of execration which has gone up from the Jewish nation against Edom. It is the one imprecation which breaks forth from the Lamentations of Jeremiah; it is the culmination of the fierce threats of Ezekiel; it is the sole purpose of the short,

8 O daughter of Babylon, that shalt be destroyed ;<sup>c</sup>

Happy shall he be that rewardeth thee

As thou hast served us.

9 Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones

Against the rock.

sharp cry of Obadiah ; it is the bitterest drop in the sad recollections of the Israelite captives by the waters of Babylon ; and the one warlike strain of the evangelical prophet is inspired by the hope that the Divine Conqueror should come knee-deep in Idumæan blood (Lam. iv. 21, 22 ; Ezek. xxv. 8, 12-14 ; Obad. 1-21 ; Jer. xlix. 7-22 ; Isa. lxiii. 1-4). — STANLEY, *Jewish Church*, ii. p. 556.

8. THAT SHALT BE DESTROYED, or, perhaps, "doomed to destruction." Others, "that art laid waste," as if referring to the taking of Babylon by Cyrus. The LXX, ambiguously, ἡ *ταλαίπωρος*. See more in Critical Note. Comp. for the sentiment, Jer. li. 56, "Because the spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken ; for Jehovah is a God of recompences ; he shall surely requite." See also, for the same principle of *retribution* in the overthrow of Babylon, Isa. xlvii. 1-9.

AS THOU HAST SERVED US ; lit. "the

requital wherewith thou hast required us."

9. LITTLE ONES ; lit. "sucklings." With such barbarous cruelty wars were carried on, even by comparatively civilized nations. Comp. for biblical examples 2 Kings viii. 12 ; xv. 16 ; Isa. xiii. 16 ; Hosea x. 14 ; xiii. 16 [xiv. 1] ; Nahum iii. 10. So Homer, painting the sack of a city, mentions, as one of its features, *νήπια τέκνα Βαλλόμενα προτι γαίῃ*. And again, Andromache, addressing her child, says, *σὺ δ' αἶ, τέκος, ἢ ἐμοὶ αὐτῇ . . . Ἐψεαι . . . ἢ τις Ἀχαιῶν Ῥίψει, χεῖρδς ἔλδων ἀπὸ πύργου, λυγρὸν ἔλεθρον*. At a far later period, Athenæus tells us, such inhuman barbarity was to be found even among the Greeks, that in one insurrection the populace wreaked their fury on the upper classes by throwing their children to be trampled under the feet of oxen ; and when the aristocracy, in their turn, got the upper hand, they took their revenge by burning their enemies alive, together with their wives and children (Tholuck).

<sup>a</sup> הוֹלְלֵינוּ. The LXX, οἱ ἀπαγάγοντες ἡμᾶς, and similarly the Chald. and Syr., "our plunderers," the word being regarded as an Aram. form, with ה for ש, instead of שוֹלְלֵנוּ. There is a twofold objection, however, to this : first, that שוֹלֵל only occurs as a *passive* ; and next, in Aram. the form is שָׁלַל, not הָלַל, in this sense. Hence it seems probable that we ought to read הוֹלְלֵינוּ. Otherwise we must derive the word from a root הָלַל, "to howl" (after the analogy of הוֹלֵל, from הָלַל) ; then the abstract "howling" will stand by metonymy for the torture, punishment, etc., which occasions it, and this, again concrete, for the torturers. In the abstract sense, Abulval., Kimchi ; in the concrete, Gesen., De Wette, Winer, and others, and so Jerome, *qui affligebant nos*.

<sup>b</sup> הָרָה. Imp. Piel, with a drawing back of the accent to the penult,

because of the pause, Gesen. § 29, 4, *b, c.* ערה, "to make bare, shave smooth, etc., reduce to a flat, level surface." Comp. Hab. iii. 13, and the noun in Isa. xix. 7.

עַשְׂרֵי־הַיָּמִים. This cannot be active with the present punctuation, *Thou that wastest* (Symm., ἡ ληστρίς, but it is a further objection to this that the root does not mean to *plunder*).

(1) If we give the active meaning, which certainly seems very suitable, the punctuation must be עַשְׂרֵי־הַיָּמִים, like עַשְׂרֵי־הַיָּמִים, Jer. iii. 7, 10 (with immovable Kamets), or at any rate עַשְׂרֵי־הַיָּמִים, Ewald, § 152 *b.*

(2) In its existing form it is a pass. part., as Aq., *προνενομευμένη*; Jerome, *vastata*. But (3) it has been rendered as a part. fut. pass., *vastanda*. Theod., *διαπρασθησομένη*. And so Rüd. in Gesen. *Thesaur.*, but Delitzsch objects that though the Niph. part. (e.g. xxii. 32; cii. 19) and the Pual (xviii. 4) may have this meaning, it is not found in the Kal. However, he would himself give the meaning *vastationi devota*, which he defends by Jer. iv. 30, where עַשְׂרֵי־הַיָּמִים is used hypothetically = "when thou art wasted." So he says the sense is here: "O daughter of Babylon, that art wasted, blessed shall he be who, when this judgment of wasting shall come upon thee, shall take thy sucklings," etc. Hupfeld, on the other hand, contends for the simple passive rendering, *thou that art wasted*, which he explains of the capture of the city by Cyrus.

## PSALM CXXXVIII.

ACCORDING to the Hebrew title, this is a Psalm of David. The LXX have added to this title the names of Haggai and Zechariah (τῷ Δαυὶδ, Ἁγγαίου, καὶ Ζαχαρίου), which would seem to show that the translators were not satisfied with the traditional view as to the authorship of the Psalm, and would rather refer it to a time subsequent to the exile. So far as the Psalm itself is concerned, we have no clue to guide us; neither the language nor the allusions will warrant any conclusions as to date or authorship. The mention of the temple in verse 2 does not prove that the Psalm was not written by David, for the word rendered "temple" might be used of a structure like the tabernacle (see on Ps. v. 7). Nor does the hope or prophecy concerning the kings of the earth in verse 4 necessarily point to a post-exile time, for hopes of a similar kind are found also in earlier Psalms (see note on that verse).

The Psalm consists of three strophes :

(1) In the first the poet encourages himself to praise God both because of his goodness and faithfulness and his great promises, and also because he himself had had his prayers answered (ver. 1-3).

(2) He utters the hope, the prophecy, that the kings of the earth shall acknowledge the greatness of Jehovah,—his greatness chiefly in this, that he does not measure by any human standard of great and small, of high and low (ver. 4-6).

(3) The application of all that he has learnt of Jehovah's character to his own individual experience in prospect of trouble and danger (ver. 7, 8).

[(A Psalm) of David.]

1 I WILL give thanks unto thee with my whole heart ;

Before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.

2 I will bow myself before thy holy temple,

And I will give thanks to thy name, because of thy  
loving-kindness and thy truth,

For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

1. UNTO THEE. The Being who is addressed is not named till ver. 4. The LXX have thought it necessary to insert a *Kύριε*, and in this have been followed by the Vulgate and by our Prayer-book version. The absence of the vocative is, however, more emphatic. It is as though in the Psalmist's heart there could be but one object of praise, whether named or unnamed.

BEFORE THE GODS. This has been variously explained. (1) The LXX, who are followed by Luther, Calvin, and others, understand it of the *angels*. But, though the angels are called upon to praise God, they are nowhere in the Old Test. regarded as witnesses of or sharers in the worship of men. (2) The Chald., Syr., Rabb., and many recent interpreters suppose that *kings* or *judges* are meant (see on lxxxii.). (3) Ewald and others would render "before God," and consider this as equivalent to "before the ark," or "in the sanctuary." But the extreme awkwardness of such a phrase here, "Before God I will give thanks to thee, O Jehovah," is sufficient

to condemn the interpretation. (4) It is far more probable that "the gods" are the false gods, the objects of heathen worship, in the very presence of whom, and to the confusion of their worshippers, the Psalmist will utter his praise of the true God. See xcv. 3; xcvi. 4, 5; cxv. 3-8.

2. THY WORD, or "promise." Comp. lvi. 10 [11]; lx. 6 [8]; lxii. 11 [12]. No particular promise is meant. The same word occurs frequently in cxix. See note on ver. 25 of that Psalm.

ABOVE ALL THY NAME. The expression seems to mean that to the soul waiting upon God and trusting in his word, the promise becomes so precious, so strong a ground of hope, that it surpasses all other manifestations of God's goodness and truth; or in the promise may here also be included the fulfilment of the promise. Many interpreters have stumbled at the expression, and Hupfeld objects that "it is contrary to all analogy. The name of God cannot be surpassed by any individual act or attribute of God, for every such separate act is only

- 3 In the day that I called thou answeredst me ;  
 Thou madest me courageous <sup>a</sup> with strength in my soul.
- 4 All the kings of the earth shall give thanks unto thee, O  
 Jehovah ;  
 For they have heard the words of thy mouth.
- 5 And they shall sing of <sup>b</sup> the ways of Jehovah ;  
 For great is the glory of Jehovah.
- 6 For Jehovah is high, yet he seeth the humble ;  
 And the proud he knoweth <sup>c</sup> afar off.
- 7 If I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt quicken me.  
 Against the wrath of mine enemies thou wilt stretch out  
 thine hand,  
 And thy right hand shall save me.

a manifestation of that name ; nor can it be limited to *past* manifestations of God's character, or taken as equivalent to *calling upon* his name. On the other hand, *to make great* (magnify) is only said of God's acts, of his grace, his salvation, and the like, and could scarcely be said of his word or promise. One would rather expect, *Thou hast magnified thy name above all thy word* ; it surpasses all that thou hast promised." The difficulty has been felt from the first. The LXX, *ἐμεγάλυνας ἐπὶ πάν τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ἅγιόν σου*, "Thou hast magnified thy holy name above all." The Chald., "Thou hast magnified the words of thy praise above all thy name." Hupfeld would follow Clericus in reading "above all thy heavens," which involves only a very slight change of the text. But all the ancient versions had the present reading.

4. ALL THE KINGS OF THE EARTH. See the expression of the same feeling in lxviii. 29-32 [30-33] ; lxxii. 10, 11 ; cii. 15 [16].

FOR THEY HAVE HEARD. This sounds in the Old Testament almost like an anticipation of St. Paul's words : "But I say have they not heard ? Yea, verily, their sound is gone forth into all the world." It is to be explained by the deep conviction in the Psalmist's heart that *God's* words cannot be hidden,

must be published abroad. Others, however, render, "When they (shall) have heard."

5. SING OF THE WAYS. Having heard the tidings, "the words of God's mouth," they will joyfully celebrate his mighty acts. Comp. ciii. 7, where "his ways" correspond to "his acts" in the parallelism. The second clause may also be rendered, "that great is," etc. Abenezra says : "They shall no more sing of love or war, but of the glory of the Lord."

6. IS HIGH. Comp. cxiii. 5, 6.

HE KNOWETH AFAR OFF. This is the only proper rendering of the clause ; but the expression is somewhat remarkable. (1) It has been explained by reference to cxxxix. 2 ("Thou understandest my thoughts afar off"), which would mean, God knows (observes) the proud, distant as they may think themselves to be from his control. (2) Or, God knows them (regards them) only at a distance, does not admit them into his fellowship ; he does not "see" them as he "seeth the humble." (3) Or it would be possible to explain, he knows them *so as to keep them* at a distance. (4) Or, again, God from afar (parallel to "high" in the first member) knows the proud, just as he sees the humble.

7. IF I WALK. Comp. xxiii. 4 and lxxi. 20.

8 Jehovah will perfect that which concerneth me ;  
 Jehovah, thy loving-kindness (endureth) forever ;  
 Forsake not the works of thy hands.

QUICKEN ME, or perhaps "keep me alive."

8. PERFECT, i.e. accomplish the work he has begun. See the same word in lvii. 2 [3], and comp. the ἐπιτελεῖν of Phil. i. 6.

FORSAKE NOT, or "relax not," turning into a prayer what he had just

expressed as a conviction of his own mind. For the word see Neh. vi. 3.

<sup>a</sup> תַּרְהִיבִי. LXX, πολυωρήσεις. De Rossi says that he found in several mss. and Edd., תַּרְהִיבִי, which is also expressed by Jerome, *dilatabis*. But the change is not necessary: the root רהב means strictly *to be proud*. Isa. iii. 5, "behave himself proudly" (in a bad sense). Prov. vi. 3, "*press* (make sure, E.V.) thy neighbor." Song of Sol. vi. 5, "for they (thine eyes) have *overcome* me" (Hiph. as here), or perhaps "have *dazzled* or *bewildered* me." If we trace the shades of meaning, we shall see that the root-meaning is *to act with spirit*. This applies both in Isa. iii. 5 and in Prov. vi. 3, and so here, "*thou hast infused spirit into me*," a sense which would not be unsuitable in Song of Sol. vi. 5. The tense obtains a *past* signification, because it follows a fut. with Vau consecutive.

<sup>b</sup> בְּרַהֲבִי. The prep. denotes the object, as often with analogous verbs, as רבר, הלל, הגה, etc.

<sup>c</sup> יְרַהֲבֵנִי, fut. Kal apparently formed after the analogy of the Hiphil forms, יְרַהֲבֵנִי, Isa. xvi. 7; יְרַהֲבֵנִי, Job xxiv. 21, and originating in the effort to restore the sound of the first radical, which in the Hiph. coalesces with the preceding vowel, and the Kal is lost altogether.

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PSALM CXXXIX.

NOWHERE are the great attributes of God—his omniscience, his omnipresence, his omnipotence, set forth so strikingly as they are in this magnificent Psalm. Nowhere is there a more overwhelming sense of the fact that man is beset and compassed about by God, pervaded by his Spirit, unable to take a step without his control; and yet nowhere is there a more emphatic assertion of the personality of man as distinct from, not absorbed in, the Deity. This is no pantheistic speculation. Man is here the workmanship of God, and stands in the presence and under the eye of One who is his Judge. The power

of conscience, the sense of sin and of responsibility, are felt and acknowledged, and prayer is offered to One who is not only the Judge, but the Friend; to One who is feared as none else are feared, who is loved as none else are loved.

Both in loftiness of thought and in expressive beauty of language the Psalm stands pre-eminent, and it is not surprising that Aben-Ezra should have pronounced it to be "the crown of all the Psalms."

The Psalm both in the Hebrew and the LXX is ascribed to David. In some copies of the latter it is also said to be a Psalm of Zechariah (*Zαχαρίου*), with the further addition by a second hand of the words, "in the dispersion" (*ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ*), which Origen tells us he found in some mss. Theodoret, on the other hand, says that he had not found the addition either in the Hebrew or the LXX, or in any of the other interpreters. The strongly Aramaic coloring of the language certainly makes it more probable that the Psalm was written after the exile than before, unless, indeed, this tendency to Aramaisms is to be regarded as evidence of a variation merely of dialect, perhaps the dialect of Northern Palestine,— a supposition which seems not to be wholly without foundation.

The rhythmical structure is, on the whole, regular. There are four strophes, each consisting of six verses; the first three strophes containing the proper theme of the Psalm, and the last the expression of individual feeling.

I. In the first strophe the poet dwells on the omniscience of God, as manifested in his knowledge of the deepest thoughts and most secret workings of the human heart (ver. 1-6).

II. In the second, on his omnipresence; inasmuch as there is no corner of the universe so remote that it is not pervaded by God's presence, no darkness so deep that it can hide from his eyes (ver. 7-12).

III. The third strophe gives the reason for the profound conviction of these truths of which the poet's heart is full. No wonder that God should have so intimate a knowledge of man, for man is the creature of God: the mysterious beginnings of life, which none can trace; the days, all of which are ordered before the first breath is drawn,— these are fashioned and ordered by the hand of God (ver. 13-18).

IV. In the last strophe the Psalmist turns abruptly aside to express his utter abhorrence of wicked men — an abhorrence, no doubt, deepened by the previous meditation on God and his attributes, and called forth probably by the circumstances in which he was placed; and then closes with a prayer that he himself may, in his inmost heart, be right



with that God who has searched him and known him and laid his hand upon him, and that he may be led by him in the way everlasting (ver. 19-24).

[For the Precentor. A Psalm of David.]

- 1 O JEHOVAH, thou hast searched me, and known (me).
- 2 THOU knowest my downsitting and mine uprising ;  
Thou understandest my thought <sup>a</sup> afar off.
- 3 My path and my bed <sup>b</sup> thou hast examined,<sup>c</sup>  
And with all my ways thou art acquainted.
- 4 For before a word is yet on my tongue,  
Lo,<sup>d</sup> O Jehovah, thou knowest it altogether.
- 5 Behind and before hast thou beset me,  
And laid thine hand upon me.
- 6 (Such) knowledge is too wonderful <sup>e</sup> for me ;  
It is too high ; I cannot attain unto it.
- 7 Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ?  
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence ?

1. KNOWN (ME). The form of the verb marks a consequence of the previous action.

2. AFAR OFF. However great the distance between us. See on cxxxviii. 6. The Prayer-book version, "long before."

3. THOU HAST EXAMINED; lit. "Thou hast winnowed," or "sifted."

4. FOR BEFORE A WORD. This is probably the better rendering (see Critical Note), though that of the E.V., "For there is not a word . . . but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether," is not certainly wrong.

5. BESET ME, or "shut me in." Comp. Job iii. 23; xiii. 27; xiv. 5, 13, 16; xix. 8. The Prayer-book version, "fashioned me," follows the LXX, *ἔπλασας*, Jer. *formasti*; but these renderings depend upon a wrong derivation of the word from *צָרַר*.

LAI D THINE HAND. Job xiii. 21; xxxiii. 7. Therefore, in the utmost exercise of his freedom, man is only accomplishing what God's counsel and

foreknowledge have determined. With the general sentiment of the first strophe, compare Acts xvii. 28, "In him we live, and move, and have our being."

6. (SUCH) KNOWLEDGE. See a similar strain of acknowledgment at the close of the third strophe (ver. 17, 18), and comp. Rom. xi. 33: "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

7. WHITHER SHALL I GO. It was this and the following verses, in all probability, which led a Spanish commentator (Father Sanchez) to ascribe this Psalm to the prophet Jonah. Comp. Jonah i. 3: "But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of Jehovah."

THY SPIRIT. "The word *Spirit*," says Calvin, "is not put here simply for the power of God, as commonly in the Scriptures, but for his mind and understanding. For inasmuch as the spirit in man is the seat of understanding, the Psalmist transfers the same to God;

- 8 If I climb up<sup>f</sup> into heaven, THOU art there ;  
 And if I make my bed in hell, lo, thou art there ;
- 9 (If) I take the wings of the morning,  
 (If) I dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
- 10 Even there shall thy hand lead me,  
 And thy right hand shall hold me.
- 11 And should I say, Only let darkness cover<sup>g</sup> me,  
 And the light about me be night ;
- 12 Even darkness cannot be too dark for thee,  
 But the night is light as the day ;  
 The darkness<sup>h</sup> and light (to thee are) both alike.
- 13 For THOU hast formed my reins,  
 Thou didst weave me together in my mother's womb.

which is clearer from the second member, where the word *face* (*presence*) is put for knowledge or sight." He then remarks that the passage has been wrongly applied to prove the infinite nature of God (*ad probandam essentialis Dei immensitatem*); for it is not with metaphysical conceptions that the Psalmist is employed, but with the practical truth that by no change of place or circumstance can *man* escape from the eye of *God*. There is further implied, too, in the thought of *escape*, and in the thought of *darkness*, a sense of sin and the terror of an awakened conscience, which of itself would lead a man to hide himself, if it were possible, from his Maker.

8. MY BED IN HELL; lit. "Should I make the unseen world (*Sheol*) my bed." Comp. Isa. lviii. 5. For the same thought, see Prov. xv. 11; Job xxvi. 6-9.

9. If I could fly with the same swiftness from east to west as the first rays of the morning shoot from one end of heaven to the other.

WINGS OF THE MORNING. So the sun is said to have wings, Mal. iv. 2.

UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE SEA, i.e. the farthest west.

11. AND THE LIGHT ABOUT ME. The apodosis does not begin here, as in E.V.,

"even the night shall be light about me," but with the next verse, where it is introduced by the particle "even," as in ver. 10. The predicate "night" stands first in the Hebrew, as is not unusual.

12. CANNOT BE TOO DARK FOR THEE; lit. "cannot be dark (so as to hide) from thee"; or we may retain, both in this and in the next clause, something of the causative meaning of the verbs, and render, "make darkness . . . give light."

13. "Who can have a truer and deeper knowledge of man than he who made him?"

FORMED. The connection and parallelism seem to show that this must be the meaning of the word here, as in Dent. xxxii. 6, "Is not he thy Father that *formed* thee?" where E. V. has "that *bought* thee;" and Gen. xiv. 19, "*Maker* of heaven and earth," where E. V. has "*possessor*."

MY REINS. See on xvi. 7. It seems to denote the sensational and emotional part of the human being, as afterwards "the bones" denote the framework of the body.

WEAVE ME TOGETHER, as in Job x. 11, "Thou hast woven me together (E. V. fenced me) with bones and sinews."

14 I will give thee thanks for that I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are thy works,  
And my soul knoweth (it) right well.

15 My frame was not hidden from thee  
When I was made in secret,  
(When) I was curiously wrought<sup>i</sup> (as) in the lower parts of the earth.

16 Thine eyes did see my substance<sup>j</sup> yet being imperfect,  
And in thy book were they all of them<sup>k</sup> written, —  
The days which were ordered, when as yet there was none of them.

17 And how precious unto me are thy thoughts, O God!  
How great is the sum of them!

18 If I would tell them, they are more in number than the sand.  
When I awake, I am still with thee.

15. MY FRAME, or, "my strength" (and so Symm. ἡ κραταίωσις μου), but here evidently meaning the bony framework of the body.

CURIOSLY WROUGHT, Λγ. ἐποικίλθην. The verb is used of some kind of parti-colored work, but whether woven or embroidered is doubtful. Gesenius, who discusses the question at large in his *Thesaurus*, decides for embroidery. On the other hand, it has been denied by Hartmann that the Hebrews possessed this art. Camp. explains well: "Velut tapetum e nervis et venis contextus."

IN SECRET. Comp. Aesch. *Eumen.* 665, ἐν σκότοισι νηδύος τετραμμένη.

IN THE LOWER PARTS OF THE EARTH. Elsewhere the phrase denotes "the unseen world"; comp. lxiii. 9 [10]; lxxxvi. 13. Here, as the parallelism shows, it is used in a figurative sense to describe a region of darkness and mystery.

16. MY SUBSTANCE YET BEING IMPERFECT. One word in the original, which means strictly anything *rolled together* as a ball, and hence is generally supposed to mean here the foetus or embryo. Hupfeld, however, prefers to understand it of the ball of life, as consisting of a number of

different threads ("the days" of ver. 16), which are first a compact mass, as it were, and which are then unwound as life runs on.

ALL OF THEM, i.e. the days mentioned in the next verse. Or, "all the parts of the one mass, the various elements of the embryo yet undeveloped." If the reference be to them, then we must render the next clause, "the days that (i.e. during which) they were ordered."

17. He breaks off in wonder and admiration and holy thankfulness, as before in ver. 14; these expressions of personal feeling lending not only much beauty and force, but also much reality, to the contemplation of God's attributes. Cf. xxxvi. 7 [8]; xcii. 5 [6]; Rom. xi. 33.

HOW PRECIOUS, or, perhaps (in accordance with the root-meaning of the word), "how hard to understand" (lit. "how heavy, or weighty"), in which case it would correspond with the ἀνεξερεύνητα of Rom. xi. 33.

SUM; lit. "sums," an unusual plural, denoting that the investigation and enumeration extend in many directions.

18. MORE IN NUMBER. Comp. xl. 5 [6].

- 19 Oh, that thou wouldst slay the wicked, O God!  
 Depart from me, ye blood-thirsty men!
- 20 Who rebel<sup>1</sup> against thee with (their) wicked devices,  
 (Who) lift up<sup>m</sup> themselves against thee<sup>n</sup> in vain.
- 21 Should I not hate them which hate thee, O Jehovah?  
 And should I not be grieved with them that rise up<sup>o</sup>  
 against thee?
- 22 With perfect hatred do I hate them;  
 I count them mine enemies.
- 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
 Try me, and know my thoughts;

WHEN I AWAKE; lit. "I have waked," i.e. as often as he awakes from sleep he finds that he is again in the presence of God, again occupied with thoughts of God, again meditating afresh with new wonder and admiration on his wisdom and goodness. Others explain, "Waking and sleeping, day and night, I think of thee, and find ever the same inexhaustible depth and fulness." Others, again, would interpret the "awaking" as awaking out of a reverie in which the Psalmist had lost himself while meditating upon God. But the first explanation is the simplest and most probable.

19. How strangely abrupt is the turning aside from one of the sublimest contemplations to be found anywhere in the Bible, to express a hope that righteous vengeance will overtake the wicked. Such a passage is startling — startling partly because the spirit of the New Testament is so different; partly, too, no doubt, because "our modern civilization has been so schooled in amenities" that we hardly know what is meant by a righteous indignation. It is well, however, to notice the fact; for this is just one of those passages which help us to understand the education of the world. Just because it startles us is it so instructive. The sixty-third Psalm presents us, as we have seen, with a similar contrast. There, however, the feeling expressed is of a more directly personal kind. David is encompassed and hard pressed by

enemies who are threatening his life. He has been driven from his throne by rebels, and the deep sense of wrong makes him burst forth in the strain of indignation and of anticipated victory: "They that seek my life to destroy it shall be cast into the pit," etc. Here, apparently, the prayer for the overthrow of the wicked does not arise from a sense of wrong and personal danger, but from the intense hatred of wickedness as wickedness, from the deep conviction that, if hateful to a true-hearted man, it must be still more intensely hateful to him who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins. The soul, in the immediate presence of God, places itself on the side of God, against all that is opposed to him. Still, the prayer, "Oh, that thou wouldst slay the wicked," can never be a Christian prayer.

20. WHO REBEL. Either the construction is changed from the second person in the preceding verse ("Depart from me") to the third in the relative clause; or the last clause of ver. 19 must be regarded as parenthetical, which is natural enough in a strong outburst of personal feeling, and then the construction proceeds regularly: "Wilt thou not slay the wicked, who rebel," etc.

WITH WICKED DEVICES . . . IN VAIN. The parallelism would be better preserved by taking both words as adverbs — "wickedly . . . foolishly."

23. SEARCH ME. "That man must

24 And see if there be any wicked way in me,  
And lead me in the way everlasting.

have a rare confidence," says Calvin, "who offers himself so boldly to the scrutiny of God's righteous judgment." And then he remarks that such a prayer is no evidence of self-ignorance or a presumptuous spirit, but of integrity of heart and the absence of all hypocrisy. It is connected with what precedes in this way — that, having declared his utter separation from, and aversion to, the wicked, he prays that this may be no mere outward separation; he remembers that, even whilst he seems most opposed to the wicked, the all-seeing eye may discern in him some way of evil and sorrow; that only as God holds his hand and leads him can he walk in the way of life.

24. WICKED WAY, or rather, "way of pain," i.e. leading to pain; such pain

and smart being the consequences of sin, as in Isa. xiv. 3. Others, "way of idols," as in Isa. xlvi. 5, "the way of idolatry being opposed to the way of Jehovah," xxv. 4. Comp. also Amos viii. 14, and the use of *ἄδωσ* Acts xix. 23; xxii. 4.

WAY EVERLASTING, i.e. the one true, abiding way, which leads to the true and everlasting God. Calvin, who translates *via seculi*, supposes merely the course of life in this world to be meant, and that the Psalmist prays God to be with him to the end ("ac si peteret Deum sibi esse duce[m] stadii sui usque ad metam"); but the Hebrew *'olam* (*aiōn*) has not of itself this meaning. Others render "the old way," i.e. the true religion, the religion of his fathers, as in Jer. vi. 16; "the old paths," xviii. 15.

\* רָצִי only here: רָצָה = Chald. רָעִיָּה (from root רָצָה = רצה), properly "will," here "thought." The רָ prefixed to the obj. is perhaps an Aramaism (comp. cxvi. 25; cxxix. 3; cxxxv. 11), but not necessarily, as the רָ may denote the *direction* of the thought.

<sup>b</sup> רָצִיָּה. Another Chald form for רָצָה, and another ἄπ. λεγ. This and the preceding word are properly two infinitives, "my walking and my lying down." Though the noun אָרָה is Hebrew, the verb occurs only here and in Job xxxiv. 8, a passage which has also an Aram. tincture.

<sup>c</sup> גִּרְרִיתָ (cognate with גִּרַּר, גִּרַּרְתָּ), *thou hast spread out*, and so *winnowed*; LXX, ἐξίχνασας, *tracked*; Jerome, *eventilasti*.

<sup>d</sup> הֵן. The construction of this verse has been taken in two ways: (1) There is no word on my tongue (which) thou dost not know altogether; (2) a word is not (yet) upon my tongue, (but) lo! thou knowest it altogether. This last is the rendering of Kimchi, Calvin, and others, and the הֵן favors it, as Hupfeld observes. Comp. Isa. xl. 24. [But הֵן in later writers = אֵם. See Gesen. *Lex.* Can it here be used after a negative in the sense of *nisi* or *quin*?]

<sup>e</sup> פְּלִיאָה. Fem. of the adj. פְּלִיאָ (as the K'thibh, Judges xiii. 18), and therefore to be read פְּלִיאָה, and not as the K'ri, פְּלִיאָה.

On רָבֵל see xiii. 5.

<sup>f</sup> אָסַפְתָּ (only here) from אָסַף, Aramaic (for the usual Heb. עָלָה), but

only used in fut. imperat. inf. Kal and Aphel. The alternate form is פָּלַץ, but we must not therefore assume, with Gesen., Ewald, and others, that פָּלַץ is for פָּלַץ, and this again by transposition for פָּלַץ. The roots are distinct, though cognate. Comp. also הִשְׁפַּח, Dan. vi. 24.

<sup>g</sup> רִשְׁפִּי. In the two other passages where the same word occurs, Gen. iii. 15; Job ix. 17, it means "to bruise," "to crush," a meaning evidently not applicable here, though the LXX have καταπατήσει. Hence Umbreit would connect it with שָׁפַח, in the sense *inhiare, insidiari* (comp. LXX, τρηεῖν), and so *invadere*, "to fall upon." Even this, however, gives but a poor meaning, as Hupfeld truly remarks. Either, therefore, we must connect it with another root, שָׁפַח, "the darkness shall be gloomy, thick, about me" — so the Targ., Saadia, Rashi, Kimchi, etc., and so Symm., ἐπισκεπάσει με; another Greek Vers., καλύψει; Jerome, *operient* — or we must adopt a different reading, such as רִשְׁפִּי, which Böttcher proposes, comparing Job xi. 17; or רִשְׁפִּי, as Ewald suggests, from שָׁפַח = שָׁפַח, *to cover*, as רִשְׁפִּי, for רִשְׁפִּי, xci. 6.

<sup>h</sup> הִשְׁפַּח. a fem. with a superfluous ה inserted, but not otherwise an uncommon form, whereas the fem. אִשְׁפַּח only occurs besides Esther viii. 16, and is a later and Aram. form.

<sup>i</sup> רִקְמָתִי (Pual only here). The root means to *variegate, ποικίλλειν*. The body of the foetus is described as woven together of so many different-colored threads, like a cunning and beautiful network of tapestry — "*velut tapetum e nervis et venis contextus*" (Camp.), — similar, therefore to the use of רִקְמָה, ver 13; Job x. 11.

<sup>j</sup> גָּלְמִי from גָּלַם, *to roll together*, 2 Kings ii. 8, whence גָּלְמָה, *a mantle*, Ezek. xxvii. 24. The word גָּלְמָה occurs here only in the Old Test., but is used in the Talmud of any unformed, unshapen mass. So the LXX and Aq., have here ἀκατέργαστόν μου; Symm., ἀμόρφωτόν με, as describing the embryo. Hupfeld, however, understands it not of the embryo, but of the yet undeveloped course of life, the days of which are so many *threads* which as yet are rolled together *in a ball*, and which are unwound as life goes on; so that גָּלְמִי would mean *my ball of life*, just as in classical and other writers we have *the thread of life, the web of life*, etc. Comp. Catull., "*Currite ducentes subtemina, currite, Parcae.*"

<sup>k</sup> כָּלָם. To what does the suffix refer? Some suppose that the yet undeveloped *members* in the embryo are alluded to, as so many threads rolled and twisted together, and fashioned day by day. But the pronoun must rather be anticipative of the following plur. *days*; these are so many threads of life (comp. Isa. xxxviii. 12) which were written (imperf.) in God's book. For other instances of this antici-

pative use of the pronoun see ix. 13; lxxxvii. 1; cxxxii. 6; Job vi. 29; Isa. viii. 21; xiii. 2.

In the following אֵלַי the K'thibh is obviously right; though the Rabb. attempt to explain the K'ri אֵלַי, "to him (i.e. God) they are as one day."

<sup>1</sup> דַּבַּרְתִּי. This cannot be "speak against thee," from דַּבַּרְתִּי, with omission of the א (of which there is only one instance in this verb, 2 Sam. xix. 14, though other elisions of the א may be cited, civ. 29; 2 Sam. xx. 9; xxii. 40; Isa. xiii. 20), for this must have been expressed by דַּבַּרְתִּי, with the prep. לָךְ or בָּךְ; nor "speak of thee," as the Chald. paraphrases "swear by thy name wickedly." There is no other instance in which דַּבַּרְתִּי with the accus. means "to speak of a person." The correct reading is probably דַּבַּרְתִּי (as the Quinta renders, *παρεπέκρανάν σε*) "provoke thee," "rebel against thee," this verb being construed with the accus. Then the following דַּבַּרְתִּי is used adverbially like אֵלַי in the next member, as further explaining the nature of the provocation or rebellion, for דַּבַּרְתִּי may mean *foolishly* i.e. *wickedly*, as well as *in vain, to no purpose*.

<sup>m</sup> אֵלַי, an anomalous form, after the analogy of verbs הָלַךְ with prosthetic א. It ought to be אֵלַי; (comp. Jer. x. 5; Ezek. xlvi. 8). The same mode of writing is found (Jer. x. 5) in the Niphal.

For this absolute use of the verb comp. lxxxix. 10; Hab. i. 3, אֵלַי, "and contention *lifteth itself up*."

<sup>n</sup> דַּבַּרְתִּי. This is generally rendered *thine enemies*, and as the verse begins with the relative אֵלַי, a second subject is thus awkwardly introduced. So the Chald. and so Aq., *ἀντίζηλοί σου*; Symm., *οἱ ἐναντίοι σου*; Jerome, *adversarii tui* (but rendering the relative preceding by *quia*). Some, feeling the awkwardness of the double subject, render, "And they have lifted up thine enemies (i.e. raised them to honor) in vain." Others, again, would explain אֵלַי, with reference to Ex. xx. 7, "they have uttered lies, sworn falsely"; or would read דַּבַּרְתִּי for דַּבַּרְתִּי, so as to bring the passage into a closer resemblance to Ex. xx. 7. But it is a slighter and simpler change to read דַּבַּרְתִּי, a change which ought, perhaps, to be made also in 1 Sam. xxviii. 16. Seven mss. Kenn., and twenty De R., have here דַּבַּרְתִּי, *unto thee*. דַּבַּרְתִּי is usually taken to be an Aramaic form for דַּבַּרְתִּי. Otherwise it must mean *thy cities* (ix. 7; Isa. xiv. 21), a sense which is unsuitable here, though it is given by the LXX. *λήψονται εἰς ματαιότητα τὰς πόλεις σου*, and also by the Syr. and Vulg.

<sup>o</sup> דַּבַּרְתִּי. The only instance of an apocop. Hithp. part. Either the ה is omitted incorrectly, or, as Buxtorf conjectures, in order to

avoid the concurrence of four *servile letters* at the beginning of the word. For the objective affix comp. xvii. 7.

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PSALM CXL.

THIS Psalm is a prayer for protection against enemies who were at once violent and crafty and unscrupulous in the use of their tongues. The general strain of the Psalm is like that of many which occur in the earlier books, and like them it is ascribed to David. In tone and language it resembles Psalms lviii. and lxiv., but we have no means of testing the accuracy of the inscription. The chief peculiarity of the Psalm is, that it has several words which occur nowhere else. Ewald would refer this and the two following Psalms — but, as it appears to me, without any sufficient reason — to the age of Manasseh. The impression left upon the mind in reading them, I think, is, that they are cast in David's vein and in imitation of his manner, rather than written by David himself; but it would be absurd to dogmatize in a matter where we are really left with nothing to guide us, unless we are disposed to accept the tradition from which the title has sprung.

The strophical division of the Psalm is, on the whole, regular. there are four strophes, consisting each of three verses, except that the third, instead of consisting of three verses of two members, consists of two verses of three members, so that the length of each strophe is in fact the same. There is also a concluding strophe of two verses. The close of the first three strophes is marked by the *Selah*.

[For the Precentor. A Psalm of David.]

- 1 DELIVER me, O Jehovah, from the evil man,  
From the violent man preserve<sup>a</sup> me.
- 2 Who have imagined evil things in (their) hearts;  
All the day they stir up<sup>b</sup> wars.
- 3 They have sharpened their tongue like a serpent,  
Adder's poison is under their lips. [*Selah*.]

1. EVIL MAN, or "evil men" . . . "violent men" (the sing. being used collectively for the plur.), which is more in accordance with the plural in the next verse.

THE VIOLENT MAN; lit. "man of vio-

lences," as in 2 Sam. xxii. 49, instead of "man of violence," as in Ps. xviii. 48 [49].

3. SHARPENED THEIR TONGUE. Cf. lii. 2 [4]. And for the next clause, lviii. 4 [5], x. 7.



- 4 Keep me, O Jehovah, from the hands of the wicked,  
From the violent man preserve me,  
Who have purposed to thrust aside my steps.
- 5 The proud have hidden a snare for me, and cords,  
They have spread a net by the side of the road,  
They have set gins for me. [Selah.]
- 6 I said to Jehovah, Thou art my God,  
Give ear, O Jehovah, to the voice of my supplications.
- 7 O Jehovah Lord, thou strength of my salvation,  
Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.
- 8 Grant not, O Jehovah, the desires<sup>c</sup> of the wicked;  
Further not his wicked device, that they be not lifted up.<sup>d</sup>  
[Selah.]
- 9 [When they lift up] the head that compass me<sup>e</sup> about,  
Let the mischief of their own lips cover them.<sup>f</sup>
- 10 Let hot burning coals fall<sup>g</sup> upon them,  
Let them be cast into the fire,  
Into floods of waters<sup>h</sup> that they rise not again.
- 11 An evil speaker shall not be established in the earth,  
The violent man—evil<sup>i</sup> shall hunt him to overthrow(him).
- 12 I know that Jehovah will maintain the cause of the afflicted,  
The right of the poor.
- 13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name;  
The upright shall dwell in thy presence.

4. The opening of the second strophe is a repetition with slight variation of the opening of the first.

5. THE PROUD HAVE HIDDEN, or the adjective may be a predicate, and the subject the same as before: "who have hidden in their pride," etc.

7. COVERED MY HEAD, i.e. as with a helmet. Comp. lx. 7 [9].

BATTLE; lit. "armor," as in 1 Kings x. 25; 2 Kings x. 2; Ezek. xxxix. 9, 10.

9. WHEN THEY LIFT UP. The verb should probably be transferred here from the end of the previous verse (see Critical Note). In the next clause, and verses, 10, 11, I have followed the E. V. in preferring the optative to the future. But the LXX., Jerome, and the major-

ity of modern commentators give the future: "Though they that compass me may lift up the head, the mischief of their own lips shall cover them; hot burning coals shall fall upon them," etc.

10. LET THEM BE CAST; lit. "let one cast them," or perhaps Jehovah may be the subject of the verb, "May he cast them."

11. AN EVIL SPEAKER; lit. "a man of tongue"; not, however, used here in the sense of "a talkative man"; as the similar phrase, "a man of lips" (E. V. "a man full of talk"), in Job xi. 2, but with the further notion of *evil* speaking, as in ver. 3.

13. DWELL IN THY PRESENCE. See xi. 7; xvi. 11.

<sup>a</sup> הַתְּצַרְתִּי. The full form, as in lxi. 8; lxxviii. 7, etc.

<sup>b</sup> הִתְגַּדְּרוּ. The verb is usually intrans. "gather themselves," in a hostile sense, as in lvi. 7. So it is commonly taken here, the prep. אֶל or לְ being understood, or the accus. being regarded as the accus. of direction. Kimchi, however, makes the verb trans. here, *gather wars*, i.e. gather the materials for war. Perhaps it is better to take גָּדַר = גָּרַר, *to stir up*, as the Chald., Syr., and others. In the next verse בְּתִשׁוּב is a ἄπ. λεγ.

<sup>c</sup> מְאַנְוִי (only here, instead of אָנַח, תְּאַנְחֶנּוּ). Constr. plur. of מְאַנְחָה, not of מְאַנְי or מְאַיִר, as Gesen., for the termination הֶ- is a contraction from *ai* — a false formation, with euphonic doubling of the third radical, according to the analogy of מְשַׁמְעִים, מְחַמְדִּים, etc., here transferred to 3 Yod, contrary to rule. It would be better to write מְאַנְוִי, like the constr. forms גָּדְרִי (Gen. xxvii. 9, 16); לְתַרְיִי (Isa. xxx. 28, instead of גָּדְרִי, etc.), after the analogy of the termination יִי. This is proposed by Abulvalid, who found it in his ms., and Kimchi (*Michlol*), and Kenn. and Norzi mention having found it in some mss.; but the form does not occur elsewhere. (The above is taken from Hupfeld). וְזָמַן is another ἄπ. λεγ.

<sup>d</sup> הִרְדִּימוּ. This is commonly taken as loosely subjoined to the previous sentence, either as governed by the preceding negative, LXX, *μήποτε ὑψώθησαν*, Symm. *ὕψωσιν* (comp. Isa. xiv. 21, הִרְדִּימוּ, בַּל יִקְיָמוּ), or as describing the consequences of their success, "they will lift themselves up." But it is impossible not to feel that, in all probability, the word is misplaced before the Selah, and that it belongs to the following verse, especially as the first clause of that verse requires a verb to make sense: "They that surround me have lifted up the head." It is true that רִים in the Kal is not trans., and therefore ראשׁ must either be the accus. of reference, "as to the head," or perhaps we ought to read הִרְדִּימוּ. For the fluctuations between Kal and Hiph. in this word comp. lxxxix. 18, 26; cxlviii. 13.

<sup>e</sup> מְסַבֵּר, usually taken as part. Hiph.; but the Hiph. of this verb is never intransitive, not even in Josh. vi. 11; 2 Sam. v. 23. It must, therefore, be from an abstract מְסַב, whence plur. constr. מְסַבִּים, used adverbially, and מְסַבֵּר, 2 Kings xxiii. 5; and here with suffix = מְסַבֵּרִי, xxvii. 6.

<sup>f</sup> יִבְסִימוּ. The K'thibh is plur., referring to the *lips* as the subject (Gesen. § 148, 1). The correction to the sing. in the K'ri is therefore unnecessary.

<sup>g</sup> יִמְיִי. The K'thibh can only refer to an indefinite subject, "*Let them (men) cast hot burning coals,*" etc., which is equivalent to a

passive: *Let hot burning coals* (which may perhaps mean *lightnings*, as in xvii. 13, 14) *be cast*, etc. See on lvi. note<sup>e</sup>. The K'ri, however, substitutes the Niph. *יָמַטוּ*, which is contrary to the usage in the Niph. Hupfeld, therefore, would read *יָמַטוּ* (comp. xi. 6), making Jehovah the subject here, as in the next clause.

<sup>h</sup> *מִמְדַּרוֹתָהּ*, only here. The Rabb. explain it to mean *deep pits*, but without any reason. It is probably to be explained by the cogn. Arab.

*همر*, to pour out water, *هَمْرَة*, a cataract.

<sup>i</sup> *רָע*. The accent is clearly wrong, for this is not an adjective to *אִישׁ רָע*, a wicked, violent man, but a noun, which is the subject of the following verb, as the Chald., the LXX, the Rabb., and others have taken it. Athnach should therefore be transferred to *הָרָע*.

## PSALM CXXI.

THIS Psalm presents some peculiar difficulties of interpretation, which, however, are due neither to the words employed nor to the grammatical construction, but to the extreme abruptness with which in verses 5-7 the thoughts follow one another, and the extreme obscurity which hangs over the allusions. To translate each sentence by itself is no difficult matter, but it is almost hopeless either to link the sentences plausibly together, or to discover in them any tangible clue to the circumstances in which the Psalmist was placed. As all the ancient versions must have had substantially the same text, the deviations in any of them being very slight, it is hardly probable that, as Olshausen and Hupfeld maintain, the text is corrupt; it is more likely that our entire ignorance of the circumstances under which the Psalm was written prevents our piercing the obscurity of the writer's words.

It has been usual to accept the inscription which assigns the Psalm to David, and to assign it to the time of his persecution by Saul. Verse 5 has generally been supposed to allude to David's generous conduct in sparing the life of his foe when he was in his power (see 1 Sam. xxiv., and comp. the note on verse 6 of this Psalm), but it is quite impossible on this supposition to give any plausible interpretation to verse 7.

Delitzsch, with more probability, refers the Psalm to the time of Absalom's rebellion. He sees an allusion to David's distance from the sanctuary and the worship of the sanctuary in verse 2, and he explains

verse 6 of the punishment which shall overtake the rebel leaders, and the return of the people to their allegiance.

Ewald would assign this, as well as the preceding and following Psalms, to a time subsequent to the Assyrian invasion, — perhaps the reign of Manasseh. He supposes that in the persecution to which the true worshippers of Jehovah, and especially the leading men amongst them, were exposed, the Psalmist, who was apparently a man of some distinction (cxlii. 7 [8]), had himself suffered. He had been assailed by threats (cxl. 3 [4], 9 [10]), and by flatteries (cxli. 4); and if these failed in drawing him away, his destruction was resolved upon (cxl. 5 [6]; cxli. 9, 10; cxlii. 3 [4]). But undaunted by threats, unswayed by flatteries, he cleaves with the most resolute faith and love to his God, and will rather submit to reproof from the true-hearted than suffer himself to be cajoled and led astray by the wicked (cxli. 5). And when at last his enemies, enraged at his firmness, seize him and cast him into prison, leaving him there to perish (cxlii. 7 [8]), he does not give way, but still cries to Jehovah for help, and trusts in his power and faithfulness.<sup>1</sup>

Maurer thinks that this Psalm was written at a time when idolatry had become prevalent, especially among men of the highest rank and station, and that in consequence the faithful servants of Jehovah were exposed to bitter persecution. We thus obtain a suitable meaning, he says, for the whole Psalm, of which he thus sketches the outline: "There are three strophes: (1) Hear my prayer, O Jehovah: suffer me not to speak any word against thee, nor to fall away to the wicked, allured by their luxurious banquets (ver. 1-4). (2) Why should I not rejoice in my God? Nay, if their leaders are overthrown, the men shall gladly hear me raising a song of joy and triumph, though now our bones cover the earth (ver. 5-7). (3) Keep me, O Jehovah,

<sup>1</sup> I subjoin Ewald's rendering and explanation of ver. 5-7: "Let the righteous smite me in love and chastise me; let no oil for the head soften my head! For still — my prayer is uttered in their misfortunes. Their judges have been hurled into the rifts of the rock; so shall they hear how sweet my words are! As though one should furrow and cleave the earth, our bones have been scattered for the jaws of death." That is, "So far am I from partaking of the dainties of the wicked, I will rather turn to the righteous, and welcome their reproofs for my past coldness. I will not even anoint my head," for that would be a sign of joy and festivity, whereas now they are in suffering, and I can only pray. The chiefest among them have already perished, "but the righteous who have escaped the general persecution shall hear my words of sympathy and my prayers" (such, for instance, as we have in this Psalm); and then, as if deeply sympathizing with the judges, the princes who have been slain, he counts himself in their number, "*Our bones lie scattered,*" etc., as on a field of battle (liii. 5 [6]).

from the devices of the wicked. Let them be snared in their own nets, whilst I escape" (ver. 8-10).

It is curious that whilst De Wette, describing the Psalm as "a very original, and therefore difficult, Psalm," holds it to be one of the oldest in the collection; Maurer, almost on the same grounds ("oratio maxime impedita ac talis in qua manifeste cum verbis luctetur vates"), sets it down as belonging to a comparatively late period.

[A Psalm of David.]

- 1 O JEHOVAH, I have called upon thee, haste thee unto me ;  
Give ear to my voice when I call upon thee.
- 2 Let my prayer be set forth (as) incense before thee,  
The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.
- 3 Set a watch,<sup>a</sup> O Jehovah, before my mouth,  
Keep the door<sup>b</sup> of my lips.
- 4 Incline not my heart to any evil thing,  
To busy itself<sup>c</sup> in wicked doings with men<sup>d</sup> that work  
iniquity ;  
And let me not eat of their dainties.

2. LIFTING UP OF MY HANDS; i.e. evidently, as the parallelism requires, in prayer; comp. xxviii. 2. Others, as the Syr., and recently Ewald and Hengstenberg, explain it of bringing an offering, which is against both the parallelism and the comparison with the evening sacrifice.

EVENING SACRIFICE. The sacrifice here meant is strictly the offering consisting of fine flour with oil and frankincense, or of unleavened cakes mingled with oil, which was burnt upon the altar (Heb. *minchah*, E. V. "meat-offering"); see Lev. ii. 1-11. This, however, like the "incense," was only added to the burnt-offering, the lamb which was offered every morning and evening (Ex. xxix. 38-42; Num. xxviii. 3-8). It would seem, therefore, that these two, "the incense" and "the offering of fine flour," etc., stand for the morning and evening sacrifices; and the sense is, "Let my daily prayer be acceptable to thee as are the daily sacrifices of thine own appointment." (The *minchah* is

used 1 King xviii. 29, 36, of the whole evening sacrifice, and of the morning sacrifice, 2 Kings iii. 20). The incense may be mentioned because, as ascending in a fragrant cloud, it was symbolical of prayer (Rev. v. 8; viii. 3, 4); and the same would hold also of the "meat-offering," of which it is said that the priest was to burn a part as "a memorial," "a sweet savor under Jehovah" (Lev. ii. 9).

3. SET A WATCH. Comp. xxxiv. 13 [14]; xxxix. 1 [2]; Prov. xiii. 3; xxi. 23. The prayer is apparently directed against the temptation to indulge in rash and foolish words, such as wicked men would indulge in (see next verse). Others suppose that he prays to be kept from the temptation to break out into bitter words against his persecutors (as against Saul, if the Psalm be David's); or into murmurs and complaints against God.

4. INCLINE NOT. See note on li. 4.

DAINTIES. It is unnecessary to explain this of things sacrificed to idols

- 5 Let a righteous man smite me, it shall be a kindness ;  
 And let him reprove me, it shall be as oil upon (my) head,  
 Let not my head refuse<sup>e</sup> (it) :  
 For yet is my prayer<sup>f</sup> against their wickednesses.
- 6 (When) their judges have been hurled down the sides of the  
 rock,  
 Then they shall hear my words that they are sweet.

(Ros., Del.), as if the Psalmist were surrounded by heathen ; comp. xvi. 4. The temptation is rather to an easy, luxurious, sensual life, as in lxxiii.

5. According to the rendering I have preferred of this verse, the sense will be : " I will gladly welcome even the reproofs of the good (comp. Prov. xxvii. 6 ; Eccl. vii. 5), and I will avail myself of prayer as the best defence against the wickedness of my persecutors." The last member of the verse may be rendered, " For even *in* their wickedness (whilst it continues and whilst I suffer from it) shall my prayer continue." So Mendels., " Ich bete noch da jene Schandthat üben." Δρ. ὅτι ἔτι καὶ προσευχῆ μου ἐν κακίαις αὐτῶν. It is possible, however, that this last clause refers not to his enemies, but to the righteous, in which case it must be rendered, " For still my prayer shall be offered *in their misfortunes*." (So Ewald).

Again, the first two clauses have been rendered : Let a righteous man smite me in love (*accus.*) (LXX. ἐν ἐλέει), and reprove me. Such oil upon the head let not my head refuse." (Delitzsch). But nothing is gained by this, and the balance of the members is not so well preserved. Others again (as Maur., Hengst.) understand by the "righteous," God, appealing to Isa. xxiv. 16 ; where, however, the "righteous" means not God, but "the righteous nation." In ver. 4 he had prayed that he might not be led astray by the evil he saw around him, nor allured by the blandishments and luxurious prosperity of the wicked. Now he says, on the contrary, "let me ever be ready to welcome even reproof from the righteous," which, however harsh, is salutary. The wounds of a friend are

faithful, and better than the kisses of an enemy.

6. This verse, difficult in itself, is still more difficult, because it has no very obvious connection either with what precedes or with what follows. The allusions are so obscure that it is impossible to do more than guess at the meaning.

THEIR JUDGES must be in a general sense the "rulers" or "princes" of "the wicked;" for the pronoun must refer to them. (Ewald, however, — see introduction to the Psalm, — supposes the leading men amongst the righteous to be meant, who are the principal sufferers in the time of persecution). The verse apparently describes a punishment which has been or will be inflicted upon them (see for this mode of punishment 2 Chron. xxv. 12 ; Luke iv. 29). The verb HURLED DOWN is the same which is used, 2 Kings ix. 33, of the throwing down of Jezebel from the window.

THE SIDES OF THE ROCK ; lit. "along," or "by the sides (Heb. *hands*) of the rock or precipice." Comp. exl. 5 [6], "by the *side* of the path"; Judg. xi. 26, "by the sides (E. V. *coasts*, Heb. *hands*) of Arnon." Others, "into the hands (i.e. the power) of the rock," with the same notion of punishment, but rather as in cxxxvii. 9, being hurled against the rock. (The preposition employed favors the latter explanation; see Lam. iv. 14).

THEY SHALL HEAR ; i.e. of course not the "judges," but either *their followers* who have been led astray by their pernicious influence, or perhaps *more generally, men* shall hear. If the Psalm is to be referred to Absalom's rebellion,

7 As when one furroweth<sup>s</sup> the earth (with the plough),

Our bones have been scattered at the mouth of the grave.

8 For unto thee, O Jehovah, the Lord, are mine eyes,

In thee have I found refuge; Oh pour not out<sup>h</sup> my soul.

or any similar occasion, the sense will be, "When the leaders in the insurrection meet with the fate they deserve, then the subjects of the king will return to their allegiance." And the expression, "they shall hear my words that they are sweet," would be a thoroughly Oriental mode of describing the satisfaction with which they would welcome the gracious amnesty pronounced by their offended sovereign. Others, who suppose that the Psalm alludes to David's magnanimity in sparing Saul when he was in his power (1 Sam. xxiv.), explain "When their leaders (meaning Saul) were let go (suffered to escape) along the sides of the rock, they heard my words that they were sweet," — recognized, that is, my forbearance and generosity in sparing my enemy, instead of taking his life.

7. AS WHEN ONE FURROWETH, etc.; lit. "as one who furroweth and cleaveth in the earth" (the participle absolute being used for the finite verb). The allusion is as obscure as in the previous verses, and the point of the comparison is differently explained. The bones scattered are compared either (1) to the clods broken by the ploughshare, or (2) to the seed scattered in the earth turned up by the plough. Maurer finds the point of the comparison in the *length* of the furrow: "Quemadmodum qui terram arat, longas facit series sulcorum, sic ossa nostra, longa serie sparsa, prostrata sunt orei in praedam." But the emphasis is laid, by the use of the double verb, on the *breaking-up* of the clods. There is no reason to supply a different object, as the E. V., "As when one cutteth and cleaveth *wood* upon the earth." The explanation first given is the most probable. In 2 Chron. xxv. 12, where ten thousand Edomites are said to have been cast down from the top of the rock (*sela'*, as here), the

same verb is used to describe their destruction which is here used of *cleaving* the earth by the plough.

AT THE MOUTH, or perhaps "for the mouth," i.e. so as to be swallowed up by it.

THE GRAVE. Heb. Sheol, the abode of the dead, though here perhaps nothing more than the grave may be meant. The verse thus describes a complete and disastrous overthrow, and apparently of the whole nation; for now we have the pronoun of the first person, "*our* bones." It is true that in some of the ancient versions the pronoun of the third person is found. So in the LXX, although τὰ ὄστᾶ ἡμῶν is the original reading, yet B has an alternate reading αὐτῶν, and this is found in A (by a second hand) and in the Syr., Arab., and Aethiop. Böttcher insists upon this as the correct reading, and explains "*their* bones" of the bones of the judges hurled down the rock. Hengst. and Delitzsch, on the other hand, find here a figure expressive of hope and consolation. The bones, according to them, are compared to seed scattered in the upturned earth, from which a harvest may be expected. So here a national resurrection (the first germ of what is expressed in Isa. xxvi. 19; Ezek. xxxvii.), a new life, is anticipated. But if this be the point of comparison, it is very strangely expressed; it certainly does not lie on the surface of the words.

8. FOR. The conjunction does not refer to what immediately precedes, but either to what is said in ver. 4, 5 (so Maurer), or perhaps rather to the whole of the former part of the Psalm, so far as it consists of petition: "Listen to my prayer, — keep me from temptation, — for unto thee are mine eyes."

POUR NOT OUT MY SOUL; i.e. give not my life up to destruction. Comp. the use of the same verb, Isa. liii. 12,

9 Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me,  
From the gins of the workers of iniquity.

10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets,  
Whilst that I withal<sup>i</sup> escape.

“He poured out his soul unto death.” But the rendering of the E. V., “leave not my soul destitute,” is in accordance with the root signification of the word, and therefore may be right.

9. FROM THE SNARE; lit. “from the hands of the snare.” So we have in xxii. 20 [21], “from the hand of the

dog;” in Job v. 20, “from the hand of the sword;” Isa. xlvii. 14, “from the hand of the flame.”

INTO THEIR OWN NETS. The pronoun is singular, used distributively, — “Each one of them into his own net.” For the sentiment comp. vii. 15 [16].

<sup>a</sup> שְׁמֶרָה. The noun occurs only here. Kimchi defends it by forms such as חֲקָמָה, עֲצָמָה. Hupfeld finds a difficulty in admitting this abstract noun from a transitive verb, especially as we have another noun, מִשְׁמֶר, in this sense; and is inclined therefore to take the word as the imperative with הַ paragog., in the same construction with לִפְי, as in xxxix. 2, where, however, it is followed by the accus. מְחַסֵּימ. Like Aben-Ezra, he supposes that the writer intended to imitate the construction in xxxix. 2, but to break it up into שִׁמְרָה מִלְּפִי and שְׁמֶרָה, but then either omitted מִלְּפִי or dropped the construction he had begun. It is so far in favor of this view, that נִצְרָה is of the same imperat. form (Kal with euphon. Dagesh, as in Prov. iv. 13); here followed by עַל (which it is nowhere else), after the analogy of שִׁמְרָה. Some, however, would make נִצְרָה, like שְׁמֶרָה, a noun.

<sup>b</sup> הַל, another ἄπ. λεγ., instead of the fem. הַלָּה.

<sup>c</sup> הַתְּנוּלָלָה. This Hiithpo. (denom. from תְּנוּלָה) occurs only here.

<sup>d</sup> אֲשֵׁרִים. This plur. form occurs also Prov. viii. 4; Isa. liii. 3.

מִנְעַמִּים, in the next line, is another ἄπ. λεγ.

<sup>e</sup> הָיָה, as הָיָה, Micah i. 15, written defectively, perhaps because optative or jussive. See lv. note <sup>i</sup>; Gesen. § 73, Rem. iv. § 74; Rem. 21 c. The rendering of the LXX, μὴ λιπανάτω τὴν κεφαλὴν μου, with which Jerome and the Syr. agree cannot be defended. There is, indeed, an Arab. root, نَرِيَ, to become fat, but there is no such root in Hebrew.

<sup>f</sup> כִּי עוֹד וְהָיָה. The כִּי must introduce the apodosis, and the sentence is elliptical; “For (so it is) still, that my prayer,” etc. With this elliptical use of כִּי עוֹד compare עוֹד אֲשֵׁר, “it will still be that,” Zech. viii. 20, and אַחֲרָיו, Prov. xxiv. 27, “afterwards it shall be that,” etc.

<sup>g</sup> פִּלְתָּה is taken by some of the ancients interpreters as = a noun, “husbandman,” and as the subject of the sentence. Symm., ὄσπερ



γεωργὸς ὅταν βήσση τὴν γῆν οὕτως ἐσκορπίσθη κ. τ. λ.; Jerome, *Sicut agricola cum scindit terram*. The root is of course the same as that of the common Arabic word *Fellah*.

<sup>h</sup> הָצַר for הָצָר (Gesen. § 75, Rem. 8), Piel, or incorr. for הָצַר, Hiph., which is found in Isa. liii. 12. The root is used of *emptying* a vessel, Gen. xxiv. 20; a chest, 2 Chron. xxiv. 11; then it gets the sense of *pouring out*, as Maurer observes: "Quod evacuandi verba facillime a vasis transferuntur ad id quod vasis continetur." But it is better, perhaps, to keep to the root meaning of making bare, destitute, empty.

<sup>i</sup> יָחַד. Some would join this to the previous hemistich: "into their own nets together." Maurer considers it to be = כָּל יָחַד, and supposes it to refer to *the nets*, and to be the object of the verb: "Whilst I escape them all." But it is better to take יָחַד here in the sense of *at the same time* (comp. iv. 9; xxxiii. 15), and עַר (*whilst*, as in Job viii. 21) as merely placed second in the sentence (comp. cxxviii. 2), in order that the emphatic word may occupy the first place.

## PSALM CXLII.

THIS is the last of the eight Psalms which, according to their inscriptions, are to be referred to David's persecution by Saul. Like the fifty-seventh Psalm, it is supposed to describe his thoughts and feelings when he was "in the cave," though whether in the cave of Adullam (1 Sam. xxii. 1) or in that of Engedi (1 Sam. xxiv. 3) is not clear. (See introduction to Psalm lvii.) The general strain of the Psalm is that of the earlier books. It expresses in language like that of David the cleaving of the heart to God, the deep sense of loneliness, the cry for deliverance, the confidence that that deliverance will call forth the sympathy and the joy of many others. But whether it is written only in imitation of David's manner, or whether it is a genuine work of David's extracted perhaps from some history, and added, at a time subsequent to the exile, to the present collection, it is impossible now to determine.

[A Maschil\* of David when he was in the Cave. A Prayer.]

- 1 WITH my voice to Jehovah will I cry,  
With my voice to Jehovah will I make supplication.

- 2 I will pour out before him my complaint ;  
 My trouble before him will I make known.
- 3 When my spirit is overwhelmed within me,  
 THOU knowest my path :  
 In the way wherein I walk,  
 Have they hidden a snare for me.
- 4 Look<sup>b</sup> on the right hand and see,  
 There is none that will know me ;  
 Refuge hath failed me ;  
 There is none that seeketh after my soul.
- 5 I have cried unto thee, O Jehovah,  
 I have said, THOU art my refuge,  
 My portion in the land of the living.
- 6 Attend unto my cry,  
 For I am brought very low :  
 Deliver me from my persecutors,  
 For they are too strong for me.
- 7 Bring forth my soul out of prison,  
 That I may give thanks to thy name.

3. WHEN MY SPIRIT. The first member of this verse is perhaps to be connected with the preceding verse, precisely as the same words are found connected in the title of Ps. cii. (So Hupfeld and Bunsen.)

IS OVERWHELMED ; lit. "darkens itself." See on lxxvii. 3 [4].

WITHIN ME ; lit. "upon me." See on xlii. note<sup>d</sup>.

THOU ; lit. "and THOU." If the existing arrangement of the text is right, the conjunction only serves to introduce the apodosis. But if the first clause, "when my spirit," etc., belongs to the previous verse, then we must render here, "And thou knowest," etc.

4. LOOK. There is no contradiction in this prayer to the previous statement of belief in God's omniscience, "Thou knowest my path," as has been alleged. Such appeals to God to see, to regard, etc., are common enough, "and are

bound up with the very nature of prayer, which is one great anthropomorphism."

ON THE RIGHT HAND, as the direction in which he would naturally look for succor (a *παροστάρης*). See xvi. 8 ; eix. 6, 31 ; cx. 5 ; cxxi. 5.

THAT WILL KNOW ; lit. "that recognizes me." Comp. Ruth ii. 10, 19.

HATH FAILED, as in Amos ii. 14 ; Jer. xxv. 35 ; Job xi. 20.

SEEKETH AFTER, i.e. "troubleth himself concerning," "careth for," as in Deut. xi. 12 ; 2 Sam. xi. 3 ; Job x. 6 ; though according to the analogy of Jer. xxx. 17, it would be possible also to render, "My soul hath none that seeketh (it)"; or "seeker" may here mean "avenger," as Hammond explains, *vindex et servator sollicitus*. Comp. for this use of the verb x. 13.

5. MY PORTION. Comp. xvi. 5 ; lxxiii. 26.

THE LIVING, or "life." See xxvii. 13.

The righteous shall come <sup>c</sup> me,  
Because thou dealest bountifully with me.

7. OUT OF PRISON. This is clearly in my joy, though elsewhere the word is used in a hostile sense. The Prayer-  
the parallel passage, cxliii. 11. book version "then shall the righteous  
COME ABOUT ME; i.e. sympathizing resort unto my company."

<sup>a</sup> See on xxxii. note <sup>a</sup>, and introduction to lvii.

<sup>b</sup> הַבִּיט. This can only be imperat. (like the following רָאָה) for הַבִּיט, as in Job xxxv. 5. See on lxxvii. note <sup>c</sup>; xciv. note <sup>a</sup>. The ancient versions, nearly without exception, have here the 1st person. LXX, *κατενόουν καὶ ἐπέβλεπον*. Similarly the Chald. and Syr. and the Rabb. commentators, and so the E. V., evidently taking the forms as infinitive absolutes, which would hold of הַבִּיט, but not of רָאָה, for the apparent inf. constr. הִבִּיטָה, Ezek. xxi. 15, proves nothing as it follows לְיָצֵק. Ewald would read רָאָה, but no change is necessary. Jerome is quite right in keeping the imperative, *Respice . . . et vide*.

<sup>c</sup> בְּקִרְבִּי. The verb, both in Hiph. and Piel, is elsewhere used in a hostile sense, and with the accus. Here it must be expressive of sympathy, though neither this meaning nor the constr. with בְּ is to be found elsewhere. Others, following the LXX and Aq., render "shall wait for me"; but then it must be Piel, as in Job xxxvi. 2, where it is also followed by לְ. Others again take the word as a denom. from בָּקַר, and explain *crown*, or *put on a crown*, in a figurative sense, i.e. triumph in me, boast themselves of me, as of a crown. Delitzsch compares Prov. xiv. 18. Symm., τὸ ὄνομά σου στεφανώσονται δίκαιοι; Jerome, *in me coronabuntur justi*. The following בְּרִי is rendered in the E. V. *for*. The LXX have *ἕως οὗ ἀνταποδώς μοι*; Jerome, *cum retribuueris mihi*; Symm., *ὅταν ἐυεργετήσης με*.

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## PSALM CXLIII.

THIS is the last of the seven Penitential Psalms, as they are called. (See Introduction, Vol. i. p. 19.) In the Hebrew it is styled a Psalm of David; in some copies of the LXX it is further said to have been written when he had to flee from his son Absalom. It is probable that the deep tone of sorrow and anguish which pervades the Psalm, and the deep sense of sin, led to the belief that it must be referred to that occasion. The spirit and the language, it is true, are not un-

worthy of David; yet the many passages borrowed from earlier Psalms make it more probable that this Psalm is the work of some later poet. Delitzsch says, very truly, that if David himself did not write it — and he admits that the many expressions derived from other sources are against such a supposition — still the Psalm is “an extract of the most precious balsam from the old Davidic songs.” Like other post-exile Psalms (such, for instance, as the one hundred and sixteenth and one hundred and nineteenth), it is a witness to us of the depth and reality of the religious life in the later history of the nation, and an evidence also of the way in which that life was upheld and cherished by the inspired words of David and other Psalmists and prophets of old.

The Psalm consists of two parts, each of which is of six verses, the conclusion of the first being marked by the *Selah*. The first portion contains the complaint (ver. 1-6); the second, the prayer founded on that complaint (ver. 7-12).

[(A Psalm) of David.]

1 O JEHOVAH, hear my prayer,

Give ear to my supplications.

In thy faithfulness answer me, (and) in thy righteousness.

2 And enter not into judgment with thy servant;

For before thee no man living is righteous.

1. IN THY FAITHFULNESS . . . IN THY RIGHTEOUSNESS. It is to God's own character that the appeal is made. It is there first, and not in his own misery, that the sinner finds the great argument why his prayer should be answered. It is precisely the same ground which St. John takes: “If we confess our sins, he is *faithful* and *righteous* (true to his promise and true to his revealed character) to forgive us our sins.”

2. ENTER NOT INTO JUDGMENT, as in Job ix. 32; xxii. 4. He traces his suffering to his sin; the malice of his enemies is the rod of God's chastisement, calling him to repentance.

BEFORE THEE; i.e. at thy bar, in the judgment.

IS RIGHTEOUS. Our translators are not consistent in their rendering of this verb. Here they follow the LXX, οὐ

*δικαιωθήσεται*, “shall not be justified.” But in Job ix. 15; x. 15; xv. 14; xxii. 3; xxxii. 1; xxxiv. 5; xxxv. 7; xl. 8, they give as the equivalent “to be righteous”; so, too, in Ps. xix. 9 [10]. But in Ps. li. 4 [6] they have “justify,” as here; and so in Job xi. 2; xiii. 18; xxv. 4; whereas in iv. 17; xxxiii. 12, they render “to be just.” See in many of the passages referred to in Job the same deep sense of man's unrighteousness before a righteous God which the Psalmist here expresses. Yet it is that very righteousness before which he trembles, to which he appeals, which he needs, in which alone he can stand before his Judge. The passage clearly shows, says Calvin, that he is justified who is considered and accounted just before God, or whom the heavenly Judge himself acquits as innocent.

- 3 For the enemy hath persecuted my soul,  
 He hath smitten my life down to the earth,  
 He hath made me dwell in darkness as those that are  
 forever dead.
- 4 And my spirit is overwhelmed in me,  
 My heart within me is desolate.
- 5 I have remembered the days of old,  
 I have meditated on all thou hast done ;  
 On the work of thy hands do I muse.
- 6 I have spread forth my hands unto thee,  
 My soul (thirsteth) after thee as a thirsty land. [Selah.]
- 7 Make haste to answer me, O Jehovah,  
 My spirit faileth :

3. FOR THE ENEMY. This is the reason why he turns to God so earnestly. The outward suffering, the persecution, the chastisement laid upon him — it may have been through some guilt of his own — had purged the spiritual eye, had made him look within, had shown him his own heart, its sinfulness and its misery, as he had never seen it before ; and this deep sense of sin and misery had led to the prayer in ver. 2. Hence his deliverance from his enemy and the forgiveness of his sin are naturally connected in his mind.

IN DARKNESS ; lit. " in darknesses," or " dark places," as in lxxxviii. 6 [7], where it is used of the abode of the dead. Comp. with this verse vii. 5 [6] ; Lam. iii. 6 ; Ps. lxxxviii. 3-6 [4-7].

FOREVER DEAD. The dead are so called as " fixed in an eternal state," as those who can never return again to this world.

4. IS OVERWHELMED. The same word as in lxxvii. 3 [4] ; cvii. 5 (where see note), cxlii. 3 [4]. " Having spoken of his outward troubles," says Calvin, " he now confesses the weakness of his spirit, whence we gather that this was no stony fortitude (*non saxeam fuisse ejus fortitudinem*), but that, whilst overwhelmed with sorrow so far as his natural feelings were concerned, he stood and was supported only by faith and the grace of the Spirit."

IS DESOLATE, or rather " is full of amazement " ; lit. " astonies itself " ; seeks to comprehend the mystery of its sufferings, and is ever beaten back upon itself in its perplexity : such is the full force of the reflexive conjugation here employed. The form occurs, besides, Isa. lix. 16 ; lxiii. 5 ; Dan. viii. 27 ; Eccl. vii. 16. This and the next verse are an echo of lxxvii. 3-6 [4-7], 11, 12 [12, 13]. See notes there.

6. I HAVE SPREAD FORTH MY HANDS, as the weary child stretches forth its hands to its mother, that on her bosom it may be hushed to rest.

THIRSTY ; lit. " weary," " languishing," but used as here Isa. xxxii. 2. The construction is doubtful. According to the accents it would be, " My soul is a land thirsting after thee." But as the adjective is used both of the soul (Prov. xxv. 25), and of a land (Ps. lxxiii. 1 [2]), it is probable that it here belongs to both words. " In great heat we see the earth cracking and gaping, as though with open mouth she asked for the rain from heaven."—*Calvin*.

AFTER THEE. " Observe how he binds himself to God alone, cuts off every other hope from his soul, and, in short, makes his very need a chariot wherewith to mount up to God."

7. In the second half of the Psalm many of the expressions are borrowed

Hide not thy face from me,

That so I become like them that go down into the pit.

8 Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning,

For in thee have I trusted ;

Cause me to know the way in which I should walk,

For unto thee have I lifted up my soul.

9 Deliver me from mine enemies, O Jehovah,

Unto thee have I fled to hide me.<sup>a</sup>

10 Teach me to do thy will,

For thou art my God ;

Let thy good <sup>b</sup> Spirit lead me in a plain country.

11 For thy name's sake, O Jehovah, quicken me,

In thy righteousness bring my soul out of distress.

from earlier Psalms. With the prayer in this verse comp. lxxix. 17 [18]; xxvii. 9; cii. 2 [3]; with the second clause comp. lxxxiv. 2 [3], where the ardent longing for God is expressed in the same way.

THAT SO I BECOME, etc., is word for word as in xxviii. 1; comp. lxxxviii. 4 [5].

8. IN THE MORNING; i.e. early, soon. Comp. Moses' prayer, xc. 14. Various interpretations have been given, which are thus summed up by Calvin: "Adverbium *mane* frigide quidam restringunt ad sacrificia. Scimus enim quotidie bis sacrificia offerre solitos, matutinum et vespertinum. Alii subtilius accipiunt, quod Deus mitius agens cum suis servis dicatur formare novum diem. Alii metaphoram esse volunt et notari prosperum lactumque statum; sicut triste et calamitosum tempus saepe notatur per tenebras. Sed miror in hac voce quaeri extraneos sensus, qua simpliciter repetit quod prius dixerat, *festina*. Mane ergo tantumdem valet ac tempusve vel celeriter."

THE WAY IN WHICH I SHOULD WALK. Cf. xxv. 4; cxlii. 3 [4], with Ex. xxxiii. 13.

LIFTED UP MY SOUL, as in xxv. 1; lxxxvi. 4.

9. FLED TO HIDE ME; lit. "unto thee have I hidden (myself)." But the phrase is very peculiar and its meaning doubtful. See in Critical Note.

10. TO DO THY WILL, not merely to

know it; hence the need of the Holy Spirit's aid, his quickening, guiding, strengthening, as well as his enlightening influence. "Necesse est Deum nobis non mortua tantum *litera* magistrum esse et doctorem, sed areano Spiritus instinetu, imo tribus modis fungitur erga nos magistri officio; quia verbo suo nos docet; deinde Spiritu mentes illuminat; tertio cordibus nostris insculpit doctrinam, ut vero et serio consensu obediamus."

THY GOOD PLEASURE; lit. "Thy good pleasure," as in ciii. 21, Prayer-book version, "the thing that pleaseth thee."

THY GOOD SPIRIT, as in Neh. ix. 20; comp. Ps. li. 11 [13].

IN A PLAIN COUNTRY; lit. "in a level land," or "on level ground," where there is no fear of stumbling and falling, LXX, *δδγησει με εν τη εδθεια*; Sym. *δια γης δμαλης*. The word *mishōr* is constantly used of the plain (campaign) country. See for instance Deut. iv. 43. Comp. Isa. xxvi. 7, "The path of the righteous is level. Thou makest level (even, as if adjusted in the balance) the road of the righteous." It is unnecessary, with Hupfeld, to correct the text, and substitute "path" for "land," for we have a similar expression in Isa. xxvi. 10, "the land of uprightness." Comp. with this verse generally xxvii. 11; xxxi. 3 [4]; xl. 8 [9]; ciii. 21.

12 And of thy loving-kindness cut off mine enemies,  
 And destroy all the adversaries of my soul ;  
 For I am thy servant.

11. OUT OF DISTRESS. Comp. cxlii. 7 [8]. The series of petitions in ver. 8-12 may thus be grouped: (1) Prayer for God's mercy or loving-kindness, as that on which all hangs, and then for guidance (ver. 8). (2) For deliverance from enemies, and then still more fully for a knowledge of God's will, and the gifts of his Spirit, that he may obey that will (ver. 9, 10). (3) For a new life, and deliverance from suffering, and now not only for deliverance from his enemies, but for their destruction (ver. 11, 12). Hence the second petition in (1) answers to the second petition in (2); the first in (2) to the second in (3).

Further, in ver. 8-10, the ground of the petition in each case is the personal relation of the Psalmist to God: "In thee have I trusted," "unto thee have I lifted up my soul," "Unto thee have I fled," "Thou art my God"; and so also at the close of ver. 12, "I am thy servant." On the other hand, in ver. 11, and the first member of ver. 12, the appeal is to God and his attributes, "For thy name's sake," "In thy righteousness," "of thy loving-kindness."

12. I AM THY SERVANT. "Tantumdem hoc valet acsi Dei se clientem faciens, ejus patrocinio vitam suam permitteret."—*Calvin*

<sup>a</sup> אֲלֵיָהָ בְּסִיחֵי אֵי. It is not easy to explain the construction. The Syr. omits the words altogether. The LXX render *ὄτι πρὸς σε κατέφυγον*, from which it might seem that they read אֵי בְּסִיחֵי, were it not that elsewhere they render נִיח, and not סֵח, by *καταφυγῶν*. The Targum paraphrases, "thy word have I counted as a Redeemer," whence it might be inferred that they read בְּסִיחֵי (see this verb Ex. xii. 4). Jerome apparently had our present text, only that he changed the vocalization, making it passive instead of active, *Ad Te protectus sum* (בְּסִיחֵי). Kimchi would explain the phrase as a *locutio praeagnans*: "I cried unto thee in secret, and so as to hide it from men." Similarly Aben-Ezra, who remarks that "to hide to a person" is exactly opposite to the expression "to hide from a person" (Gen. xviii. 17), and means, therefore to reveal to him what is hidden from others. J. D. Michaelis *Supplem.* p. 1317) takes the same view, and so does Rosenm., "Tibi in occulto revelavi quod homines celavi." Saadia, who is followed by Ewald, Maurer, Hengst., and others, takes the verb in a reflexive sense, "Unto thee (i.e. with thee have I hidden myself," which they defend by the use of the Piel in Gen. xxxviii. 14; Deut. xxii. 12; Jonah iii. 6. The last of these, however, proves nothing, as קָלִי is to be supplied from the preceding בְּקָלִי, and then the construction will be "he covereth sackcloth, i.e. he puts it as a covering, upon him," the construction being exactly the same as in Job xxxvi. 32; Ezek. xxiv. 7. In the other two passages Hupfeld would adopt the somewhat arbitrary method of substituting the Hithpael for the Piel.

Delitzsch more probably explains the use of the Piel in these passages as elliptical, Gen. xxxviii. 14, "And she put a covering with a veil (before her face)"; Deut xxii. 12, "Wherewith thou putttest a covering (on thy body)." Hence they do not justify our taking כִּסְיָהּ here in a reflexive sense. Hupfeld, Olsh., and others, would read חִסְיָהּ; but the objection to this is, that this verb is elsewhere always followed by ך, not by לָא.

<sup>b</sup> טוֹבָה. The art. it omitted occasionally with the adj. after a definite noun, Gesen. § 111, 2 b. He quotes 2 Sam. vi. 3; Ezek. xxxix. 27 In the very same expression, Neh. ix. 20, we have the article with the adj. LXX, τὸ πνεῖμα σου τὸ ἄγαθόν.

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## PSALM CXLIV.

THIS is a singularly composite Psalm. The earlier portion of it, to the end of verse 11, consists almost entirely of a cento of quotations, strung together from earlier Psalms; and it is not always easy to trace a real connection between them. The latter portion of the Psalm (verses 12-15), differs completely from the former. It bears the stamp of originality, and is entirely free from the quotations and allusions with which the preceding verses abound. It is hardly probable, however, that this concluding portion is the work of the poet who compiled the rest of the Psalm; it is more probable that he has here transcribed a fragment of some ancient poem, in which were portrayed the happiness and prosperity of the nation in its brightest days, — under David, it may have been, or at the beginning of the reign of Solomon.

His object seems to have been thus to revive the hopes of his nation, perhaps after the return from the exile, by reminding them how in their past history obedience to God had brought with it its full recompense.

Kimchi, who holds the Psalm to be David's, refers it to the events mentioned in 2 Sam. v., when, having been acknowledged by all the tribes of Israel as their king (see verse 2 of the Psalm, "who subdueth my people under me"), and having completely subjugated the Philistines, he might look forward to a peaceful and prosperous reign.

In some copies of the LXX the Psalm is said to have been composed in honor of David's victory over Goliath; which may perhaps



be due to the Targum on verse 10, which explains "the hurtful sword" as the sword of Goliath. It is scarcely necessary to remark how improbable such a view is.

Others, again, have conjectured that the Psalm was directed against Abner (2 Sam. ii. 13, etc.) or against Absalom. Theodoret supposes it to be spoken in the person of the Jews, who, after their return from Babylon, were attacked by the neighboring nations. Another Greek writer, mentioned by Agellius, would refer the Psalm to the times of the Maccabees.

But the language of verses 1-4, as well as the language of verse 10, is clearly only suitable in the mouth of a king, or some powerful and recognized leader of the nation; and it is difficult to find a person of rank in the later history in whose mouth such a Psalm as this would be appropriate.

The Psalmist recounts glorious victories in the past, complains that the nation is now beset by strange, i.e. barbarous, enemies, so false and treacherous that no covenant can be kept with them, prays for deliverance from them by an interposition great and glorious as had been vouchsafed of old, and anticipates the return of a golden age of peace and plenty.

[(A Psalm) of David.]

- 1 BLESSED be Jehovah my rock,  
 Who traineth my hands for the war,  
 My fingers for the battle.
- 2 My loving-kindness and my fortress,  
 My high tower and my deliverer.  
 My shield, and he in whom I find refuge,  
 Who subdueth my people under me.

The first two verses are taken from Ps. xviii. 2 [3], 46 [47], 34 [35].

2. MY LOVING-KINDNESS. A singular expression for "God of my loving-kindness" (lix. 10 [11], 17 [18]; Jonah ii. 8 [9]). "Deum . . . bonitatem suam nominat, ab eo manare intelligens quicquid possidet bonorum."—*Calvin*.

MY DELIVERER; lit. "my deliverer for me," as the expression is found in the other version of Ps. xviii. in 2 Sam. xxii. 2. On the heaping together of epithets and titles of God Calvin re-

marks, that it is not superfluous, but designed to strengthen and confirm faith; for men's minds are easily shaken, especially when some storm of trial beats upon them. Hence, if God should promise us his succor in one word, it would not be enough; in fact, in spite of all the props and aids he gives us, we constantly totter and are ready to fall, and such a forgetfulness of his loving-kindness steals upon us, that we come near to losing heart altogether.

WHO SUBDUETH, as in xviii. 47 [48];

- 3 Jehovah, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him?  
 A son of man, that thou makest account of him?
- 4 As for man, he is like a breath;  
 His days are as a shadow that passeth.
- 5 Bow thy heavens, O Jehovah, and come down,  
 Touch the mountains that they smoke.
- 6 Shoot out lightning, and scatter them,  
 Send forth thine arrows, and discomfit them.
- 7 Send forth thine hand from above,  
 Rid me, and deliver me from many waters,  
 From the hand of the sons of the alien,
- 8 Whose mouth hath spoken falsehood,  
 And whose right hand is a right hand of lies.

only there we have "peoples" instead of "my people," as here. Some, indeed, would correct the text here, or regard the form as an imperfect plural. The Syr. and Chald. have the plural, and it is found in some mss. It is certainly not easy to understand how any but a despotic ruler, or one whose people had taken up arms against him, could thus celebrate God as subduing his own nation under him. Delitzsch suggests that the words may have been the words of David after he had been anointed, but before he had ascended the throne. And similarly Calvin, supposing this to be one of David's Psalms, "Postquam ergo David quas adeptus erat victorias contra externos Deo ascripsit, simul etiam gratias agit de ordinato regni statu. Et certe quum esset ignobilis, deinde falsis calumniis exosus, vix credibile fuit posse unquam tranquillum imperium consequi. Quod ergo praeter spem repente se populus dedit, tam admirabilis mutatio praeclarum fuit Dei opus." In any case, the Psalmist is not triumphing in the exercise of despotic power, but gratefully acknowledges that the authority he wields comes only from God.

3. This and the next verse are again borrowed from other passages. The weakness of man seems here to be urged

as a reason why God should come to his succor against his enemies. Ver. 3 is a variation of viii. 4 [5]. Ver. 4 resembles xxxix. 5, 6 [6, 7]; compare cii. 11 [12]; Job viii. 9; xiv. 2.

5. Here begins the direct prayer for the overthrow of his enemies. The Psalmist longs for a theophany, a coming of God to judgment, which he describes in language again borrowed from xviii. 9 [10], 14-16 [15-17].

TOUCH THE MOUNTAINS, as in civ. 32, with allusion perhaps to Ex. xix. 18; xx. 18.

6. SHOOT OUT LIGHTNING; literally "lighten lightning." The verb occurs nowhere else, and the verb translated "rid" in the next verse is found only here in this sense (which is the meaning of the root in Aramaic and Arabic), so that even a writer who borrows so largely as this Psalmist has still his peculiarities. Comp. with this verse xviii. 14.

7. THINE HAND. Many mss. and editions have the singular, and so have all the ancient versions, though the received text has the plural.

SONS OF THE ALIEN, as in xviii. 44 [45].

8. A RIGHT HAND OF LIES, denoting faithlessness to a solemn covenant, the right hand being lifted up in the taking of an oath.

- 9 O God, a new song will I sing unto thee,  
 Upon a ten-stringed lute will I play unto thee,  
 10 Who giveth victory unto kings,  
 Who riddeth David his servant from the hurtful sword.  
 11 Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange persons,  
 Whose mouth hath spoken falsehood,  
 And whose right hand is a right hand of lies,  
 12 We whose <sup>a</sup> sons are as plants  
 Grown up in their youth ;  
 Our daughters as corner-pillars,  
 Sculptured to grace a palace ;  
 13 Our garners <sup>b</sup> full,  
 Affording all manner of store ;  
 Our sheep multiplying in thousands,  
 In ten thousands in our fields ;

9. The prayer for deliverance is followed by the promise of thankfulness for the aid vouchsafed. The "new song," however is not given.

O GOD. "The *Elohim* in this verse is the only one in the last two books of the Psalter, except in Ps. cviii., which is a composite Psalm formed of two old Davidic Elohistie Psalms, and therefore clearly a weak attempt to reproduce the old Davidic Elohistie style."—*Delitzsch*.

A NEW SONG. Comp. xxxiii. 3 ; xl. 3 [4]. UPON A TEN-STRINGED LUTE, xcii. 3 [4].

10. DAVID HIS SERVANT. Mentioned here apparently as an example of all kings and leaders, but with obvious reference to xviii. 50 [51].

11. This verse is repeated as a refrain from ver. 7, 8.

12. The passage which follows to the end is, as has already been remarked, altogether unlike the rest of the Psalm. For its grammatical construction see Critical Note ; on its connection with the preceding verses something has been said in the introduction to the Psalm.

AS PLANTS. In a striking sermon on this verse, the late Archdeacon Hare says of the figure here employed, "There

is something so palpable and striking in this type, that, five-and-twenty years ago, in speaking of the gentlemanly character, I was led to say, 'If a gentleman is to grow up, he must grow like a tree: there must be nothing between him and heaven.'" This figure marks the native strength and vigor and freedom of the youth of the land, as the next does the polished gracefulness, the quiet beauty, of the maidens. They are like the exquisitely-sculptured forms (the Caryatides) which adorned the corners of some magnificent hall or chamber of a palace.

CORNER-PILLARS ; lit. "corners" (Zech. ix. 15).

TO GRACE A PALACE ; lit. "(after) the mode of structure of a palace."

13. ALL MANNER OF STORE ; lit. "from kind to kind." The word is a late Aramaic word.

MULTIPLYING ; lit. "bringing forth thousands, multiplied into ten thousands," or "made ten thousands."

FIELDS. This (and not "streets," E.V.) is the meaning of the word here, as in Job v. 10 ; Prov. viii. 26 ; and this is in accordance with the root-meaning, "places *outside* the city." "Field" is

14 Our oxen<sup>e</sup> well laden ;

No breach and no sallying forth,<sup>d</sup>

And no cry (of battle) in our streets.

15 Happy is the people that is in such a case ;<sup>e</sup>

Happy is the people which hath Jehovah for its God.

used in this sense in English: "By the civil law the corpses of persons deceased were buried *out of the city in the fields.*"—Ayliffe, *Parergon.*

14. Every expression in this verse is of doubtful interpretation.

LADEN, or perhaps "our cattle great with young," i.e. "fruitful," which accords better with the preceding description of the sheep. See more in Critical Note.

NO BREACH. This is the obvious meaning of the word: see on ix. 1, 2 [2, 3].

NO SALLYING FORTH; lit. "going out," which has been interpreted either of "going forth to war," or "going forth into captivity." This and the previous expression, taken together, most naturally denote a time of profound peace, when no enemy lies before the walls, when there is no need to fear the assault through the breach, no need to sally forth to attack the besiegers. Comp. Amos v. 3. The LXX have *διέξοδος*; Symm., *ἐκφορὰ*; Jerome, *egressus*. Ainsworth, "none going out, i.e.

no cattle driven away by the enemy. See Amos iv. 3."

CRY (OF BATTLE). Such seems the probable meaning from the context; and so Calvin, *clamor qui ex subito tumultu exoritur*, and Clericus, *rugnantium*; or it may mean, generally, "cry of sorrow," as in Jer. xiv. 2.

STREETS, broad, open places, *πλατεῖα*. In Jer. v. 1, the E.V. has "broad places." The whole passage (12-15) is a picture of the most perfect, undisturbed peace and tranquillity.

15. HAPPY. The temporal blessing of prosperity, as a sign of God's favor, is natural enough under the old dispensation. Calvin, however, says truly: "Si quis objiciat nihil nisi crassum et terrenum spirare, quod de felicitate hominum aestimat ex caduceis commodis: respondeo, hæc dno conjunctim legenda esse, beatos esse qui in sua abundantia Deum sibi propitium sentiunt; et sic ejus gratiam degustant in benedictionibus caduceis ut de paterno ejus amore persuasi, aspirant ad veram hereditatem."

<sup>a</sup> *וְיָצִי*. The relative at the beginning of this verse is very perplexing. (1) The LXX, with their rendering *ὧν οἱ υἱοί*, would seem to refer it to the enemy, "the strange persons" of the preceding verse. But it is clear, from ver. 15, that the picture of ver. 12-14 is a picture of the felicity of the Jewish nation under the protection of Jehovah. (2) Hence De Wette and others would give to the relative the meaning of "in order that," "so that," as in Gen. xi. 7; Deut. iv. 40; 1 Kings xxii. 16; but then it must be followed by the finite verb, whereas here we have nothing but participles. (3) It has been suggested, therefore, to take the relative in the sense of "for," "because," as in Gen. xxxi. 49; Deut. iii. 24; but it is not clear how what follows in this and the next verse can be alleged *as a reason* for the prayer of the previous verse. (4) Bunsen refers the relative to

God, and supplies a verb: "Who maketh our sons like plants," but does not attempt to defend the rendering. (5) Maurer joins the relative with the suffix of the following noun—certainly the most obvious construction—but finds here the expression of a wish, to which the form of the sentence (in participles) does not lend itself. He connects the verses thus: "Save me, thy people, even us (ver. 11); whose sons, may they be as plants," etc. (6) Ewald also keeps to the common use of the relative, but connects it with ver. 15, "We, whose sons are, etc. . . . Oh, happy is the people that is in such a case." And, supposing that the relative is to be retained, this is, on the whole, the most satisfactory. Hupfeld, however, and others consider the whole passage (12–15) as a fragment belonging to some other Psalm, and here altogether out of place. Delitzsch suggests that perhaps ver. 11, where the refrain is repeated, ought to be struck out. In this case, however, the relative would naturally refer to God, and then we should expect some verb to follow it.

[Kay renders, "what time"; but though  $\text{מִנְעָר}$  may mean this, such a sense is doubtful with the participle. The only other passage in which  $\text{מִנְעָר}$  stands with the participle, so far as I am aware, is Eccl. viii. 12, where Dr. Ginsburg, after a careful discussion of the use of the particle, renders "because." That sense, however, would not be suitable here, and I am now inclined (3d ed.) to suggest the rendering "whereas," as best suiting the context and the participle.]

<sup>b</sup>  $\text{מִנְעָרֵינוּ}$ , a  $\alpha\pi. \lambda\epsilon\gamma.$  from a sing.  $\text{מִנְעָר}$  or  $\text{מִנְעָרָה}$  (Ewald), and in either case shortened from  $\text{מִנְעָרָה}$ . The Aram.  $\text{מִנְעָר}$  in the next line occurs again 2 Chron. xvi. 14, instead of  $\text{מִנְעָרָה}$ , which is the older word.

<sup>c</sup>  $\text{אֲלֵפְיָנָה מ'}$ . The word means elsewhere "princes," "leaders," and Maurer, Fürst, and others, would retain this meaning here: "Our princes are set up, i.e. full of power and dignity." They appeal, for this sense of  $\text{אֲלֵפְיָנָה}$ , to the Chald. form in Ezra vi. 3. This interpretation accords with what follows, but not with what precedes. After the mention of "sheep" ( $\text{צֹאֵן צֹאֵן}$ , a form in which the  $\text{ר}$  is evidence of late writing), it is more natural to take  $\text{אֲלֵפְיָנָה}$  here as the representative in the later language of the older  $\text{אֲלֵפְיָנָה}$  (viii. 8), *oxen*. But assuming this to be the case, the meaning of  $\text{מ'}$  is still doubtful. It means *laden* or *burdened*, but how? (1) It has been explained to mean "capable of bearing burdens," *laboris patientes robusti* (so the Chald. and Kimchi), but it is doubtful whether the pass. part. can bear this meaning. (2) "*Laden*, i.e. with the fruits of the land," as an image of plenteousness; or "laden with fat or flesh," and so "strong," which comes to pretty much the same the thing as (1). So

the LXX, παχεῖς, and so the Syr., Jerome, and most of the older interpreters. (3) *Pregnant* (laden with the fruit of the womb), as descriptive of the fruitfulness of the herds: so Ros., Gesen., De Wette, Ewald, Hitzig, Hupfeld. The chief objection to this is the masc. form of the noun, but צָלִיחַ, like בָּקָר, may be epicene.

<sup>d</sup> רִיזְצֵאחַ. App. here used as a noun, though strictly speaking the fem. participle, as in Deut. xxviii. 57.

<sup>e</sup> שִׁבְּחָהּ. The same form occurs again Song of Sol. v. 9. The שׁ prefixed to רִיזְצֵאחַ is a solitary instance.

## PSALM CXLV.

THIS is the last of the Alphabetical Psalms, of which there are eight in all, if we reckon the ninth and tenth Psalms as forming one. Like four other of the Alphabetical Psalms, this bears the name of David, although there can in this case be no doubt that the inscription is not to be trusted. As in several other instances, so here, the acrostic arrangement is not strictly observed. The letter *Nun* (ז) is omitted. The LXX have supplied the deficiency by intercalating a verse, Πιστὸς (כִּנָּן, as in cxi. 7) Κύριος ἐν τοῖς λόγοις αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὁσῖος ἐν πάσι τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ; but the latter part of this is taken from verse 17, and none of the other ancient versions, except the Syr. and those which follow the LXX, recognize this addition.

This is the only Psalm which is called a *Tehillah*, i.e. "Praise" or "Hymn," the plural of which word, *Tehillim*, is the general name for the whole Psalter. The LXX render it *αἴνεσις*, Aquila *ὑμνησις*, Symmachus *ῥῆμος*, and "Hymn" is given as the equivalent in the Midrash on the Song of Solomon. In the Talmud (*Berachoth, Ab*) it is said: "Every one who repeats the *Tehillah* of David thrice a day may be sure that he is a child of the world to come. And why? Not merely because the Psalm is alphabetical (for that the one hundred and nineteenth is, and in an eightfold degree), nor only because it celebrates God's care for all creatures (for that the great Hallel does, cxxxvi. 25), but because it unites both these qualities in itself."

[A Hymn of David.]

1 & I WILL, exalt thee my God, O King,

And I will bless thy name forever and ever.

1. FOREVER AND EVER. Not merely, *est*: but the heart lifted up to God, and as Calvin, *etiamsi plura secula victurus* full of the thoughts of God, can no more

- 2 **א** Every day will I bless thee,  
And I will praise thy name forever and ever.
- 3 **א** Great is Jehovah, and highly to be praised,  
And his greatness is unsearchable.
- 4 **א** One generation to another shall laud thy works,  
And shall declare thy mighty acts.
- 5 **א** Of the glorious honor of thy majesty,  
And of thy wondrous works, will I meditate.
- 6 **א** And men shall speak of the power of thy terrible acts,  
And I will tell of thy greatness.<sup>a</sup>
- 7 **א** The memory of thine abundant goodness<sup>b</sup> they shall utter.  
And sing aloud of thy righteousness.
- 8 **א** Gracious and of tender compassion is Jehovah,  
Long-suffering and of great loving-kindness.
- 9 **א** Jehovah is good unto all,  
And his tender compassions are over all his works.
- 10 **א** All thy works give thanks to thee, O Jehovah,  
And thy beloved bless thee.
- 11 **א** They talk of the glory of thy kingdom,  
And speak of thy might.
- 12 **ב** To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts,  
And the glorious majesty of his kingdom.
- 13 **א** Thy kingdom is a kingdom for all ages,  
And thy dominion for all generations.
- 14 **ב** Jehovah upholdeth all them that fall,  
And raiseth up all those that be bowed down.

conceive that its praise should cease, than that God himself should cease to be.

3. GREATLY TO BE PRAISED, or "greatly praised"; but see on xviii. 3.

5. OF THE GLORIOUS HONOR, etc., or "of the majesty of the glory of thine honor."

THY WONDROUS WORKS; lit. "the words of thy wondrous works." Comp. lxxv. 3 [4].

MEDITATE, or, perhaps, "rehearse"; i.e. in poetry. The E.V. commonly "talk of."

6. AND I WILL TELL, etc.; lit. "and as for thy greatnesses (or great acts), I will tell of every one of them."

7. UTTER; lit. it is "pour forth," the same word as in xix. 2 [3]; lix. 7 [8], where see Note.

14. The glory, the majesty, the eternity of God's kingdom, of which so much has been said—how are they manifested? Where is the conspicuous excellence of that kingdom seen? Not in the symbols of earthly pride and power, but in gracious condescension

- 15 ע The eyes of all wait upon thee,  
And thou givest them their food in its season ;
- 16 פ Opening thine hand,  
And satisfying the desire of every living thing.
- 17 צ Jehovah is righteous in all his ways,  
And loving in all his works.
- 18 ק Jehovah is nigh to all them that call upon him,  
To all who call upon him in truth.
- 19 ר He fulfilleth the desire of them that fear him,  
And when he heareth their cry he helpeth them.
- 20 ש Jehovah keepeth all them that love him,  
But all the wicked will he destroy.
- 21 ת Let my mouth speak the praise of Jehovah,  
And let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.

to the fallen and the crushed, in a gracious care which provides for the wants of every living thing. (We have here a resumption and expansion of the thoughts in ver. 8, 9.)

ALL THEM THAT FALL. Others, "them that are ready to fall;" but see xxxvii. 24.

15. This verse, and the first clause of the next, are taken from civ. 27, 28.

<sup>a</sup> גרלותיך. The K'thibh is in the plur., which has been very unnecessarily corrected to the sing., because of the following singular suffix, which, however, is not uncommon with the plur. (see, for instance, 2 Kings iii. 3; x. 26), and here, moreover, can be readily explained as distributive, especially as the sing. suffix follows.

<sup>b</sup> רב-טובך. The adj. is irregularly prefixed, possibly, as Hengst. suggests, because it forms one word with the *ncun* following = *much-goodness*. Kimchi, Ros., Olsh., Delitzsch, would take רב as a subst., for רב, but according to the analogy of xxxi. 20; Isa. lxiii. 7, it must be an adj.

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## PSALM CXLVI.

THIS Psalm is the first of another series of Hallelujah Psalms, with which the book closes. Certain of the words and phrases seem to connect it with the one hundred and forty-fifth; others are borrowed



from the one hundred and fourth and one hundred and eighteenth. The LXX ascribe it, as they do the one hundred and thirty-eighth and the next two Psalms (or the next three, according to their reckoning, for they divide the one hundred and forty-seventh into two), to Haggai and Zechariah (*Ἀλληλούια· Ἀγγαίου καὶ Ζαχαρίου*). It is by no means improbable that this inscription represents an ancient tradition, for nothing would be more natural than that these prophets should directly or indirectly have contributed to the liturgy of the second temple, to which these Psalms so evidently belong. Later they formed, together with Psalms cxlix. and cl., a portion of the daily morning prayer; they also had the name of "Hallel" though expressly distinguished from "the Hallel," which was to be sung at the Passover and the other feasts.

The Psalm bears evident traces, both in style and language, and also in its allusions to other Psalms, of belonging to the post-exile literature; and the words of verses 7-9 are certainly no inapt expression of the feelings which would naturally be called forth at a time immediately subsequent to the return from the captivity.

It has an exhortation to trust not in man (ver. 3, 4), but in Jehovah alone (ver. 5),—an exhortation enforced by the exhibition of Jehovah's character and attributes as the one really worthy object of trust (ver. 6-9), and confirmed by the fact that his kingdom does not contain the seeds of weakness and dissolution, like all earthly kingdoms, but is eternal as he is eternal (ver. 10).

### HALLELUJAH!

1 PRAISE Jehovah, O my soul!

2 I will praise Jehovah as long as I live,

I will play (on the harp) unto my God while I have any being.

3 Trust not in princes,

(Nor) in the son of man, in whom there is no help.

4 His breath goeth forth; he turneth to his earth,

In that very day his thoughts perish.

2. WHILE I HAVE ANY BEING; lit. "while I yet (am)." See civ. 33. Not in this song only will he utter his praise, but "his life shall be a thanksgiving unto the power that made him."

3. TRUST NOT IN PRINCES. A warning which might be called forth by the

circumstances of the nation after their return from Babylon. See on cxviii. 8, 9.

NO HELP, OR "no salvation." Comp. xxxiii. 16; lx. 11 [13].

4. HIS BREATH, etc., or, "When his breath goeth forth, he turneth," etc.,

- 5 Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help,  
Whose hope (rests) upon Jehovah his God,  
6 Who made heaven and earth,  
The sea and all that therein is ;  
Who keepeth truth forever ;  
7 (Who) executeth judgment for the oppressed,  
(Who) giveth bread to the hungry :  
Jehovah looseth the prisoners,  
8 Jehovah openeth the eyes of the blind,  
Jehovah raiseth up them that are bowed down ;  
Jehovah loveth the righteous ;

the two apocopated forms indicating perhaps that the two clauses are protasis and apodosis.

HIS BREATH. Comp. civ. 29. And, with his breath, HIS THOUGHTS, or, "purposes," or "schemes," though this is a modern word in this sense (a Chald. word for which we have the Hebrew equivalent in Job xii. 5), however grand the conception, however masterly the execution, all come to an end. The science, the philosophy, the statesmanship of one age is exploded in the next. The men who are the masters of the world's intellect to-day are discrowned to-morrow. In this age of restless and rapid change they may survive their own thoughts: their thoughts do not survive them. There is an almost exact parallel in 1 Macc. ii. 63.

5. FOR HIS HELP. The predicate is introduced by the preposition (the *Beth essentialis*, as the grammarians term it), as in xxxv. 2, for instance.

6. WHO MADE (as in cxv. 15; cxxi. 2; cxxiv. 8; cxxxiv. 3, this designation of God being characteristic of the later Psalms). First, he is an *Almighty* God, as the Creator of the universe; next, he is a *faithful* God ("who keepeth truth forever"); further, he is a *righteous* God (ver. 7), a *bountiful* God (ib.), a *gracious* God (ver. 7-9).

WHO KEEPETH. In the series of participles marking the several acts or attributes of God in this and the next two verses, this only has the article pre-

fixed, perhaps because the Psalmist designed to give a certain prominence or emphasis to this attribute of God, that he is one "who keepeth truth forever." It is, in fact, the central thought of the Psalm. For, on this ground beyond all others, is God the object of trust. He is true, and his word is truth, and that word he keeps, not for a time, but forever.

7-9. These verses portray God's character as a ruler. It is such a God who is Zion's King (ver. 10). Such an one men may trust, for he is not like the princes of the earth (ver. 3).

7. LOOSETH THE PRISONERS. Comp. Isa. lxi. 1. Delitzsch quotes a curious instance of the allegorical interpretation of these words from Joseph Albo, who in his *Dogmatics* (bearing date 1425), sect. ii. cap. 16, maintaining against Maimonides that the ceremonial law was not of perpetual obligation, appeals to the Midrash Tanchuma, which interprets this loosing of the prisoners as an allowing of what had once been forbidden.

8. OPENETH THE EYES; lit. "openeth the blind," i.e. maketh them to see. The expression may be used figuratively, as a remedy applied either to physical helplessness, as Deut. xxviii. 29; Isa. lix. 9, 10; Job xii. 25; or to spiritual want of discernment, as Isa. xxix. 18; xlii. 7, 18; xliii. 8. Here the context favors the former.

RAISETH UP. This word only occurs once besides (cxlv. 14).

- 9 Jehovah keepeth the strangers,  
 He setteth up the widow and the fatherless,  
 But the way of the wicked he turneth aside.
- 10 Jehovah shall be King forever,  
 Thy God, O Zion, unto all generations.  
 Hallelujah!

9. THE STRANGERS . . . THE WIDOW . . . THE FATHERLESS, the three great examples of natural defencelessness. "Valde gratus mihi est hic Psalmus," says Bakius, "ob Trifolium illud Dei: Advenas, Pupillos, et Viduas, versu uno luculentissime depictum, id quod in toto Psalterio nullibi fit."

SETTETH UP, the same word as in cxlvii. 6.

HE TURNETH ASIDE, rendered by the E.V. in Ecclesiastes, "made crooked." That which happens in the course of God's providence, and as the inevitable result of his righteous laws, is usually ascribed in Scripture to his immediate agency.

10. SHALL BE KING. See introduction to xcix.

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## PSALM CXLVII.

LIKE the last Psalm, and like those which follow it, this is evidently an anthem intended for the service of the second temple. It celebrates God's almighty and gracious rule over his people and over the world of nature, but mingles with this a special commemoration of his goodness in bringing back his people from their captivity and rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. In the allusions to these events in verses 2, 3, and verses 13, 14, we shall probably be justified in seeing the occasion of the Psalm. It may have been written for the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, which, as we learn from Neh. xii. 27, was kept "with gladness, both with thanksgivings and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps." It is, indeed, not improbable, as Hengstenberg suggests, that not this Psalm only, but the rest of the Psalms to the end of the book, are all anthems originally composed for the same occasion. The wall had been built under circumstances of no ordinary difficulty and discouragement (Neh. ii. 17-iv. 23); its completion was celebrated with no common joy and thankfulness; "for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the wives also and the children had rejoiced; so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off." See Neh. xii. 27-43.

The Psalm cannot be said to have any regular strophical arrange-

ment, but the renewed exhortations to praise in verses 7, 12, suggest a natural division of the Psalm. It is a *Trifolium* of praise.

The LXX divide the Psalm into two parts, beginning a new Psalm at verse 12.

### 1 HALLELUJAH!

For it is good to sing<sup>a</sup> unto our God,

For it is sweet; comely is the hymn of praise.

### 2 Jehovah doth build up Jerusalem,

He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel;

### 3 Who healeth the broken in heart,

And bindeth up their wounds;

### 4 Who telleth the number of the stars,

He giveth names unto them all.

### 5 Great is our Lord, and of great power,

His understanding is infinite.

1. This verse might perhaps be better rendered with the change of a single consonant: "Praise ye Jah, for he is good; sing unto our God, for he is lovely; comely is the hymn of praise." Comp. cxxxv. 3; xxxiii. 1. See more in Critical Note.

2. **DOTH BUILD UP.** With reference to the rebuilding of the walls after the captivity, as in cxxii. 3.

**GATHERETH TOGETHER.** A verb found in this conjugation only (Ezek. xxii. 20 [21]; xxxix. 28), and in the latter passage with the same reference as here.

**OUTCASTS;** lit. "those who are thrust out, driven away." Symm., *ἐξωσμέvous*, whereas the LXX express the sense more generally, *τὰς διασποράς*. It is the same word as in Isa. xi. 12; lvi. 8.

3. **BROKEN IN HEART.** As in xxxiv. 18 [19]; Isa. lxi. 1, where, however, the participle is Niphal.

4. **WHO TELLETH THE NUMBER;** lit. "apportioneth a number to the stars." This is adduced as a proof of the omniscience and omnipotence of God, and hence as a ground of consolation to his people, however they may have been scattered, and however they may have been oppressed. Surely he must know, he must be able to succor, human woe,

to whom it is an easy thing to count those stars which are beyond man's arithmetic (Gen. xv. 5). The argument is precisely the same as in Isa. xl. 26-29, "Lift up your eyes and see: Who hath created these things? It is he that bringeth out *their host by number*, who calleth them all (*by*) name. For abundance of power, and because he is mighty in strength, not one faileth. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from Jehovah, and my cause is passed away from my God? Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard? An everlasting God is Jehovah, who created the ends of the earth. He fainteth not, neither is weary: *there is no searching of his understanding*. He giveth to the weary strength, and to them that have no power he increaseth might," etc. The passages in italics will show how evidently the words of the prophet were in the mind of the Psalmist.

**GIVETH NAMES,** an expression marking not only God's power in marshalling them all as a host (Isa. xl. 26), but also the most intimate knowledge and the most watchful care, as that of a shepherd for his flock (John x. 3). For the idiom see Gen. ii.

5. **OF GREAT POWER:** lit. "abound-

- 6 Jehovah setteth up the afflicted,  
 He casteth the wicked down to the ground.
- 7 Sing unto Jehovah with thanksgiving,  
 Play upon the harp unto our God ;
- 8 Who covereth the heaven with clouds,  
 Who prepareth rain for the earth,  
 Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains ;
- 9 (Who) giveth to the cattle their fodder,  
 (And) to the young ravens which cry.
- 10 Not in the strength of an horse doth he delight,  
 Not in the legs of a man doth he take pleasure ;
- 11 Jehovah taketh pleasure in them that fear him,  
 In them that hope for his loving-kindness.
- 12 Laud Jehovah, O Jerusalem,  
 Praise thy God, O Zion ;
- 13 For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates,  
 He hath blessed thy children in the midst of thee ;

ing in power," as in Isa. xl. 26, "mighty in strength," though there perhaps the epithet applies to the stars, unless indeed, we may take the use of the phrase here as deciding its application there.

HIS UNDERSTANDING IS INFINITE ; lit. "to (of) his understanding there is no number," apparently, in the Hebrew, play on ver. 4, where it is said "He telleth the number," etc., whereas both in cxlv. 3 and Isa. xl. 28 it is, "there is no searching." Comp. Rom. xi. 33, ἀνεξίχνιαστοι αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ.

6. The same Lord who with infinite power and unsearchable wisdom rules the stars in their courses, rules also the world of man. The history of the world is a mirror both of his love and of his righteous anger. His rule and his order are a correction of man's anarchy and disorder.

7. A fresh burst of praise because of God's fatherly care, as shown in his provision for the wants of the cattle and the fowls of the air. And as he feeds the ravens (comp. Luke xii. 24), which have neither storehouse nor barn, but

only cry to him for their food (Job xxxviii. 41), so amongst men (ver. 10) his delight is not in those who trust in their own strength and swiftness, but in those who look to *him*, fear *him*, put their trust in *his* goodness. In ver. 8 the LXX have added, from civ. 14, "and herb for the service of men," whence it has found its way into our Prayer-book version. But here this addition is out of place, and disturbs the order of thought. It is not till ver. 10, 11, that *man* is introduced.

9. WHICH CRY, or, "when they cry."

12. Again the Psalmist begins his hymn of praise, and now with a direct reference to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the bright prospect which seemed to dawn upon the nation after its restoration.

13. HATH STRENGTHENED THE BARS OF THY GATES. The expression might certainly denote figuratively (as Hupfeld says) the security of the city ; but, as the Psalm so evidently refers to the return from the captivity and the re-

- 14 Who maketh thy border peace,  
 (And) satisfieth thee with the fat of wheat ;
- 15 Who sendeth forth his commandment upon earth :  
 His word runneth very swiftly ;
- 16 Who giveth snow like wool,  
 (And) scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes ;
- 17 (Who) casteth forth his ice like morsels :  
 Who can stand before his frost ?
- 18 He sendeth his word, and melteth them,  
 He causeth his wind to blow (and the) waters flow.
- 19 He declareth his word unto Jacob,  
 His statutes and his judgments unto Israel.
- 20 He hath not dealt so with any nation ;  
 And as for (his) judgments, they do not know them.  
 Hallelujah !

building of Jerusalem (ver. 2), there can be little doubt that there is here a direct and literal reference to the setting up of the gates as described in Neh. vii. 1-4. With the latter part of the verse Comp. the promise in Isa. lx. 17, 18, "I will also make thy officers peace . . . violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders, but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise."

14. FAT OF WHEAT. See on lxxi. 16 [17].

15-18. This repeated reference to God's power as manifested in the world is certainly remarkable, and is characteristic of these later Psalms. It may, perhaps, be accounted for by the fact that never had so strong a conviction laid hold of the national heart, of the utter impotence of all the gods of the heathen, as after the return from the exile; never, therefore, so triumphant and living a sense of the dominion of Jehovah, not in Israel only, but throughout the universe.

15. HIS COMMANDMENT, or "saying,"

with reference perhaps to the creative fiat, "And God said"; comp. xxxiii. 9. God is said to "send" this as his messenger, as in ver. 18 of this Psalm, and cvii. 20, where see note.

16. SNOW LIKE WOOL, etc. The point of the comparison is probably merely in the general resemblance of the snow, frost, ice, to the different objects mentioned, not in "the ease with which God accomplishes the greatest things as man does the least, such as causing some locks of wool to fly, or scattering a few ashes" (Hengst.).

19. God's works in nature are for all men; "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. v. 45); but there is a special privilege belonging to his chosen people. They, and they alone in the world, have received the lively oracles of his mouth. Comp. Rom. iii. 1, 2. "What advantage then hath the Jew? . . . Much every way: first, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."

\* וְיָמְרָה. This, as it stands, must be a fem. infin. Piel, and as such it is usually defended by וְיִסְרָה, Lev. xxvi. 18, the only other instance

of such a form; but Hupfeld contends that such fem. infin. in the Piel and Hiph. ought to be of the forms  $\text{הִתְקַלָּה}$  and  $\text{הִתְקַלְּהָ}$ , as in Aramaic. He also objects that  $\text{כִּי טוֹב}$  cannot mean "for *it* is good," but "for *he* is good," the adjective being always predicated of God, and he appeals especially to the parallel passage, cxxxv. 3. Further, according to the usual rendering, the second hemistich of the verse consists of two verses dependent on  $\text{כִּי}$ , yet unconnected with one another; and in the next verse the construction is carried on with a participle, which implies that Jehovah is already the subject of the previous verse. Hence, unless  $\text{זַמְרָה}$  is imperat. paragog. sing., instead of plur. (which here would be a harsh enallage of number), we must either read  $\text{זַמְרֵי}$  (so Ven., Olsh.) or  $\text{זַמְרָהּ}$ , with the same change from the 3d pers. to the 1st as in cxlv. 6. The Athnach is wrongly placed: it should clearly stand with  $\text{נִצְרִים}$ , not with  $\text{אֲלֵהֶינּוּ}$ .

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PSALM CXLVIII.

IN this splendid anthem the Psalmist calls upon the whole creation, in its two great divisions (according to the Hebrew conception) of heaven and earth, to praise Jehovah. Things with and things without life, beings rational and irrational, are summoned to join the mighty chorus. The Psalm is an expression of the loftiest devotion, and embraces at the same time the most comprehensive view of the relation of the creature to the Creator. Whether it is exclusively the utterance of a heart filled to the full with the thought of the infinite majesty of God, or whether it is also an anticipation, a prophetic forecast, of the final glory of creation, when, at the manifestation of the sons of God, the creation itself shall also be redeemed from the bondage of corruption (Rom. viii. 18-23), and the homage of praise shall indeed be rendered by all things that are in heaven and earth and under the earth, is a question into which we need not enter. The former seems to my mind the more probable view; but the other is as old as Hillary, who sees the end of the exhortation of the Psalm to be, "Ut ob depulsam saeculi vanitatem creatura omnis, ex magnis officiorum suorum laboribus absoluta, et in beato regno aeternitatis aliquando respirans, Deum suum et laeta predicat et quieta, et ipsa secundum Apostolum in gloriam beatæ aeternitatis assumpta."

Isaac Taylor says: "It is but faintly and afar off that the ancient liturgies (except so far as they merely copied their originals) come up to the majesty and the wide compass of the Hebrew worship, such as

it is indicated in the one hundred and forty-eighth Psalm. Neither Ambrose, nor Gregory, nor the Greeks, have reached or approached this level; and in tempering the boldness of their originals by admixtures of what is more Christianlike and spiritual, the added elements sustain an injury which is not compensated by what they bring forward of a purer or less earthly kind. Feeble, indeed, is the tone of these anthems of the ancient church; sophisticated or artificial is their style. Nor would it be possible—it has never yet seemed so—to Christianize the Hebrew anthems, retaining their power, their earth-like richness, and their manifold splendors—which are the very splendors and the true riches and the grandeur of God's world—and withal attempered with expressions that touch to the quick the warmest human sympathies. And as the enhancement of all these there is the *nationality*, there is that fire which is sure to kindle fire in true human hearts—

‘He showeth his word unto Jacob,  
His statutes and his judgments unto Israel.  
He hath not dealt so with any nation;  
As for his judgments, they have not known them.’

[From the close of the one hundred and forty-seventh Psalm].”—  
*Spirit of the Hebrew Poetry*, pp. 157, 158.

The earliest imitation of this Psalm is “The Song of the Three Children,” interpolated by the LXX into the third chapter of Daniel. The Hymn of Francis of Assisi, in which he calls upon the creatures to praise God, *propter honorabilem fratrem nostrum solem*, has also been compared with it, though there is really no comparison between the two. The same Francis, who thus calls the sun our “honorable brother,” could also address a cricket as his sister, “Canta, soror mea cicada, et Dominum creatorem tuum júbilo lauda.” But neither in this Psalm, nor elsewhere in Scripture, is this brotherly and sisterly relation of things inanimate and irrational to man recognized or implied.

The Psalm consists of two equal parts:

I. The praise of God in heaven (ver. 1–6).

II. The praise of God on earth (ver. 7–12).

### 1 HALLELUJAH!

O praise Jehovah from the heavens,

Praise him in the heights.

1. FROM THE HEAVENS. This first verse is not to be restricted merely to the angels. It is the prelude comprising all afterwards enumerated, angels, sun, and moon, etc.

2. HIS HOST. Here, as is plain from



- 2 Praise ye him, all his angels,  
Praise him, all his host.
- 3 Praise him, sun and moon,  
Praise him, all ye stars of light.
- 4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens,  
And ye waters, that be above the heavens.
- 5 Let them praise the name of Jehovah,  
For HE commanded, and they were created ;
- 6 And he made them to stand (fast) forever and ever,  
He hath given them a decree, and they transgress it not.
- 7 Oh praise Jehovah from the earth,  
Ye sea-monsters and all deeps ;
- 8 Fire and hail, snow and vapor,  
Stormy wind fulfilling his word ;
- 9 Ye mountains, and all hills,  
Fruit-trees, and all cedars ;

the parallelism, "the angels," as also in 1 Kings xxii. 19, though elsewhere the expression is used of the *stars*, and some would so understand it here.

4. HEAVENS OF HEAVENS. A superlative, according to the common Hebrew idiom, denoting "the highest heavens"; comp. 2 Cor. xii. 2. Others take it as a poetical way of expressing the apparently boundless depth of the heavens. So Luther, "Ihr Himmel alenthalben"; Maurer, "Omnia coelorum spatia utut vasta et infinita," an interpretation which perhaps derives some support from the phrase, "the heaven and the heaven of heavens" (Dent. x. 14; 1 Kings viii. 27).

WATERS . . . ABOVE THE HEAVENS, as in Gen. i. 7. This is usually explained of the clouds, though the form of expression cannot be said to favor such an explanation, nor yet the statement in Genesis, that the firmament or expanse was intended to separate the waters above from the waters below. Taken in their obvious meaning, the words must point to the existence of a vast heavenly sea or reservoir. However, it is quite out of place, especially

when dealing with language so evidently poetical as this, to raise any question as to its scientific accuracy.

5. HE COMMANDED. The LXX add here from the parallel passage (xxxiii. 9), the other clause, "He spake, and it was done," or, as they render, ". . . and they were made."

6. AND THEY TRANSGRESS IT NOT; lit. "and none of them transgresses it"; for the verb is in the singular, and therefore distributive. Others, as the E.V., following the LXX, Jerome, the Syriac, etc., "a law which shall not pass," or "shall not be broken." The objection to this is, that the verb is never used elsewhere of the passing away of a law, but always of the transgression of a law.

7. The second great division of created things, — that is, according to the Old Testament view, THE EARTH.

SEA-MONSTERS, mentioned first, as at the bottom of the scale in creation, as in Gen. i. 21.

8. FIRE, i.e. "lightning," as in xviii. 12 [13], where it is in like manner joined with hail.

VAPOR, or, perhaps rather, "smoke,"

- 10 Beasts, and all cattle,  
 Creeping things, and winged fowl ;
- 11 Kings of the earth, and all peoples,  
 Princes, and all judges of the earth ;
- 12 Both young men, and maidens,  
 Old men, and children :
- 13 Let them praise the name of Jehovah,  
 For his name only is exalted,  
 His majesty above earth and heaven.
- 14 And he hath lifted up the horn of his people,—  
 A praise to all his beloved,—  
 (Even) to the children of Israel, a people near unto  
 him.  
 Hallelujah !

answering to "fire," as "snow" to "hail."

STORMY WIND, as in cvii. 25.

11, 12. Man mentioned last, as the crown of all. The first step (see ver. 7) and the last are the same as in Gen. i. In the intervening stages, with the usual poetic freedom, the order of Genesis is not adhered to.

13. LET THEM PRAISE, exactly as at the close of the first great division of the anthem (ver. 5) ; and, in the same way as there, the reason for the exhortation follows in the next clause. But it is a different reason. It is no longer because he has given them a decree, bound them as passive unconscious creatures by a law which they cannot transgress. (It is the fearful mystery of the reasonable will that it can transgress the law.) It is because his name is exalted, so that the eyes of men can see and the hearts and tongues of men confess it ; it is because he has graciously revealed himself to, and mightily succored, the people whom he loves, the

nation who are near to him. If it be said, that what was designed to be a universal anthem is thus narrowed at its close, it must be remembered that, however largely the glory of God was written on the visible creation, it was only to the Jew that any direct revelation of his character had been made.

EXALTED. Isa. xii. 4, etc. ; xxx. 13.

14. LIFTED UP THE HORN. See on lxxv. 6 ; others, "hath lifted up a horn unto his people," the horn being the house of David.

A PRAISE. This may either be (1) in apposition with the whole previous sentence ; viz. the lifting up of the horn is "a praise," a glory, to his beloved (comp. Isa. lxi. 3, 11 ; lxii. 7) ; or (2) in apposition with the subject of the previous verb, God himself is "a praise (i.e. object of praise) to," etc. So the LXX, ὕμνος ; Jerome, *laus*. So the Prayer-book version gives the sense : "all his saints shall praise him."

NEAR UNTO HIM, as a holy people (Deut. iv. 7). Comp. Lev. x. 3.

## PSALM CXLIX.

THE feelings expressed in this Psalm are perfectly in accordance with the time and the circumstances to which we have already referred the whole of this closing group of Hallelujah Psalms, beginning with the one hundred and forty-sixth. It breathes the spirit of intense joy and eager hope which must have been in the very nature of things characteristic of the period which succeeded the return from the Babylonish captivity. Men of strong faith and religious enthusiasm and fervent loyalty must have felt that in the very fact of the restoration of the people to their own land was to be seen so signal a proof of the divine favor, that it could not but be regarded as a pledge of a glorious future yet in store for the nation. The burning sense of wrong, the purpose of a terrible revenge, which was the feeling uppermost when they had first escaped from their oppressors (as in Psalm cxxxvii.), was soon changed into the hope of a series of magnificent victories over all the nations of the world, and the setting up of a universal dominion. It is such a hope which is expressed here. The old days of the nation, and the old martial spirit, are revived. God is their King (ver. 2), and they are his soldiers, going forth to wage his battles, with his praises in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hands. A spirit which now seems sanguinary and revengeful had, it is not too much to say, its proper function under the Old Testament, and was not only natural but necessary, if that small nation was to maintain itself against the powerful tribes by which it was hemmed in on all sides. But it ought to require no proof that language like that of verses 6-9 of this Psalm is no warrant for the exhibition of a similar spirit in the Christian church.

“The dream that it was possible to use such a prayer as this, without a spiritual transubstantiation of the words, has made them the signal for some of the greatest crimes with which the church has ever been stained. It was by means of this Psalm that Casper Sciopius in his ‘Clarion of the Sacred War’ (*Classicum Belli Sacri*), a work written, it has been said, not with ink, but with blood, roused and inflamed the Roman Catholic princes to the Thirty Year’s War. It was by means of this Psalm that, in the Protestant community, Thomas Münzer fanned the flames of the War of the Peasants. We see from these and other instances that when in her interpretation of such a Psalm the church forgets the words of the apostle, ‘the weapons of our warfare are not carnal’ (2 Cor. x. 4), she falls back

upon the ground of the Old Testament, beyond which she has long since advanced,—ground which even the Jews themselves do not venture to maintain, because they cannot altogether withdraw themselves from the influence of the light which has dawned in Christianity, and which condemns the vindictive spirit. The church of the Old Testament, which, as the people of Jehovah, was at the same time called to wage a holy war, had a right to express its hope of the universal conquest and dominion promised to it, in such terms as those of this Psalm; but, since Jerusalem and the seat of the Old Testament worship have perished, the national form of the church has also forever been broken in pieces. The church of Christ is built up among and out of the nations; but neither is the church a nation, nor will ever again one nation be the church, *κατ' ἐξόχην*. Therefore the Christian must transpose the letter of this Psalm into the spirit of the New Testament." — *Delitzsch*.

### 1 HALLELUJAH!

O sing to Jehovah a new song,

His praise in the congregation of (his) beloved.

2 Let Israel rejoice in him that made him,<sup>a</sup>

Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King;

3 Let them praise his name in (the) dance,

With tabret and harp let them play unto him;

4 For Jehovah taketh pleasure in his people,

He beautifieth the afflicted with salvation.

5 Let (his) beloved exult with glory,

Let them sing for joy upon their beds;

1. A NEW SONG. As expressive of all the new hopes and joys of a new era, a new spring of the nation, a new youth of the church bursting forth into a new life.

(HIS) BELOVED, or, "them that love him"; see on xvi. 10. A name repeated ver. 5 and 9, and therefore characteristic of the Psalm.

2. IN THEIR KING. God again is claimed emphatically as the King of the nation, when they had no longer a king sitting on David's throne. Such a King will not leave them under foreign rule; he will break the yoke of every oppressor from their neck.

4. TAKETH PLEASURE, as has been shown by their restoration to their own land. Comp. Isa. liv. 7, 8.

BEAUTIFIETH. Comp., as having the same reference to the change in the condition of the nation, Isa. lv. 5; lx. 7, 9, 13; lxi. 3.

5. WITH GLORY, or it might be rendered "because of (the) glory (put upon them)."

UPON THEIR BEDS. Even there, even when they have laid themselves down to rest, let them break forth into joyful songs at the thought of God's high favor shown to them, in the anticipation of the victories which they shall achieve.

- 6 (With) the high<sup>b</sup> (praises) of God in their mouth,  
 And a two-edged sword in their hand ;  
 7 To execute vengeance on the nations,  
 (And) punishments on the people ;  
 8 To bind their kings with chains,  
 And their nobles with iron fetters ;  
 9 To execute upon them (the) judgment written,  
 It is an honor for all his beloved.  
 Hallelujah !

This appears to me to be the obvious and most simple explanation. Maurer, "Tam privata quam publicasit laetitiam." Hengstenberg, "*Upon their beds*,—where before, in the loneliness of night, they consumed themselves with grief for their shame." Comp. Hos. vii. 14.

6. A revival of the old military spirit of the nation, of which we have an instance Neh. iv. 17 [11], "With the one hand they did their work, and with the other they held the sword." But a still better parallel is 2 Macc. xv. 27, *ταῖς μὲν χερσὶν ἀγωνιζόμενοι, ταῖς δὲ καρδίαις πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν εὐχόμενοι.*

ΜΟΥΤΗ. Heb. "throat," probably intended to express the *loud* utterance.

9. (THE) JUDGMENT WRITTEN. This has been explained to mean the judgment written in the law, and that either (1) the extermination of the Canaanites, as a pattern for all future acts of righteous vengeance (Stier); or (2), in a more general sense, such judgments as those threatened in Deut. xxxii. 40-43. Comp. Isa. xlv. 14; Ezek. xxv. 14; xxxviii., xxxix.; Zech. xiv. But the extermination of the Canaanites could not be regarded as a typical example, for the Jews were not sent to exterminate other nations, nor is any such measure

hinted at here. Nor, again, if by "written" we understand "prescribed in the law," is the allusion to Deut. xxxii. 40-44 and similar passages more probable; for in those passages vengeance on the enemies of Israel is not *enjoined*, but God speaks of it as his own act. Hence others understand by "a judgment written," one in accordance with the divine will as written in Scripture, as opposed to selfish aims and passions (so Calvin). But perhaps it is better to take it as denoting a judgment fixed, settled — as committed to writing, so as to denote its permanent, unalterable character — written thus by God himself. As in Isa. lxxv. 6, God says, "Behold it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom."

IT IS AN HONOR. That is, the subjection of the world described in the previous verses. But perhaps it is better to take the pronoun as referring to God: "He is a glory to all," etc.; i.e. either (1) his glory and majesty are reflected in his people; or (2) he is the author and fountain of their glory; or (3) he is the glorious object of their praise.

<sup>a</sup> עָשָׂה. This has been usually taken as a plur., adapting itself to אֱלֹהִים; but it is rather sing. (with the usual substitution of ה' for ו', in verbs ה' (ל')), and particularly in this participle, Job xxxv. 10; Isa. liv. 5. So Hupfeld and Ewald, *Lehrb.* § 256 b, and so also Gesen. in the latest editions of his Grammar.

<sup>b</sup> רִוְחָםָהּ, infin. subst. from רוּחַם: see on lxxvi. note f.

## PSALM CL.

THE great closing hallelujah, or doxology, of the Psalter, in which every kind of musical instrument is to bear its part as well as the voice of man, in which not one nation only, but “everything that hath breath,” is invited to join. It is one of those Psalms which “declare their own intention as anthems, adapted for that public worship which was the glory and delight of the Hebrew people; a worship carrying with it the soul of the multitude by its simple majesty and by the powers of music, brought in their utmost force to recommend the devotions of earth in the ears of Heaven.” “Take it,” says Isaac Taylor, “as a sample of this class, and bring the spectacle and the sounds into one, for the imagination to rest in. It was evidently to subserve the purposes of *music* that these thirteen verses are put together: it was no doubt to give effect first to the human voice, and then to the alternations of instruments — loud and tender and gay — with the graceful movements of the dance, that the anthem was composed and its chorus brought out,

‘Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord!  
Praise ye the Lord!’

And so did the congregated thousands take up their part with a shout, ‘even as the voice of many waters.’ — *Spirit of the Hebrew Poetry*, pp. 156, 157.

## 1 HALLELUJAH!

Oh praise God in his sanctuary,  
Praise him in the firmament of his strength.

2 Praise him for his mighty acts,  
Praise him according to his excellent greatness.

3 Praise him with the sound of the cornet,  
Praise him with lute and harp.

1. IN HIS SANCTUARY. This may be either the earthly or the heavenly temple. The character of the Psalm as a liturgical anthem would seem to show that the former is meant; the parallelism would favor the latter. See xi. 4, where there is the same ambiguity.

FIRMAMENT OF HIS STRENGTH, i.e. the heaven in which his kingly power

and majesty are displayed. Comp. lxviii. 34 [35].

3. CORNET, properly the curved instrument made of a ram's horn (see on lxxxii. 3), and distinct from the straight metal trumpet, though in the Talmud it is said that after the destruction of the temple the distinction of names was no longer observed.

- 4 Praise him with tabret and dance,  
 Praise him upon the strings and pipe.  
 5 Praise him upon the clear cymbals,  
 Praise him upon the loud cymbals.  
 6 Let everything that hath breath praise Jah !

## HALLELUJAH !

4. **TABRET**, or "tambourine." The Hebrew *tôph* is the same as the Arab. *dûff*; and the Spanish *adufe* is derived through the Moorish from the same root.

**STRINGS**. This is probably the meaning, as in Syriac. See on xlv. note <sup>h</sup>.

**PIPE**, properly "shepherd's flute," (Gen. iv. 21); but not elsewhere mentioned as an instrument employed in sacred music.

5. **CYMBALS**. The Hebrew word is onomatopoeic, intended to describe the *clanging* of these instruments. It occurs

in sacred music (2 Sam. vi. 5), LXX. *κύμβαλα*. The distinction between the two kinds mentioned is, probably, that the first, as smaller, had a clear, high sound; the latter, as larger, a deep, loud sound. (So Ewald, *Jahrb.* viii. 67). Others render, "castanets."

6. **LET EVERYTHING THAT HATH BREATH**, and, above all, the voice of man, as opposed to the dead instruments mentioned before. What more fitting close than this of the great "Book of Praises" ?





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