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A

LITERAL TRANSLATION

OF THE

BOOK OF PSALMS;

INTENDED TO ILLUSTRATE THEIR

POETICAL AND MORAL STRUCTURE:

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

DISSERTATIONS

ON THE WORD *SELAH*, AND ON THE AUTHORSHIP, ORDER, TITLES,
AND POETICAL FEATURES OF THE PSALMS.

BY

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I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of sacred Scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst.

HOOVER.

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DISSERTATIONS ON THE PSALMS.

DISSERTATION I.

ON THE WORD SELAH.

§ 1. ON THE MEANING AND FUNCTION OF THE WORD.

IT will be the object of the present Dissertation to offer an explanation of the word SELAH, which frequently occurs in the Psalms, and in only one sacred poem besides, the Prayer of Habakkuk; and upon the meaning of which the Church has never pronounced any determinate judgment.

It cannot be denied, that investigations of this kind are not generally encouraged by the learning or piety of the present age. Two notions, well nigh allied to puritanism, are not a little prevalent: the first is, that the form and structure of Holy Scripture is a mystery, into which it were irreverent to search; the second is, that critical studies are a kind of mechanical employment, inconsistent with the salutary meditation upon things divine.

In answer to such objections, it may suffice briefly to observe, that since all Holy Scripture was given for our learning, no one word is superfluous, or disconnected from the deep instruction imparted by the Spirit of God. To seek, therefore, the removal of even one verbal obscurity in those divine oracles, is

a task to which it would be an honour and privilege to devote an entire life, did providential circumstances permit. It is enough to know that the task is a sacred one: the result can be estimated by the Author of Wisdom alone. For whatever object of a religious kind the holy soil of God's Word is cultivated; for whatever treasure the field is searched, we may be certain, that if faith and humility accompany the work, some riches of value inestimable will be found, even though these may prove altogether different from the expectations of the seeker. So it is in every work of faith. And as regards the study, whether critical or meditative, of the Book of Psalms in particular, to this truth the devout labours of the faithful bear witness; who, in all ages, of both the former and latter Dispensation, have made that Book the chief companion of their devotions, and instructor of their lives.

But it is confidently hoped, that the scrutiny of the word now in question will not prove a matter of mere critical speculation, or mere literary curiosity. On the contrary, if the view taken in the following pages be correct, we shall discover in this word a significant aid towards the intellectual, and therefore spiritual, apprehension of the Psalms themselves.

In the present enquiry two principles have been kept steadily in view; the adherence, namely, to the internal evidence of Holy Scripture, in the first place; in the second, an attention to the opinions of antiquity, both Jewish and Christian. From these several indications are derived the materials for constructing a consistent system, which carefully excludes the conjectures of mere private judgment and fancy.

The first observation to be made is this: that the word SELAH cannot safely be regarded otherwise than as an integral part of the original text of the sacred Volume. Whether it be coeval with the Psalms

themselves or not, this much at least is evident, that it formed a part of the letter of Holy Scripture when the earliest translation, that of the Septuagint, was made. In that translation it is scrupulously retained; and no intimation whatever exists, in prior history or tradition, of its having been inserted subsequently to the time when the Canon of the Old Testament was completed. It is true that the word is omitted in the later editions of the Vulgate, and in the Syriac and Arabic translations. The sense of the Psalms was found to be complete without it, and it evidently formed no part of the sentence which it preceded or followed. And since the public recitation and popular use of the Psalms would be impeded by the retention of a word of unknown, and apparently irrecoverable meaning, its omission might be justified in manuals intended for the liturgical use of the Church, like the Psalter in our Book of Common Prayer. But to drop it altogether from the text of an authoritative and documentary version, was a precedent which the translators of the English Bible wisely refused to follow. If any word of Holy Writ may be omitted merely because it is unintelligible or obscure, the integrity of God's written Word may soon be impaired to an extent that is incalculable.

It is now in place to enquire into the meaning of the word. This has given rise to a variety of conjectures.^a Some meanings have been assigned to it of no general acceptance, and evidently proceeding from mere vague conjecture, though announced, as fanciful surmises frequently are, with no little dogmatism. Such are "Amen," "for ever," and "mark this well," or "*nota bene*." These have found their supporters among many of the Jewish and a few of the Christian writers. But, in vindication of them, we

^a For a detail of the various opinions, see the Note at the end of this Dissertation.

have merely the assertion of men, who, according to their wont, would sooner hazard any interpretation, however gratuitous, than confess their ignorance. The writings of the Targumists and Rabbins betray in general a total want of apprehension of the true style and sentiment of Holy Writ; and (as will presently be shown), there were obvious causes why the real meaning of the word should be forgotten by men who had evidently lost the key to sacred poetry. But in these interpretations there is a want of consistency among the Jews themselves. That they are utterly unsupported by internal evidence, any one will perceive who will but examine the sacred text in any of its translations; for it will be found that each of these significations is redundant, unnecessary, or unmeaning, in the place where Selah occurs.

But by far the greater number of Christian, and many of the Jewish writers, afford a testimony altogether in accordance with the evidence exhibited by the structure of the Psalms themselves. In general, this testimony is given as traditional or conjectural. As it has been already remarked in the first paragraph of this section, no positive doctrine has been laid down on the subject. Disconnected, and apparently diverse, as may be the notes which we have caught from the indistinct voice of remote antiquity, they will be found, when put together, to form but parts of one consistent melody.

Thus, the word SELAH is translated in the Septuagint by the word DIAPSALMA^a, which means either a mark of division in the Psalm, like a line or space which separates one stanza from another; or that portion of the Psalm which is followed by this word, and by it separated from the following context.

^a Heumannus considers *διὰ* here to signify *inter*, as in *διάστημα*, *διάστημα*, *διάρημα*, *διάρημα*. So that *διάψαλμα* means the interposition of instrumental music. — *Poete*, vol. iii. p. 473.

Now, one of the earliest Christian writers, Justin Martyr, thus applies the term: "In the *Diapsalma*^a of the 48th Psalm," (the 47th of our translation, at the very place where *Selah* occurs,) "it is there said of Christ, 'God hath gone up,' " &c. And so Optatus^b: "In the second *Diapsalma*, 'But to the ungodly said God.' " This occurs in the 50th Psalm of our translation, when the *Diapsalma* occurs in the Greek, but not in the Hebrew. Both these writers employ the word as if it were a well-known designation, indicating a new stanza or division.

With this view other conjectural or traditional meanings will be found, on examination, to harmonize. These are as follows: a sign or notice, indicating a change in thought, in expression, in the subject matter, in the person of the narrator or interlocutor in the metre, or in the melody; the raising of the voices or instruments; the interposition of a symphony; a pause; or, lastly, the temporary suspension of the flow of prophecy, or of inspiration.

It is evident that a change of person must imply a change in thought, sentiment, or subject matter; that a change in any of these respects may justify a change of metre. And as to metre, it is now sufficiently established, as a literary axiom, that Hebrew poetry has a metre, not of syllables and feet, but of ideas or sentiments; that its lines are measured, not by the correspondence or regular recurrence of long and short syllables or accents artificially disposed, but by the correspondence or regular recurrence of certain ideas, marshalled in a certain order. Thus, a change in sentiment will be synonymous with a change of metre, when applied to the poetry of the Psalms.

^a Ἐν διαψάλματι τεσσαρακοστοῦ ἑκτου ψαλμοῦ, εἰς τὸν Χριστὸν οὕτως εἶρηται, ἀνέση ὁ Θεὸς, κ. τ. λ. — *Dial. cum Tryph.* p. 255. edit. Par.

^b Sub secundo diapsalmate, "Peccatori autem dixit Deus." — *Contra Parmenium*, in *Psal.* 49.

So far, then, several of these different meanings are in accordance, each being but a component part of one comprehensive notion.

Now any change of this kind would obviously be marked either by a pause, when the Psalm was simply recited; or by a symphony, or change in the method of accompaniment, when performed, as the Psalms were in the Temple, by singers and minstrels.

That the word SELAH included this accompaniment is in the highest degree probable. For we are to consider, not only that the poetry of the Psalms was divinely inspired, but that the music which accompanied them was a matter of Divine appointment, as we are told by the words of Holy Scripture, too generally overlooked: "And he (Hezekiah) set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets." ^a

We may be confident, therefore, that the musical accompaniment was as perfect as the poetry; that it was constructed according to the laws of harmony, unknown to the rest of the world, but divinely revealed to the Israelites; that it was at once grave, religious, and expressive; but, above all, that it was far more accurately subservient to the sentiment than the best music of any other nation. It is, therefore, far from strange that some marks of choral direction should be found accompanying the sacred text itself.

This *à priori* supposition, however, is not a little confirmed by the following facts. Of the thirty-nine Psalms in which Selah occurs, twenty-eight have musical directions prefixed; while all either have these, or are ascribed in their titles to David, Asaph, Ethan,

^a 2 Chron. xxix. 25.

or Heman, or the sons of Korah, that is, the directors and composers of the psalmody, or the members of the Temple choirs. Again, it does not occur in any of those Psalms which have no title prefixed, the alphabetical Psalms, or the Songs of Degrees. These are for the most part poems of a simple and uniform texture^a, at least without very marked or abrupt transitions of sentiment or subject, and such therefore as would require an equality of strain in their accompaniment. Nor is it found in any of the Psalms which were composed after the Captivity, when the choirs of the Temple had suffered a considerable diminution. The Prayer of Habakkuk, in which it occurs, was composed at a time when we are expressly told that the service of the Temple was restored by King Josiah to its pristine magnificence.^b

Before proceeding to make the deduction from the evidence now stated, a remark must be made upon the notion, that *Selah* signified the cessation of the flow of prophecy, or of inspiration. This notion had its rise from the partial observation of a fact. There are certain Psalms (the 89th especially) in which the change consists in a transition from thanksgiving to complaint, from the prophetic announcement of blessings to the bewailment of reverses and woes. But such a definition is plainly wrong, since both the triumphal songs, and the lamentations and elegies, were equally inspired from above, and equally tended to the instruction and edification of the Church throughout all time.

It now remains to offer an explanation of the word *Selah*. And first, as to its functions. It is a word,

^a Herder remarks, that *Selah* indicates a change of tone: "quæ in carminibus affectuosis crebra fuerit, in quibus etiam hæc nota tantum occurrit, in Psalmis vero dogmaticis non reperitur."—*De Genio Poes. Hebr.* ii. 376.

^b 2 Chron. xxxv. 15—18.

marking the commencement of a new division of the Psalm. These divisions are uniformly found to be discriminated upon regular and consistent principles. Thus the Diapsalma sometimes separates the exordium from the main subject, or the main subject or action from the catastrophe or conclusion; or, to use the language of ancient tragedy, (whose principles, I doubt not, were ultimately derived from the Hebrews,) the Prologue from the Episode, and the Episode from the Exode. Sometimes it marks a transition from the narrative to the speech, from the prophecy to the prayer, from the thanksgiving to the complaint, from the narration to the moral inference. At other times it divides the Psalm into parallel stanzas, responding to one another in sentiment, as the strophes and antistrophes of the Greek choral ode do in metre. Again: it marks the limits of the various stages of sentimental or moral progression, with a precision which teaches the mind to ponder the intrinsic value of each separate lesson of heavenly wisdom.

That all the Psalms in which the Diapsalma occurs are marked at the places of its insertion by one or other of these characteristics, will, it is hoped, be evident to those who will accompany the writer through the following pages. Though in one or two Psalms the application may not be so obvious, yet it is apprehended that in no one instance is the general theory contradicted.

The function of the word is the consideration of chief importance. As to its etymological meaning, nothing can be said with confidence, in so great obscurity is the point involved. However, the following solution is offered, as one which appears highly probable, and accords with the notion already expressed, of Selah being peculiarly employed as a musical direction.

According to many critics, the root of the word is

one which signifies *to elevate*.^a That the verb is applicable to jubilant praise, is collected from the 68th Psalm, where it is translated, "Magnify him that rideth upon the heavens." Some have considered it as meaning an exaltation of the voice, the raising of a higher strain. But this interpretation will obviously not apply to many of the Psalms, in which the following Diapsalma, or division, would require a depression, not an elevation, of the music. If, however, we consider it to mean the performance^b of a symphony, or the raising the strain by some instruments peculiarly used for the purpose, we shall arrive at a consistent meaning.

Now we have some indications, by no means obscure, both in the Jewish traditions and in Scripture history, of such a symphony being used in the intervals of the Psalm. Thus, as Dr. Lightfoot records^c, the Jewish tradition was, that certain Psalms were stately performed at the daily sacrifice, one for each day in the week: that each of these was divided into three parts, and that after the conclusion of each part a pause was made, and the priests then sounded their trumpets. In this account we have probably the substance of truth, but, as often happens, distorted and modified. There is a regularity and method in this artificial canon of the Rabbins which is generally to be found

^a Kimchi derives it from ללח, and applies it to the elevation of the voice. So Bythner. Mr. Mudge (on Psalm iii. 2., ix. 16.), has the same opinion, and considers it to mean "some strain of music higher than ordinary, some bold flourish of trumpets amid the words." And in his note to Ps. lxxviii. 4. he says: "ללח I translate by *raising a Selah*, to make it agree with verse 32, 33., where there is the same expression of a *Selah* to Him that rideth on the heavens."

^b "Selah, a bold symphony." — *Dr. Kennicott*. Remarks on Select Passages in the Old Testament, on Ps. iii. 2., p. 223. Oxf. 1787. And Solomon Van Til, as cited by Henmannus (Pœcile, iii. 478.): "Signum quo admoniti buccinatores cantum interpellarunt, idque vividius fervidiusque." Schleusner thus interprets it; "quod fidibus interimitur: variatio vocis ac modulationis inter canendum."

^c Temple Service, c. vii. § 2.

in suspicious traditions. It is credible that at proper intervals the trumpets sounded; but that there was an uniformly triple division of each psalm is contradicted by the evidence afforded by their structure, especially of those in daily use, mentioned by Dr. Lightfoot.^a

It is conceived, however, that the use of Selah was not connected so much with this daily service as with the psalmody on the more solemn festivals, — “the days of gladness, the solemn days, and beginning of months, over burnt-offerings and peace-offerings;”^b when, according to the Divine command, the priests blew the silver trumpets. Combining this command with the above tradition, it seems likely that the trumpets were blown at intervals of the psalmody, and that Selah means the raising of the strain of symphony. From many passages of Scripture it appears that this more solemn use of the trumpets was also observed on other great occasions, as the dedication or restoration of the Temple. For example, at the great festival celebrated by King Hezekiah: “And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, *and the priests with the trumpets.* And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt-offering upon the altar: and when the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began also *with the trumpets,* and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel. And all the congregation worshipped; *and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded;* and all this continued until the burnt-offering was finished.”

If this view be correct, then it may be understood why the word Selah is found in so small a number of the Psalms. There are many others precisely similar

^a The 24th, a Selah Psalm, is tripartite; but the 48th, 81st, and 82nd, also Selah Psalms, have but two divisions each. The 92nd, 93rd, and 94th have no diapsalma marked. The latter is capable of a tripartite division.

^b Numbers, x. 10.

^c 2 Chron. xxix. 26–28.

in construction (as will be shown in a future section of this Dissertation), in which the word is wanting. This difficulty is explained, if we suppose the Psalms wherein it occurs to have been appropriated to certain more solemn occasions. And such will appear to be the case with a considerable number of the Selah Psalms. Thus, the 81st was composed for the Feast of Trumpets, or that of the new moon; and several others have specific reference to great events of Jewish history, when we find that there were extraordinary assemblages of priests and Levites at the Temple. This will be more largely discussed in a subsequent Dissertation on the order and authorship of the Psalms.

The theory that Selah was a notice adapted to the more solemn psalmody of the Temple service may satisfactorily account for the meaning of the word having been first obscured, and then lost to the Jewish Church in later times. In the first place, the choirs suffered great diminution on the return from the Captivity: the families of Ethan and Heman having disappeared, that only of Asaph remaining.^a So that, although the memory of the former mode of solemn choral worship may have been preserved, it appears not improbable that its performance was, from necessity, considerably modified and changed.^b And there is reason to suppose that, during subsequent times, and the desolation of the Temple, under the oppression of foreign rulers, it degenerated, and finally disappeared. We are told, upon respectable authority^c, that the Jews of more recent times had lost all tradition even of the ancient Temple music. It is certain that the sister arts had perished; that

^a Ezra, ii. 41.

^b Geierus (comm. ad Ps. exi. 3.) thinks that Selah had become obsolete before the Captivity, as, in his opinion, it occurs in those Psalms only which were composed by David, or in his reign.

^c See Burney's History of Music, vol. i. p. 251.

constructive and architectural skill, which raised the first Temple, and those peculiar features of Hebrew poetry which can hardly be traced in the oriental literature of later days. These features are not to be found in the Rabbinical writings; and it seems that the knowledge of the measured system of the sacred lyrics had been judicially extinguished, till revived by the Spirit of God in the songs of the Virgin Mary, of Simeon, and of Zacharias, and apparently confined to the oracles of those harbingers of our blessed Lord, and to his own revealed word. So little indication is there in Jewish criticism of a genuine apprehension of the structure, whether metrical or sentimental, of the Psalm, that when once the ancient method of the Temple music had fallen into oblivion, it may be presumed, that no clue remained towards elucidating the meaning of a word, the practical function of which had long been obsolete.

It may be well, before proceeding to an analysis of the Psalm, in which the Diapsalma occurs, to offer a few remarks upon the advantage of this investigation. There are utilitarians in religion as well as in secular matters; and to these, as it has been already observed, critical or intellectual research in sacred studies appears unprofitable. Let it, however, be remembered, that in these studies the intellectual is inseparably connected with the spiritual. When the Holy Spirit speaks to the understanding, he seeks at the same time to influence the heart. And since he has thought fit to cast his divine instruction in a certain mould, to clothe it with a definite form, it cannot be a superfluous wish to trace that form, to examine that wonderful anatomy of his Word, and to ascertain the precise channels through which his inspiration flows. But the moral structure of the Psalm will clearly show, for our warning, the stages and progress of human sin, and for our encouragement, the gradual

course of true repentance, of forgiveness, of growth in heavenly virtue; it will disclose the progress of God's Providence and Grace, and it will regulate both the taste, the imagination, the intellect, and affections, by an orderly discipline, so that they may not exceed their proper limits and functions, but be fitted for the reasonable service of their Bestower. It will check the presumption of human fancy, and promote that *regularity of thought*, which is the promoter of real piety, the corrective of fanaticism, and the handmaid of Truth itself.

In the following sections the Psalms in which *Selah* occurs will be analysed, beginning with those of most simple construction, that is, of two divisions.

§ 2. PSALMS OF TWO DIVISIONS.

The most obvious and remarkable instance of Ps. 1. the bipartite division occurs in the 50th Psalm, where the Prologue or Introduction is separated by *Selah* from its main subject. The exordium, unequalled for sublimity, even in the Holy Scriptures themselves, represents the preparation for assembling the world before the Divine judgment-seat. God himself appears, as he did once on Mount Sinai, and as he shall appear at the end of the world, surrounded by fire, and lightnings, and tempest; the heaven and the earth being the witnesses of the sentence he is about to pronounce.

The God of Gods, the LORD hath spoken, and called the earth
From the rising of the sun, unto the going down thereof.

Out of Sion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

He shall come, even our God, and shall not keep silence:

A fire before him shall devour,

And round about him shall be a mighty tempest.

He shall call to the heavens from above,

And to the earth, that he may judge his people.

“ Gather unto me my saints,
 Those that have covenanted with me with sacrifice.”
 And the heavens shall declare his righteousness,
 For God is judge himself.

SELAH.

Then follows the oracular voice of God, which forms the substance of the Psalm, prefaced by the solemn but loving terms of appellation, “ Hear, O my people,” so often employed in prophetic Scripture.

Hear, O my people, and I will speak :
 O Israel, and I will testify unto thee :
 God, even thy God, am I.

This second part contains, in the first place, a warning to his people not to neglect his word and spiritual religion, without which the outward ceremonial of the law, though of divine prescription, could be of no avail; a warning equally essential to Christians, to whom the Holy Spirit still speaks in these imperishable words, reminding them of the ultimate object of the ordinances of the more perfect Covenant.

Not for thy sacrifices will I reprove thee :
 (For thy burnt offerings are before me continually ^a :)
 I will not take out of thy house a bullock,
 Nor out of thy folds the he-goats.
 For mine is every beast of the forest :
 The cattle upon a thousand hills.
 I know every fowl of the hills,
 And the wild beast of the field is before me.
 If I be hungry, I will not tell thee,
 For mine is the world, and the fulness thereof.
 Will I eat the flesh of bulls,
 And the blood of goats will I drink ?

^a Thy material sacrifices are sufficient : I require nothing more from thee of this kind. I will take *no more* bullocks, &c. The spiritual sacrifice is that which I require.

Sacrifice unto God thanksgiving,
 And perform to the Most High thy vows :
 And call on me in the day of trouble :
 I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

In the next place it contains an address to the ungodly :

But unto the ungodly saith God,
 What is it to thee to declare my statutes,
 Or to take my covenant into thy mouth ?
 For it is thou who hatest instruction,
 And castest my words behind thee.
 If thou seest a thief, then thou consentest unto him,
 And with adulterers is thy portion.
 Thy mouth thou givest to wickedness,
 And thy tongue frameth deceit.
 Thou sittest^a ; against thy brother thou speakest ;
 Against the son of thy mother thou settest forth slander.
 These things thou hast done ; and I kept silence :
 Thou thoughtest that I am altogether as thyself.
 I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.

And the last five lines form an epode, or conclusion, briefly summing up the subject matter of the Psalm, addressing, in the first place, the contemners of God, in the second place his obedient followers.

Consider now, ye that forget God,
 Lest I tear in pieces, and *there be* none to deliver.
 He that sacrificeth praise, honoureth me,
 And he that ordereth his way,
 To him shall I shew the salvation of God.

The second part of this Psalm is thus a complete poem in itself.

In another Dissertation will be shown the connection of this Psalm with the following, in which it is expanded and illustrated. ^b

^a This shows a deliberate habit of wickedness.

^b See this discussed in Dissertation II. § 5.

Ps. LXXV. The introduction of the 75th Psalm is in like manner prefatory. The speaker is a righteous king of Israel, in all likelihood Jehoshaphat, now newly possessed of his kingdom. He begins with acknowledging the presence and sovereignty of God, from whom all power is derived: he declares his intention of making the Divine Law the guide of his administration, "when he receives the congregation," that is, when he enters on the duties of his government; and in avowing his purpose, laments the wickedness of the world in general, and the unhappy degeneracy of Israel, broken by their wars, and almost alienated from God by their sins. In this state of things, he feels that he has a great weight of responsibility, in setting an example to the world, in upholding the almost forgotten rule of right, and in reconstructing and propping up the social edifice.

We give thanks to thee, O God, we give thanks :
 For near is thy Name: thy wonders do declare it.
 When I receive the congregation, I in uprightness will judge :
 The earth is dissolved, and all the inhabitants thereof:
 I myself bear up the pillars of it.

SELAH.

Then follows the main subject; which consists of his address to the ungodly among his people. It is an obvious enlargement of the introductory part, which contains, as frequently happens in the Psalms, the germ or general subject of the poem. In a strain much resembling that of the 82nd Psalm, he exhorts them to a godly sobriety and humility, warning them of the retributive justice from on high; and concludes with a reiteration of religious praise, and of his own determination to re-establish justice and piety in the land. The regular construction of the stanzas is to be observed, each consisting of four

lines. The Psalm ends, as it began, with ascribing praise to God.

1.

I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly,
And to the ungodly, Exalt not the horn :
Exalt not on high your horn :
Speak not with a stiff neck.

2.

For not from the east, nor from the west,
Nor from the south, is exaltation :
For God is the Judge :
This one he putteth down, and that one he exalteth.

3.

For a cup is in the hand of the Lord, and the wine is red,
It is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same ;
But the dregs thereof, they shall wring them out,
They shall drink them, even all the ungodly of the earth.

4.

But as for me, I will declare for ever,
I will make a Psalm to the God of Jacob :
And all the horns of the ungodly will I break :
The horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

In the next place are to be considered those Psalms, of two divisions, in which the first is distinguished from the second by a change of metre and of style. The reader must be again reminded, as was stated in the first section, that by metre is here to be understood the metre of sentiment, not of syllables; the artificial collocation of ideas, not of sounds, which is the essence of Hebrew Poetry. The word metre is strictly applicable; since we have here to do, not with the oratio soluta, but with measured thoughts, having fixed proportions, defined and restricted by certain laws.

The prologue, or first part of the 7th Psalm, is Ps. vii. an expression of complaint. It consists of two stanzas or strophes, one parallel to the other: but the second an enlargement of the first.

1.

O Lord my God, in thee do I seek refuge :
 Save me from all my persecutors, and deliver me :
 Lest he devour, like a lion, my soul :
 Rending it, and there be none to help.

2.

O Lord my God, if I have done this,
 If there be indeed iniquity in my hands,
 If I have rewarded unto him that was at peace with me
 evil ;
 (Yea, I have delivered him that troubled me without
 cause)
 Then let mine enemy pursue my soul, and overtake it :
 And let him tread down upon the earth my life,
 And my glory in the dust let him lay.

SELAH.

The strain now evidently changes. Instead of being constructed in regular stanzas, the second part forms an ode of irregular character, whence, in all probability, the title of *Shiggaion* ^a, a Wandering Ode. The tone of complaint is relieved by a confident invocation of judgment, with thanks for the approaching and certain deliverance. It is a prayer of faith, and therefore of thanksgiving.

Arise, O Lord, in thy wrath,
 Lift up thyself, because of the rage of those that trouble
 me :
 And awake for me in the judgment that thou hast com-
 manded.
 And the congregation of the people shall be round about
 thee :
 Therefore for their sakes do thou on high return.

The action of the poem now proceeds : and issues in the discomfiture of the wicked : his own weapons, by the over-ruling power of divine vengeance, being turned against himself. The whole concludes with an epode, expressive of thanksgiving for this overthrow of his enemies.

* See the next Dissertation, on the Titles of the Psalms.

I will give thanks unto the LORD, according to his righteousness,
 And I will make a Psalm to the Name of the LORD Most High.

Of a similar change of style, the 24th Psalm affords Ps. xxiv.
 an obvious instance.

The first part speaks of the worshipper: the second, of Him who is worshipped. It would seem that its inspired author had in his mind the ascent of Moses into the Mount: the context here prescribing the same moral requisites for approaching God's Presence in his Temple, as were essential for approaching him when revealed in ancient time on Mount Sinai. "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you, above all people, as it is this day."^a This appears the more probable from his adoption of the Mosaical expression, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." The first part is constructed in simple cognate parallelism: that is to say, in a series of lines, in which, for the most part, the second line of each couplet is parallel in sense, and in the order of the words, to the first, but invariably with some amplification and modification.^b

The LORD's is the earth, and the fulness thereof,
 The world, and they that dwell therein:
 For he himself on the seas hath founded it;
 And on the floods hath established it.
 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD,
 And who shall rise up in the place of his holiness?
 The clean of hands, and the pure of heart,
 Who hath not lifted up to vanity his soul,
 And hath not sworn deceitfully.
 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD,
 And righteousness from the God of his salvation.

^a Deut. x. 14, 15.

^b See Bishop Jebb's Sacred Literature. p. 38.

This is the generation of them that require him,
 That seek thy face. [O God] of Jacob.
 SELAH.

The second part, or division, a song of triumph, which the Church interprets as prophetic of our Saviour's ascension, is totally distinct both in subject and in style from the first. It forms four stanzas, progressive in their sentiment, and alternated, in appearance something like the strophes of an *Aleaic* ode. Aben Ezra well remarks upon the nature of the climax which it exhibits: that as the second stanza, "Who is the King of Glory?" refers to the Lord's battles upon earth, so the fourth refers to his future glory, when all battles shall cease, and when he shall reign in peace over the hosts of heaven. In the fourth stanza the greater urgency of demand is shown by the phrase, "Who is *he*, this King of Glory?" a feature which is not marked in either of our authorized translations. On the occurrence of *Selah* at the end of the Psalm remarks will be presently made in a future section.

1.

Lift up, O ye gates, your heads,
 And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,
 And he shall come in, the King of Glory.

2.

Who is this King of Glory?
 The Lord strong and mighty,
 The Lord mighty in battle.

3.

Lift up, O ye gates, your heads,
 And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors:
 And he shall come in, the King of Glory.

4.

Who is he, this King of Glory?
 The LORD of Hosts:
 Even He is the King of Glory.

SELAH.

The first part of the 44th Psalm is a song of triumph, consisting of four alternated stanzas, with a couplet forming an epode in conclusion, the whole being a perfect poem in itself. In the first two stanzas God's past wonders are commemorated.

1.

O God, with our ears we have heard, our fathers have told us
The work thou workedst in their days, in the days of old.
It was Thou: thine hand the heathen did drive out, and
plant them:
Thou didst afflict the nations, and cast them out.

2.

For not by their own sword got they the land in possession,
And their own arm did not save them:
For *it was* thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of
thy countenance,
Because thou favouredst them.

In the next two stanzas his present favour is celebrated, in terms evidently responding to the former.

3.

Thou art He, my King, O God;
Command salvation for Jacob:
Through thee them that trouble us will we push down;
Through thy Name will we tread them under that rise up
against us.

4.

For not in my bow will I trust,
And my sword shall not save me:
For thou hast saved us from them that trouble us,
And them that hate us thou hast put to shame.

The two concluding lines form an epode, which answers to the first and third stanzas, the holy Name of God being mentioned in each.

In God we boast all the day,
And thy Name for ever we praise.

SELAH.

The second part forms in sentiment and construction a direct contrast to the first. It reverses the picture, and speaks of abandonment, defeat, and sorrow.

But thou hast cast us off, and puttest us to confusion,
And goest not forth with our hosts, &c.

It is written in simple parallelism, not in alternate stanzas.

There are other Psalms of two divisions, in which no change of construction in the stanzas takes place, though a change of strain evidently does. Thus in the 60th Psalm, an order is observed, the reverse of that last noticed. The first part is elegiac, the second part triumphant.

Ps. lx.

O God, thou hast cast us off: thou hast broken us:
Thou hast been displeas'd: O return to us:
Thou hast made the earth to tremble: thou hast rent it
asunder:
Heal the breaches thereof: for it shaketh.
Thou hast shew'd thy people heaviness:
Thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.
Thou hast given to them that fear thee an ensign,
That it may be a sign because of the truth.

SELAH.

As if he had said, "Why hast thou cast us out, when thou hast set one up as an ensign, as a leader to thy people? Shall that banner be displayed in vain?" But he presently calls to mind his own providential position, and is encouraged by the thought to express that confidence which forms the subject of the second part. The two last lines of the first part thus form a note of preparation, as it were, for modulating into a more joyful key.

That thy beloved may be delivered,
Save with thy right hand, and hear me.
God hath spoken in his holiness:

I will rejoice: I will divide Sichem;
 And the valley of Succoth I will mete out.
 Mine is Gilead, and mine is Manasseh:
 And Ephraim is the strength of my head:
 Judah is my lawgiver.
 Moab is my wash-pot:
 Over Edom will I cast out my shoe:
 Because of me, Philistia, triumph thou.^a
 Who will bring me into the city of strength?
 Who will lead me into Edom?
 Wilt not thou, O God, *who* didst cast us off?
 Even *thou*, O God, *who didst* not go forth with our hosts?
 Give us help from trouble:
 For vain is the salvation of man.
 Through God we shall do valiantly,
 And he it is that shall tread down them that trouble us.

The meaning may be thus briefly explained: Save with thy right hand, and hear me, in order to the deliverance of thy chosen people. And I am confident he will save us: for so he has promised. I will therefore rejoice, and maintain the possession he has given me of Gilead (which had revolted during the reign of Saul^b), of Manasseh, and Ephraim, the chief tribes of Israel, now reunited to the monarchy of Judah^c; while in Judah is the metropolis both of civil and religious government. And already I have had victory over Moabites, Edomites, and Philistines, the earnest of greater conquests to come.^d But who will mature these conquests for us? Is it not He who in our faint-heartedness had been supposed to have cast us off?

It is remarkable that the latter portion of this Psalm forms also the latter portion of the 108th.

^a Or rather, as in the parallel Psalm, the 108th: "Upon Philistia will I triumph," as the Syriac reads; and which, though found in but one Hebrew copy, seems the genuine reading.

^b 2 Sam. ii. 8.

^c 2 Sam. v. 3.

^d 2 Sam. viii. See the title of this Psalm.

And the former part of the 108th forms the third stanza of the 57th; in which last Psalm Selah separates it from the preceding portion.

Ps. lxi. The following Psalm, the 61st, is of a similar construction. The change, however, is not so abrupt.

The first part contains a prayer, not expressed in the usual strain of misery; but in a hopeful, though earnest and anxious spirit. The Psalmist does not so much desire deliverance from evil, as the blessing of the Divine Presence. The desire is that he may dwell in the Tabernacle of God for ever, and abide under the shadow of his wings.

Hear, O God, my crying:
 Attend unto my prayer.
 From the end of the earth to thee will I cry,
 In the overwhelming of my heart.
 To the rock that is higher than I lead me:
 For thou hast been a refuge to me:
 A tower of strength from the face of the enemy.
 I would abide in thy tabernacle for ever:
 I would take refuge in the covering of thy wings.

SELAH.

In the second part it has its fulfilment, not only in the granting of what he sought, but in the bestowing of length of days, and prosperity, both now and for ever. The kingdom of God and his righteousness have been sought, and all other things have been by Divine mercy added unto him.

For thou, O Lord, hast heard my vows:
 Thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy
 Name.
 Days to the days of the king shalt thou add:
 His years shall be as generations and generations.
 He shall dwell for ever in the presence of God:
 Mercy and truth do thou prepare: they shall preserve him.
 So shall I make a psalm to thy Name for ever;
 That I may perform my vows day by day.

Of the second stanza *rows* form both the commencing and the concluding topic. It is to be observed that this second division may be taken in connection with the first part both of the 20th and 21st Psalm; both of which are divided from the sequel by *Selah*; and both of which, while directly alluding to the family of David and Solomon, have their ultimate and proper reference to the Messiah. The 27th, 28th, and 29th Psalms appear to be but a continuous expansion of that which has been now examined.

The 54th Psalm contains, in like manner, two divisions. Ps. liv. The contrast, however, is here more marked. The first contains the frequent subject of complaint, namely, the oppression of enemies; the second speaks of deliverance and praise, being, like the sequel of the 61st, the fulfilment of prayer.

O God, by thy Name save me,
 And by thy strength judge me.
 O God, hear my prayer;
 Give ear to the words of my mouth.
 For strangers are risen up against me,
 And oppressors seek after my soul:
 They have not set God before them.

SELAH.

Behold, God is a helper to me:
 The Lord is with them that uphold my soul:
 He shall reward evil to those who watch for me:
 In thy truth thou shalt cut them off.
 Freely will I sacrifice to thee:
 Thy name will I praise, O LORD, for it is good:
 For from all my trouble he hath delivered me,
 And on mine enemies mine eyes have looked.

The 83rd Psalm, in its first division, speaks of the confederacy of God's enemies; in the second, invokes, in a prophetic strain, the judgments of Heaven. Ps. lxxxiii.

O God, keep not thou still silence :
 Hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.
 For lo, thine enemies make a murmuring,
 And they that hate thee lift up the head, &c.

In this strain it proceeds. The second part thus opens :

Do to them as to Midian,
 As to Siserá, as to Jabin at the brook of Kison, &c.

And the whole concludes with this moral reflection :

And they shall know, that thou, whose Name is Jehovah,
 Art alone the Most High over all the earth.

The next class of bipartite Psalms is that consisting of two parts, which are not marked by any strong contrast, but which rather form two divisions of the subject, in many respects circumstantially different, though in the main resembling one another, and responsorial.

Ps. xlvii. Thus in the 47th Psalm, the latter division forms a noble gradation, and shows an advance in the action of the poem.

The first part contains an exhortation to the inhabitants of the earth to praise the Almighty as their God and King : and his special benefits to his chosen people are predicted.

O all ye people, clap the hand :
 Shout unto God with a voice of melody :
 For the LORD Most High is to be feared :
 A King who is great over all the earth.
 He shall subdue the people under us :
 And the nations under our feet :
 He shall choose for us an inheritance :
 The excellency of Jacob, whom he loveth.

SELAH.

In the second part, God is represented as sitting on the throne, not of conquest, but of holiness. It

speaks of that reign of Grace, which had its beginning when Christ ascended up on high, and received gifts for men. The Gentiles are no longer captive, but are joined to the people of the God of Abraham, the father of the promised seed, adopted into their family, and sharing their privileges.

God is gone on high with a shout :
 The Lord with the voice of a trumpet.
 Sing psalms to God, sing psalms ;
 Sing psalms to our King, sing psalms :
 For the King of all the earth is God :
 Sing ye psalms with understanding.
 A King is God over the heathen :
 God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.
 The princes of the people are gathered to the people of the
 God of Abraham :
 For of God are the shields of the earth : he is greatly
 exalted.

The 48th Psalm has two parts, the latter in a Ps. xlviii. great measure parallel with the former, but rising in sentiment, and implying a change of place and action.

The first part commemorates God's power visibly displayed ; the second, his goodness and spiritual invisible influences. The Psalm begins in a jubilant strain, celebrating his greatness, and proceeds to a graphic description of the strength and beauty of Zion, the chosen and visible seat of his earthly dominion. Then follows the amazement of the confederated kings, who had assembled to attack this sacred fortress, at the manifestation of the divine power which caused their overthrow. The concluding lines of this part form an *epanodos*^a, again adverting

^a That is, "a stanza so constructed, that, whatever be the number of lines, the first line shall be parallel with the last ; the second with the penultimate ; and so throughout, in an order that looks inward."—*Sacred Literature*, Sect. iv. p. 53.

to the Holy City, and declaring that God's power will for ever uphold its external glory.

Great is the Lord, and to be praised highly
In the City of our God, the hill of his holiness.

Fair is *that* place, the joy of the whole earth,
The hill of Sion, on the sides of the north^a,

The City of the great King :

God in her palaces is known for a refuge.

For lo, the kings were gathered^b :

They passed by together.

They themselves saw it : so they marvelled :

They were troubled : they hasted away.

Trembling came upon them there,

Pain, as of one in travail.

With the east wind thou breakest the ships of Tarshish.^c

As we have heard, so have we seen

In the City of the LORD of hosts, in the City of our God.

God will establish it for ever.

SELAH.

^a Dr. Lightfoot, in his *Chorographical Century*, c. xxii., remarks, that "It is an old dispute, and lasts to this day, whether Sion or Jerusalem lay on the North part of the city. We place Sion on the North;" and he proceeds to justify this opinion by the passage in the psalm to which this note refers, and by the authority of Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Lyrannus. But this is certainly contrary to the opinion of many eminent chorographers. See the map in Mr. Williams's learned and valuable work, "The Holy City." Bishop Horsley thus explains the text: "Beautiful is the hill of Zion. In the northern quarters are the buildings of the great King, *i. e.*, the Temple." This would remove the difficulty, were it consistent with the flow of Hebrew poetry, which it perhaps hardly is. The *north* would seem rather to refer to the position of the city as viewed by its invading enemies, who approached from the south. See 2 Chron. xx. 1, 2., to which chapter this Psalm refers, according to Bishop Patrick.

^b This passage is in the abrupt style of Job, vi. 18. :—

The paths of their way are turned aside :

They go to nothing, and perish.

The troops of Tema looked :

The companies of Sheba waited for them :

They were confounded because they had hoped ;

They came thither, and were ashamed.

^c That mighty force is compared to the east wind, which broke the ships of Tarshish in Jehoshaphat's reign. 2 Chron. xx. 37.

In the corresponding portion the scene is changed from the outward fortress to the courts of the Temple, where the holy influences of the Divine Inhabitant, his mercy and righteousness, are experienced, and are made the subject of peaceful meditation. The praise of God is declared to extend not merely throughout Jerusalem, but to the ends of the earth. Mount Sion and the daughter of Judah are then called upon to rejoice; and as the enemies of God were before astonished at the terrible wonders issuing from his fortress, so now his servants are summoned to admire its outward strength and beauty, as the peculiar scene and receptacle of his Spirit. And in the concluding line it is declared that God is *our God* (an expression which always implies his fatherly goodness), and that he will be our guide even to death. The arrangement of the lines here made is intended to exhibit the antiphonal correspondence of the second to the first division.

We have waited, O God, for thy loving kindness
 In the midst of thy temple.
 According to thy Name, O God,
 So is thy praise unto the ends of the earth:
 Of righteousness thy right hand is full.
 Let Mount Sion be glad: let the daughters of Judah re-
 joice,
 Because of thy judgments.
 Walk about Sion, and go round about her:
 Tell the towers thereof:
 Mark ye well her bulwarks: consider her palaces,
 That ye may tell it to the generation following.
 For this God is our God for ever and ever:
 Even he shall be our guide unto death.^a

The 81st Psalm is divided by *Selah* into two parts, accurately discriminated, and differing in construction. Ps. lxxxii.

^a See this Psalm historically explained in the second Dissertation.

The first part is an instructive exhortation. It opens with a summons to the people to celebrate the Feast of Trumpets, at the prescribed season, in the seventh month, the first of the civil year.^a No explicit reason is given in Holy Scripture for the institution of this festival; but the Psalm before us seems to confirm the opinion of Theodoret^b, that the Feast of Trumpets commemorated the promulgation of the law on Mount Sinai, when the people heard the Trumpet of God, of which such emphatic mention is made in the Book of Exodus, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews.^c

Sing for joy to God our strength ;
 Make a joyful noise to the God of Jacob :
 Take a psalm, and bring the timbrel,
 The harp of pleasantness, with the lute :
 Blow up, in the new moon, the Trumpet,
 In the time appointed, on the day of our feast.

The second stanza of the first part sets forth the divine institution of the festival, the first parallel triplet declaring it to be peculiar to the chosen people; the concluding couplet defining the time of its appointment, namely, when those two cardinal events had taken place, the Exodus, “when Israel went through the land of Egypt,” and the delivery of the Law, “when he heard a language which he knew not.”

For a statute of Israel is this,
 A judgment of the God of Jacob :
 A testimony in Joseph he ordained it,
 When he had gone forth through the land of Egypt,
When a language *which* I knew not I heard.^d

In the third stanza occurs a change of person, peculiarly characteristic of the Psalms of Asaph. The Almighty here speaks, and inculcates on his people of

^a Levit. xxiii. 2. ; Numb. xxix. 1.

^b Quest. 32. in Levit.

^c Exod. xix. 15, 19. Heb. xii. 19.

^d The Septuagint reads “a language (which) *he* knew not *he* heard :”
 γλῶσσαν ἣν οὐκ εἶρω ἤκουσαν. This is also the reading of the Syriac and

later times a motive for grateful obedience, by reminding them of those acts of divine mercy which ought to have prepared the hearts of their ancestors for the subsequent delivery of the Law. These acts are recorded in the strict order of time, being the deliverance from the burthens of Egypt, the answer to their cry, in the rescue from the armies of Pharaoh, the bestowal of manna from heaven (the secret place of thunder), and the mercy shown at the waters of Meribah.

I eased from the burthen his shoulder :
 His hands from the pots were removed.
 In trouble thou calledst, and I delivered thee ;
 I heard thee in the secret place of thunder ;
 I proved thee at the waters of strife.

SELAH.

The second part is retrospective and historical. The whole of this division resembles so strongly, both in sentiment and expression, the style of the Mosaical songs in Deuteronomy, that I am disposed to consider

the Vulgate, and is followed by our Prayer Book version, which Dr. Durell* (Crit. Remarks) defends : as also Bishop Mare, Mr. Dimock † (Critical Notes) and Dr. Kennicott ‡ (Select Pass. of the O. T. p. 260.). Indeed it would appear, that both in this passage, and in the concluding line, where the LXX reads, "should *he* have satisfied them," the personification of the Hebrew text is less consistent and intelligible.

* Dr. Durell's note is as follows : "One old version observes in the margin, that this is spoken by God, in the presence of the people, because he was their leader. But this seems very forced. I would rather read, with most of the old versions, ידע ישמע viz. he (*i. e.* Joseph) heard a language that he understood not; or, with less variation from the text, ידעת שמיע 'I made thee hear a language which thou understoodest not.' The two following verses would justify this change of persons."

† Mr. Dimock remarks, that, "As one MS. reads שפת נ, I apprehend the true reading was שפת נ 'He ordained it for a testimony in Joseph, when he went out from the land of Egypt, when he heard a language he did not know : *i. e.* when he was sold into Egypt."

‡ בעת צאתו=בצאתו "The particle influences the latter clause, where I read, שפת לא ידעה ישמע, linguam, quam non intellexit, audivit."

it an ancient Ode, adapted to the service of the Temple by Asaph; the first part being a prologue prefixed by him.

It opens, after the manner of the second division of the 50th Psalm, (which is also one of Asaph's,) with the oracular formula, of frequent use in Holy Scripture: "Hear, O my people." The Voice of God here proclaims the great fundamental commandment, namely, the worship of the one true God; and is an evident epitome of the first table of the Law delivered on Mount Sinai.

This part consists of three parallel stanzas. Their correspondence is sufficiently visible at a glance; the first line of each commemorates the Voice of God, the second making mention of Israel. The first stanza records the commandment and the promise.

Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee,
 O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me.
 There shall not be in thee a strange God,
 Neither shalt thou worship any other God.
 I am the LORD thy God,
 Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt:
 Open wide thy mouth, and I will fill it.

The second stanza tells of the people's disobedience.

But my people hearkened not to my voice,
 And Israel would have none of me;
 So I gave them up to the imaginations of their
 own hearts;
 They walked in their own counsels.

The third stanza enlarges on the consequences that would have followed their obedience.

O that my people had hearkened unto me,
 That Israel in my ways had walked:
 Soon their enemies I should have put down,
 And against them that troubled them I should have
 turned mine hand:

The haters of the LORD should have been found liars
to him,
But their time should have been for ever.
And he should have fed them with the flour of wheat,
And from the rock with honey should I have satisfied
them.^a

The first and last stanzas are strictly correspondent, containing each three topics: the two latter of which (the discomfiture of enemies and divine nourishment) are expanded, in the antistrophe, according to the usual method of divine poetry.

From this analysis, it appears, that the Voice of God, delivering the Law, forms the cardinal feature of the Psalm. The note of preparation is given in the line, "When a language which I knew not I heard." This line has given rise to a great difference of opinion. By some ^b critics it has been considered as referring to the barbarous language of the Egyptians, heard by the Israelites. But this circumstance would, in the Psalm before us, be trivial and redundant, and therefore inconsistent with the economical significancy of a sacred lyric, of which every member is uniformly essential towards the completeness of the whole. Others ^c have annexed this line to the following stanza, considering it as a part of the Divine speech. To this there are many objections. In the first place, this position of the line would make the second stanza defective, its fourth line being unaccompanied by a parallel, in opposition to the laws of sacred poetry. The abruptness of such an arrangement is evident even to a merely secular ear. In the next place, the phrase, "A language which I knew not," if attri-

^a "Should he have satisfied them" is the reading of the LXX.

^b Munsterus, Vatablus, Clarius, &c. One of the pseudo-Chrysostoms refers the expression "he had heard it, &c." to Joseph individually, and the strange language to Potiphar's wife.

^c Bishop Horsley, Mr. Mudge, Mr. Parkhurst, Burkus.

buted to the Divine Speaker, must mean one of two things, the barbarous and blasphemous language of the Egyptians, or the murmurings of the Israelites. The former reading would be redundant: the latter in no way contributes to the integrity of the poem. For the great offence of the Israelites, upon which stress is laid in the sequel, was not their murmuring in the wilderness, but their disobedience to God's revealed Law. But whether the unknown language be considered their rebellious complaint before the delivery of the Law, or like conduct after, either interpretation would disturb the chronological sequence of the stanza, which we have shown to be perfect. Besides, a topic is thus introduced, which finds no response in the second part. The strictness of sacred parallelism would require, in the antistrophe, or answering stanza, a distinct recognition of the "hard speeches" supposed to be mentioned in the strophe or preceding stanza; whereas the only correspondence which can be alleged is a very vague one: "the imagination of their hearts, and their own counsels." But if, with many of the Fathers^a, and with some eminent modern critics^b, the interpretation already given

^a Eusebius, Athanasius, Theodoret.

S. Jerome. Populus ille gentium in ecclesiâ mandata quæ prius ignorabat accepit.

S. Augustine. Cum antem transieris rubrum mare, cum eductus fueris a delictis tuis in manu potenti et brachio forti, præcepturus es mysteria que non noveras: quia et ipse Joseph, cum exiret de terrâ Ægypti, linguam quam non noverat audivit.

Among the Jewish writers, Aben Ezra. Ita dicit Psalter, in personâ totius populi.

^b Calmet, Michaelis: whose notion Bishop Horsley thinks extravagant and absurd. The Bishop must have overlooked the ancient authorities noticed above. . . . De Dieu: "Sermo hic non fuit Ægyptiorum, sed Dei dicentis, *Remori ab opere*, &c. Probat celebrandum esse Deum, quia ipse hoc pro testimonio posuerat in Jacob, et hoc ita factum probat ex sermone Dei, quem cum judicia sua in Ægyptios exerceret, audiverat."

Geierus: Audivi sermonem Dei, &c., nempe in legislatione.

Cocceius: Cum Deus Jacob, quem rectè non agnoveram, nec audiveram

be adopted, the second part of the poem will be found to contain an accurate dilation of the two leading topics announced in the first; namely, the Exodus with all its awful accompaniments, and the voice of God, heard, for the first time, among the sons of men; that voice of which Moses speaks in more than one place, with such emphatic earnestness: "Who is there of all flesh that hath heard the Voice of the living God speak out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?"

The last bimembral Psalm of this kind that remains to be noticed is the 143rd. Here indeed no change of person, sentiment, or metre takes place; though the construction of the second strophe is somewhat different, as is obvious to the eye. But a moral progression is to be observed. Ps. cxliii.

The first division contains a plaintive prayer for deliverance from deserved punishment; an expression of desolate sorrow, and a sad recollection of past mercies; not unmixed, however, with hope.

1. O LORD, hear my prayer :
Give ear unto my supplications in thy truth :
Answer me in thy righteousness :
And enter not into judgment with thy servant,
For no man shall be justified in thy sight.

2. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul :
He hath smitten to the earth my life :
He hath made me to dwell in darkness,
As those that have been dead long time.
And my spirit in me is overwhelmed :
Within me my heart is desolate.

loquentem, quem nullus homo ex se novit. Vide Matth. xi. 25. 27.; è Monte Sinai me allocutus est. Hic autem sermo sequitur, v. 7.

Dathe quotes the following ingenious passage from Duederlein: "Sed nescio quem vocem audio!" Subitanea et digna prophetico impetu digressio, cum vates sese divino allatu subito percussum sentit, et oraculum audire sibi persuadet. Nam in sequentibus Deus loquitur.

3. I remember the days of old :
 I meditate on all thy doings :
 On the work of thy hands I muse :
 I stretch forth my hands unto thee,
 And my soul, as a land of thirst, to thee.

SELAH.

The second part reiterates the same complaint, with an intensity of feeling. The frame is now sinking through the weight of suffering, and instant relief is essential to the preservation of life. But though the flesh is more weak, the spirit is more hopeful, and, chastened by suffering, has higher objects of desire. It prays, not only for acquittal, but for grace: not only for deliverance from evil, but for guidance into good: relief from vexation of heart, by the healing influence and teaching of the Holy Spirit, and the transplantation of the soul from the thirsty land, mentioned in the former part, into the land of righteousness.

1.

Hear me speedily, O LORD; my spirit faileth :
 Hide not thy face from me,
 For I am become like them that go down to the pit.

2.

Make me to hear in the morning of thy mercy,
 For in thee do I trust :
 Make me to know the way wherein I should walk,
 For unto thee do I lift up my soul.
 Deliver me from mine enemies, O LORD :
 Unto thee *do I flee* to hide me.
 Teach me to do thy pleasure,
 For thou art my God :

3.

Let thy good Spirit lead me into the land of upright-
 ness,
 For thy Name's sake, O LORD, quicken me :
 In thy righteousness bring out of trouble my soul :

And in thy mercy slay mine enemies :
 And make all them perish that trouble my soul,
 For I am thy servant.

The beauty, tenderness, and moral gradation of this exquisite elegy is not to be excelled. The word *Selah* discriminates its divisions with the minutest accuracy.

There are four binembral Psalms of a more intricate construction than any of the foregoing. In these the first part, or prologue, contains two or more topics which are expanded in an inverted order, according to the laws of the *Epanodos*, in the second.

Thus, the 20th Psalm contains three topics : the first is a declaration that God will hear ; the second, that he will save ; the third, that he will accept the gifts and sacrifice. Ps. xx.

1. The Lord shall hear thee in the day of trouble :
2. The Name of the God of Jacob shall exalt thee.
 He shall send help from the holy place :
 And out of Sion he shall uphold thee.
3. He will remember all thy gifts,
 And thy burnt-offering he will accept.

SELAH.

In the second part, each of these topics is repeated, but their order is reversed, and each is considerably amplified. First are mentioned the sacrifices and burnt offerings (the third topic of the former division) ; not directly indeed, but implied in the pious desires and counsels and petitions, of which the ceremonial offerings were the outward type and channel.

He will grant thee according to thine heart,
 And all thy counsel he will fulfil.
 We will sing for joy in thy salvation,
 And in the Name of our God we will set up our
 banners.
 The Lord will fulfil all thy petitions.

Next, the saving power of God is proclaimed. And observe the gradation: *heaven* is the antithetical phrase to the *holy place*. And God's Name, one of the particulars in the corresponding topic of the first part, is here praised. In both the stanzas of the second part a thanksgiving to God is interposed.

Now know I that the LORD saveth his Anointed ;
He will hear him from the heaven of his holiness,
With the strength of the salvation of his right hand.

Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses :

But as for us, the Name of the LORD our God we
will remember :

As for them, they are bowed down and fallen :

But as for us, we are risen and stand upright.

The Psalm concludes with a couplet correspondent to that with which it began — the hearing of prayer.

O LORD, save the King :

Hear us in the day when we call.

Ps. xxi.

It is remarkable, that the following Psalm, the 21st, is of a construction exactly similar to the 20th, and the subject is in close connexion. It is an advance upon the former, that spoke of benefits to come; these, of the same benefits accomplished. The prayer has been heard: the King is saved: and the present Psalm is a thanksgiving for the great salvation.

Three topics are contained in the introduction, as in the 20th Psalm, expanded as before, inversely, in the sequel. These are; first, God's strength: secondly, his salvation: thirdly, the answer to prayer: the last topic being of the same kind as that in the corresponding place of the 20th Psalm. And observe, that the offerings and sacrifice before spoken of, are here shown to be accompanied with the "desire of the heart, and the request of the lips," the very soul of religious worship, the inward

meaning of all sacrifice. In the first part no mention is made of the "day of trouble:" that is now passed away.

1. O LORD, in thy strength the King shall be glad,
2. And in thy salvation how exceedingly shall he rejoice !
3. The desires of his heart thou hast given him,
And the request of his lips thou hast not withholden.

SELAH.

The third of these topics is the first taken up in the sequel. We are shown what that thing was which his heart desired and his lips requested (a matter unexplained in the preceding Psalm), and its ample fulfilment: corresponding to God's blessing upon Solomon, who obtained much more than he had asked.

For thou shalt prevent him with the blessings of goodness :
Thou shalt set on his head a crown of pure gold.
Life he asked of thee :
Thou gavest him length of days for ever and ever.

Then follows the amplified expression of joy in God's salvation; (the second topic:) and the moral cause of this great blessing: "because the King trusteth in the LORD."

Great is his glory in thy salvation :
Honour and majesty shalt thou lay upon him,
For thou shalt set on him blessings for ever :
Thou shalt make him joyful with the gladness of thy countenance.
For the King trusteth in the LORD :
And through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved.

The poem concludes with a magnificent epode, which speaks of the effects of God's strength (the subject of the first line of the Psalm): of the terror inflicted on his enemies, and of the gladness bestowed upon his servants.

Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies :
 Thy right hand shall find out them that hate thee.
 Thou shalt make them as a furnace of fire in the time of
 thy wrath :
 The LORD in his displeasure shall swallow them up,
 And the fire shall devour them.
 Their fruit from the earth shalt thou destroy,
 And their seed from among the children of men :
 For they intended against thee evil :
 They imagined mischief : — they cannot *do it*.
 Therefore shalt thou put them to flight :
 On thy strings shalt thou make ready *thine arrows* against
 their face.
 Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength ;
 We will sing, and make a Psalm to thy power.

PS. LXXXV.

The 85th Psalm is constructed on a like model. The introduction contains two topics, greatly expanded in the latter part. The first is, the Divine goodness to the land of Judah : the second, the reversal of the captivity of God's people, and the forgiveness of their sins.

1. Thou hast become gracious, O LORD, to thy land :
2. Thou hast turned the captivity of Jacob :
 Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people :
 Thou hast covered all their sins.

SELAH.

Then follows in the sequel, first, the expansion of the latter topics. The deliverance is spoken of as partly fulfilled, partly future : and there is a prayer for the entire remission of punishment, already in a great measure granted.

Thou hast taken away all thy displeasure,
 Thou hast turned thyself from the indignation of thy wrath.
 Turn us, O God of our salvation,
 And let thine anger cease from us.
 Wilt thou for ever be displeased at us ?
 Wilt thou stretch out thy wrath from generation to
 generation ?

Wilt thou not thyself turn again, *wilt thou not*
quicken us,

That thy people may be glad in thee?

Shew us, O LORD, thy mercy,

And thy salvation grant unto us.

I will hearken what God the LORD will speak,

For he shall speak peace to his people, and to his saints,

That they turn not again to folly.

Then follows an exquisite picture of God's graciousness to the land, in which the moral and the natural are intermingled in a manner peculiar to the poetry of Holy Writ. By an unequalled personification, Righteousness and Truth, hitherto at conflict with Mercy and Peace, are now, by the grace of Christ, reconciled; and all, having met in heaven, become the guardians and inhabitants of the earth.^a The increase of the land is Truth, the fruits of the Spirit; and Righteousness acts as the herald of the Lord.

Truly nigh unto them that fear him is his salvation,

That glory may dwell in our land.

Mercy and Truth have met *together*,

Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other:

Truth out of the earth shall spring,

And Righteousness from heaven hath looked down.^b

^a See Bishop Andrews's Sermon on this text (his eleventh Sermon on the Nativity), which suggested the view here taken. The Sermons of that great divine and eminent saint are remarkable, among other excellencies of a yet higher kind, for an intellectual fertility, and critical acumen, of which there is a lamentable dearth in our days. It is to be hoped that the late republication of his works may be symptomatic of the revival of a more vigorous theology among us, and of an increasing reverence for the great Fathers of the Church of England.

^b A strong contrast to this beautiful image is afforded by the celebrated passage of Lucretius, when personifying his "Religio."

Quæ caput a cæli regionibus ostendebat,

Horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans:

When dire Religion showed her face from heaven,

With frightful aspect low'ring o'er mankind.

In his use of the word "Religion," so as to associate it with something cruel, burthensome, or superstitious, what an index is afforded to the spirit

Yea, the LORD shall give that which is good,
 And our land shall give her increase.
 Righteousness shall go before him,
 And shall direct in the way his goings.

PS. LXXXII. The 82nd Psalm has two divisions exactly similar. In subject it resembles the 75th, and was probably by the same author. It has that sententious character so observable in the Psalms of Asaph; and contains directions to the magistrates and judges of Israel. The first topic is a declaration of this truth, recognised by the still Christian law of England, that God is the source of all justice. The second is a remonstrance with those who have perverted this delegated authority.

1. God standeth in the congregation of princes^a:
 Among the gods he judgeth.
2. How long will ye judge wrongfully,
 And the persons of the ungodly will ye accept?

SELAH.

The second part expands the topics of the first, reversing their order. It contains, in the first place, an exhortation to reform their unjust conduct, and a repetition of the reproof: in the second, a declaration of the intrinsic weakness of men even in the highest place; and an appeal to God to resume his own delegated power, to arise and judge the earth.

2. Judge the low and destitute:
 To the poor and necessitous do justice:

as well of the system then popularly adopted, as of the so called philosophic religion of this gifted poet: to both of which that of the Gospel affords a happy contrast. Had the light of a more divine philosophy reached him, with what different feelings should we read the works of one, whose poetry exhibits both the Roman intellect and language in their full vigour, before they had been enfeebled by the boasted but degenerate "elegancies" of the Virgilian style, and the effeminacies of a servile Augustan age!

^a לַאֲמֹלִים Heb., but our Bible, with the LXX, reads אֱלֹהִים. The Syriac, "angels," which favours Justin Martyr's opinion, given in the next note.

Deliver the low and needy :
 Out of the land of the ungodly rid them.
 They know not, neither will they understand :
 In darkness they walk on :
 All the foundations of the earth are moved.

1. As for me, I have said, Gods are ye^a :
 And children of the Most High are all of you :
 But like men shall ye die :
 And like one of the princes shall ye fall.
 Arise, O God, judge the earth ;
 For it is thou who shalt inherit all the nations.

§ 3. PSALMS OF THREE DIVISIONS, WITH A BURTHEN.

Having exhibited the binembral Psalms, we shall now proceed to examine those of a more intricate construction, which are divided by *Selah* into three parts.

Of these, four are further defined by a recurring word or phrase, which immediately precedes or follows *Selah*, forming what is commonly called the burthen of the song ; of which visible boundary the accurate propriety is further confirmed by the sentiment. This burthen, when it is found at the beginning of a stanza, is called by rhetoricians the *Anaphora* ; when at the end, the *Epistrophe*. These terms will be employed in the course of the present Dissertation.

These, as most obviously marked, will be first examined ; being the thirty-ninth, the forty-sixth, the fifty-ninth, and the sixty-second.

The burthen of the 39th Psalm is the line, “ Verily Ps. xxxix.

^a Justin Martyr considers this passage as speaking of the fallen angels. Καὶ τὴν πτώσιν τοῦ ἐνὸς τῶν ἀρχόντων, τουτέστι τοῦ κεκλημένου ἐκείνου ὄφραως, πέντος πτώσιν μεγάλην, διὰ τὸ ἀποπλανῆσαι τὴν Εὐάν. (p. 353. ed. Paris.)

every man living is altogether vanity." The divisions mark a progression in the sentiment. This Psalm is evidently connected with the preceding, the thirty-eighth, the theme of which was a prayer for relief, made by one suffering under the sore visitation of God, manifested in plagues of mind and body, inflicted on account of sin, and under the moral torture occasioned by the desertion of faint-hearted friends, and tauntings of blaspheming enemies.^a In making this prayer, he adverts to circumstances which had formerly increased his pain, the silence, namely, which he had heretofore determined to observe. He had become as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs. In the opening of the 39th Psalm, this resolution of silence is more particularly alluded to; which he shows to have been an abstinence from good words, even from prayer. His state was that elsewhere described^b, when he held his tongue, and his bones consumed away through his daily complaining.

I said, I will take heed to my ways,
That I sin not in my tongue.
I will keep my mouth with a bridle
While the ungodly is before me.
I was dumb with silence:
I held my peace, even from good:
And my pain was stirred.

But his resolution, though in a great degree laud-

^a That the thirty-eighth Psalm is in many respects prophetic of our blessed Lord, no one mindful of the spiritual instruction of Holy Writ can deny. The main object, however, of the treatises in the present work has been already explained: namely, the elucidation of the direct and literal meaning of the Psalms. It is plain, that the application to our Lord's sufferings can be made in those particulars only in which human sin is not concerned; and that the moral teaching of the Psalms, when indicating the course of repentance and forgiveness, is quite distinct from their prophetic application.

^b Psalm xxxviii. 3.

able, appears to have been somewhat influenced by that pride and obstinacy in which even good men have unconsciously indulged, and mistaken for firmness. And from these causes, as well as from the stunning effect of his calamities, from fear and awe, he has not yet found courage to open his heart to God. His prayers have been ejaculatory and vague, but there has not been yet that particularity of confession and supplication which accompanies true repentance. And, in consequence, his agony is almost too great for human endurance; when there is no avenue for human sympathy, no outlet for overwhelming grief; when the soul is in utter solitude, estranged from God and man. At length, however, nature breaks through the restraint —

My heart was hot within me :
While I was musing, the fire kindled :
I spake with my tongue :

and the Divine grace makes a way to escape, that he may be able to bear his sufferings; urging him, in the first instance, not to revile his enemies, but to seek the presence of his God.

But the first efforts of his prayer are full of perturbation, and the vehement expression of wretchedness. The lesson of patience he has not yet learned; and, like Job, he wishes to die: he desires to know when his end shall be, that he may count, with eagerness, the few useless hours that remain.

Make me to know, O LORD, mine end,
And the measure of my days, what it is,
That I may know how shortlived am I.

This wish is fortified by the general aspect of the vanity of life, which, as men are disposed to do when under the heavy pressure of calamity, the Psalmist exaggerates, using this strong expression, “Surely

every man *living*," or at his best estate, "is *altogether* vanity;" making no exception. Under the pressure of this melancholy conviction the first part of the Psalm ends.

Behold, a span-long thou hast made my days :
 And my short life is as nothing before thee :
 Surely altogether vanity is every man living.

SELAH.

In the second part, the prayer is continued, but in a higher strain. The course of his meditations leads him to see clearly the cause of man's misery, which consists, not in a common and unavoidable destiny of the human race, but in wilful sin. He has already seen that man is vanity. But he now recognises the source of human disquiet, in those vain desires which can never satisfy the heart, and which provoke the judgment of God.

Surely in a shadow man doth walk :
 Surely in vain are they disquieted :
 He heapeth up, and knoweth not who shall gather.

This reflection leads him to a source, no less evident, of comfort; and the light which breaks upon his understanding enables him to remember that God is his hope. In this recollection he finds relief. And now his real prayer begins, the first effort of which is to ask for deliverance, not from his pains, but from their cause, from sin.

And now, what is my hope ?
 O LORD, my waiting is even for thee.
 From all my transgressions deliver me :
 The reproach of the foolish make me not.

He is now enabled to anatomize his former train of thought with more distinctness. Till now, he says, he had been dumb, "because thou didst it;" that is,

under the pressure of a divine visitation. As he before prayed that the cause of punishment, so now he prays that the punishment itself, may be removed; thus tacitly acknowledging that prayer was the means which he ought resolutely to have used at the first.

I was dumb, I opened not my mouth,
 For it was thou who didst it.
 Remove from me thy plague :
 By the blow of thy hand I am even consumed.

But in praying for the removal of the plague, he is brought to perceive, that sin must be removed also. For that is the cause of God's chastisements; that is the cankerworm which, by the Divine judgment, causes man's beauty to consume away, and makes his years to be but vanity.

When thou with rebukes for iniquity dost chasten man,
 Thou destroyest, as a moth, his beauty :
 Surely vanity is every man.

SELAH.

It is to be observed that the concluding sentiment, which forms an *epistrophe*, or burthen, is repeated with less vehemence than in the first part. His first expression was that "every man *living* is *altogether* vanity;" that man's life, even under the most favourable circumstances of life, was utterly insignificant. The words *living* and *altogether* are here omitted. The divine teaching has enabled him to form a more temperate judgment. Though weakness, misery, and evil undoubtedly make up a large portion of our present condition, yet divine grace can make present misery tend to future happiness, and temporal evil to eternal good. Man is vanity, but not at his best estate; the life of the good shall not perish for ever, but each one redeemed from the earth shall hereafter become in truth a living soul.

The concluding portion, which is a brief deduction from the reflections which preceded, consists of a prayer to God to hear his supplication, and accept his repentance. In true accordance to the course of human nature, tears are now described as coming to the relief of an unburthened heart. He desires to consider the shortness of his life, and to strengthen himself during the remainder of his journey. There is no longer an impatient desire to “know the number of his days,” but an humble and profitable wish, to improve those days, that he may apply his heart unto wisdom^a, and prepare himself for the life to come. For that he looks to heaven as his proper^b country, is evident from his confession that he is a stranger upon earth; a truth which to a mere child of this world would appear so melancholy, but to a servant of God is in itself a consolatory assurance.

Hear my prayer, O LORD ;
 And unto my calling give ear :
 At my tears hold not thy peace.
 For a stranger am I with thee,
 A sojourner, like all my fathers.
 O spare me, that I may recover strength,
 Before I go away, and be no more !

From this analysis, it will, it is hoped, appear, that the second portion is a moral advance upon the first; the third is the application, or moral, of the whole. The first represents a state of moral agony; the second, the workings of a mind under the influence of prayer: the progress of those right and practical convictions to which the soul, submitted to divine

^a “And teach us . . . to see how frail and uncertain our own condition is; and so to number our days, that we may seriously apply our hearts to that holy and heavenly wisdom, whilst we live here, which may in the end bring us to life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, thine only Son, our Lord.”—*Commendatory Prayer in the Visitation of the Sick.*

^b Heb. xi. 13.

teaching, will always arrive ; the third, the prayer of matured faith and repentance.

With this Psalm the 40th is evidently connected, in which the deliverance from evil, the result of religious patience, is fully announced. And it must be noticed, that in this latter Psalm, so far from holding his tongue, he speaks openly of God's truth, and of his salvation ; he declares his mercy and truth in the great congregation.

Of the 46th Psalm the burthen, or epistrophe, is, Ps. xlvj.
 "The LORD of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge ;" occurring at the end of the second and third parts.

The first division is prefatory. It is expressive of strong reliance in the Divine protection against the besiegers of Jerusalem, whose gathering is compared to the swelling of a tempestuous flood. But this expression is rather negative than positive : "we will not fear."

God is to us refuge and strength,
 A help in troubles very present.
 Therefore will we not fear, at the trembling ^a of the earth,
 Or at the removing of the mountains into the heart of the
 seas ;
 They rage, they are troubled, the waters thereof :
 The mountains shake at the swelling thereof.

SELAH.

In the next division, which opens with a contrast between the turbulent floods of the wicked, and the peaceful streams^b of

"Siloa's brook, that flow'd
 Fast by the oracles of God,"

^a Or, breaking.

^b The river of God has doubtless a prophetic allusion to the sanctifying waters of Baptism. But I would hazard another interpretation : viz., these floods, tempestuous as they are, but make the city of God rejoice the more in its security ; the floods are come, and beat upon the house, which falls not, since it is founded on a rock. However, I confess that the word פְּלִינִים is applied generally to peaceful streams : and parallel texts strengthen its reference to the River of God.

there is both an advance in the sentiment, and an expansion of each particular circumstance. The reiterated expression of hope is now accompanied with religious joy. The holiness of the fortress, the habitation of God, not hitherto mentioned, is made an additional ground of security. The time of expected deliverance, uncertain hitherto, is now declared to be near at hand; the enemies before alluded to in a general way, are now defined as the heathen kingdoms of the earth, against whom the voice of God is to denounce destruction; and the Avenger of his enemies, and the Refuge of his people, is called by his revealed Name, the LORD of hosts, the God of Jacob.

A river there is, the streams whereof shall make glad the
 City of God,
 The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.
 God is in the midst of her: she shall not be moved:
 God shall help her at the dawn of the morning.
 The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved:
 He hath uttered his voice: the earth shall melt.
 The LORD of hosts is with us:
 A high place for us is the God of Jacob.
 SELAH.

The third division proclaims the deliverance achieved, the war supernaturally stilled; the instruments of war destroyed; and the voice of God, announced in the preceding division, utters an oracular sentence, declaring his universal dominion. The poem concludes with the same epistrophe, "The LORD of hosts," &c. Selah occurs at the end, about which an observation will be made in its place.

O come, behold the works of the LORD,
 What desolation he hath made desolate on the earth,
 Making wars to cease unto the end of the earth.
 The bow he breaketh, and snappeth the spear:

The chariots he burneth in the fire.
 “ Be still, and know that I am God ;
 “ I will be exalted among the heathen :
 “ I will be exalted in the earth.”

The LORD of hosts is with us :
 A high place for us is the God of Jacob.

The burthen, or anaphora, of the 59th Psalm re- Ps. lix.
 curs at the beginning of the second and third parts.

As in the tripartite Psalm already examined, the first part is introductory, the second may be called the action, the third the catastrophe, as in a regular drama. The first part contains a prayer for deliverance under the instant apprehension of harm from unprovoked enemies. There is no want of faith, but there is no certain assurance of the issue. It consists of three regular stanzas, of four lines each. This prologue is different in metrical arrangement from the two latter portions, which are of a more intricate construction, and to a considerable degree parallel.

1.

Deliver me from mine enemies, O God,
 From them that rise against me set me on high :
 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity,
 And from the men of blood save me.

2.

For lo, they lie waiting for my soul ;
 They are gathered against me, the mighty men ;
 Not *for* my transgression, nor *for* my sin, O LORD :
 Without *my* fault they run and prepare themselves.

3.

Arise to help me^a, and behold :
 Even thou, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel :
 Awake to visit all the heathen :
 Be not merciful to all that offend wickedly.

SELAH.

^a Or, to meet me.

His enemies are now brought to view more distinctly, and their insatiable rapacity is represented under the image of dogs^a, in pursuit of prey. But the prayer of faith is matured into a certain conviction of their discomfiture. In announcing the approaching vengeance, the Psalmist, desirous that a moral lesson may be imparted to his countrymen, prays that a standing monument may remain of the Divine retribution, by the preservation of the scattered nation: but presently, horrified at their blasphemies, he recalls his words, and prays that they may be utterly consumed.

They will return in the evening,
 They will make a noise like a dog,
 And go round about the city.
 Behold, they belch out with their mouth:
 Swords are in their lips:
 For who doth hear?
 But thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them:
 Thou shalt have in derision all the heathen.
 My strength, on thee will I wait:
 For God is my high place:
 The God of my mercy shall prevent me:
 God shall make me look upon those who watch for me.
 Destroy them not, lest my people forget it:
 Scatter them by thy power,
 And bring them down, *thou who art* our shield, O LORD.
 O the sin of their mouth!
 O the words of their lips!
 They shall be even taken in their pride,
 And for the cursing and lying which they speak,
 Consume them in thy wrath,
 Consume them, and they shall not be:
 And they shall know that God ruleth in Jacob,
 Even unto the ends of the earth.

SELAH.

^a The name of "Dogs" has been assumed as a *nom de guerre* by the Arabian tribe of Dumah, who call themselves Beni Kelb, sons of a dog. This name, assumed most probably as the war-cry of the tribe, derives striking illustration from the 59th Psalm. — *Forster's Historical Geography of Arabia*, vol. i. p. 283.

The third part represents the security he enjoys under the Divine protection. His enemies are again represented as in pursuit of their prey ; but their search is fruitless. Meantime the Psalmist ascribes praise to God for his present protection, the earnest of that total defeat of his enemies which is about to follow ; and he concludes with the same thanksgiving which he had uttered in the second part, “ My strength, to thee will I sing,” &c.

And they will return in the evening ;
They will make a noise like a dog,
And go round about the city.

They will wander for meat ;
If they be not satisfied, then they will stay all night.
But as for me, I will sing of thy power,
And I will praise in the morning thy mercy :
For thou hast been a high place for me,
And a refuge in the day of trouble to me.
My strength, to thee will I sing :
For God is my high place,
The God of my mercy.

The *urthen*, or *anaphora*, of the 62nd Psalm, Ps. lxi. is the sentiment which begins the first two divisions : “ Truly upon God waiteth my soul.” *Truly* also begins the third.

Of this Psalm Bishop Patrick justly remarks, that it is one altogether of thanksgiving ; there is no prayer. The subject is confidence in the Divine protection. Its construction is most regular. In each part there is an address to men : in each, a reference to the justice and mercy of God. The poem opens with the expression of confidence, which inspirits him to predict the downfall of his intriguing and deceitful enemies, whose secret snares he describes. It consists, like the first topic of the preceding Psalm, of three quatrains.

1.

Truly upon God waiteth my soul :
 From him is my salvation :
 Truly he is my rock, and my salvation :
 My high place : I shall not be moved greatly.

2.

How long will ye imagine mischief against a man ?
 Ye shall be slain, all of you :
 As a wall that is tottering,
 As a hedge that is cast down.

3.

Truly from his exaltation they consult to cast him down :
 They delight in lying :
 With their mouth they bless :
 But in their^a inmost thought they curse.

SELAH.

The second part repeats the like sentiment, but, as usual, in a higher strain. God is not only his salvation, but his hope : for so the burthen of the song is varied. His confidence is now more firm. Before, he knew he should not be “greatly moved :” now, he shall not be moved at all. The hope now expressed does not, as before, regard mere temporal deliverance — it regards positive and internal benefits, namely, the spiritual health derived from the God of his salvation and glory. And he is urged, by his personal experience of the Divine presence, to invite the people to share in his happy feelings : he therefore exhorts them to put their trust in God, to give him the homage of their heart, and to seek that heavenly refuge, which he had found for himself.

1.

Truly upon God waiteth my soul,
 For from him is my hope.
 Truly he is my rock, and my salvation,
 My high place : I shall not be moved.

^a קרבו Vide Ps. xlv. 12.

In God is my salvation and my glory :
 The rock of my might : my refuge is in God.
 Trust in him, at all times, ye people :
 Pour out before him your hearts :
 God is a refuge for us.

SELAH.

The third part forms the catastrophe. No indistinct allusion is made to the final judgment, when those who trust in riches, and who do wrong, shall be weighed in the balance and found wanting. The wicked being addressed in this division, as the people of God were in the former, in order to warn them of their approaching doom, the poem concludes with the oracular voice of God, proclaiming a just retribution both to the good and evil. The structure of the Psalm is therefore in strictest conformity, like many others, to the dramatic rules of ancient poetry.

1.

Truly vanity are the sons of Adam^a ;
 A lie are the sons of men :
 In the balance they are lighter than vanity itself.

2.

Trust not in oppression,
 And in robbery become not vain :
 Upon riches, if they increase, set not your heart.

3.

Once God hath spoken,
 Twice this I have heard,
 That power *belongeth* unto God :
 And that to thee, LORD, *belongeth* mercy,
 For thou shalt reward a man according to his work.

^a I give the literal interpretation of the Hebrew, Sons of Adam — Sons of Men ; the former meaning men of low, the latter, of high degree, as sometimes rendered in our translation.

§ 4. PSALMS OF THREE DIVISIONS, WITH PROGRESSIVE SENTIMENT.

Of the tripartite Psalms, there are four which are not marked by any recurring burthen, but in which the word discriminates the several progressive stages of the sentiment. These are the 3rd, 4th, 67th, and 88th.

Ps. iii.

The 3rd Psalm eminently bears the hand of David. There is that alternation of deep feeling and moral tenderness, which stamps all his compositions with a character peculiarly their own.

Of the first division, as frequently happens in the Psalms, the theme is a plaintive prayer, forming the prologue to the poem, against the aggressions of blaspheming enemies.

LORD, how many are they that trouble me :
 Many are they that rise against me :
 Many are they that say to my soul,
 There is no salvation for him in God.

SELAH.

Presently, fear is dispelled, and confidence and joy succeed : and he lies down with that assurance of Divine protection, which is the answer to faithful prayer.

But thou, O LORD, art a shield about me,
 My glory, and the lifter up of my head :
 With my voice upon the LORD I did call,
 And he heard me from the hill of his holiness.

SELAH.

In the concluding division, he rises from sleep, having been protected through the perils of the night : and, refreshed and fortified, he is now prepared to meet his enemies, in certainty of conquest. The Psalm ends with an acknowledgment of God's saving power.

and his blessing, not upon himself only, but upon the people at large.

As for me, I lay down, I awaked :
 For the LORD sustained me.
 I will not be afraid for ten thousands of the people,
 Which round about have set themselves against me.

Arise, O LORD :
 Save me, O my God :
 For thou hast smitten all mine enemies on the cheek
 bone :
 The teeth of the ungodly thou hast broken.
 To the LORD *belongeth* salvation :
 Upon thy people is thy blessing.
 SELAH.^a

The Psalm ends with Selah, indicating its connection, either in whole or in part, with another Psalm. Now a remarkable resemblance is discoverable between this and the Psalm which follows, exactly like that which we have already observed as holding between the 20th and 21st. The 4th Psalm, therefore, will now be examined in connection with the 3rd.

The three divisions of the 4th Psalm exactly correspond in sentiment to those of the 3rd: the first speaks of prayer against persecution; the second, of the Divine protection before the repose of the night; the third, of the active and courageous service of the day. PS. IV.

But in this Psalm there is a great moral progression, explanatory and expansive of the former. Thus, in the exordium of the 3rd, God is simply addressed under his awful name of Jehovah; in the 4th, by

^a The Syriac, which usually leaves *Selah* untranslated, here renders it *for ever*.

the more kindly designation of "God of my righteousness:" which implies a rescue, not from danger only, but from moral evil. In the 3rd Psalm, the apprehension of danger is stronger than the hope of rescue: in the 4th, hope predominates: past mercies are recollected, and made the ground of present confidence. And in again mentioning his enemies, he lays open their innate turpitude, their delight in wickedness, which was the cause of their blasphemies: and he addresses them with the strong language of confident reprobation.

When I call, hear me, O God of my righteousness;
 In trouble thou hast enlarged me:
 Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.
 O sons of men, how long my glory will ye put to shame?
 Will ye love vanity, will ye seek after deceit?

SELAH.

In the second division of the 3rd Psalm the Lord was recognised in a general way, as his defender; and mention was simply made of the offering up and acceptance of the evening prayer. In the corresponding portion of the 4th, the moral reason of God's defence is assigned: the godliness, namely, of him whom the Lord hath chosen to himself. The nature of the evening prayer is also divulged; the fear of God, the abstinence from sin, the examination of the heart, and the patience of faith.

But know, that the LORD hath set apart the godly to himself:
 The LORD will hear when I call upon him.
 Stand in awe, and do no sin:
 Speak to your own heart upon your bed, and be still.

SELAH.

And whereas in the concluding portion of the 3rd Psalm, the servant of God rises refreshed to oppose his enemies, in the 4th there is a distinct

mention made of the sacrifice of righteousness; in other words, of those spiritual employments which give courage to the heart, and are the channels of that holy strength which enables the performance of the most active duties. And superior blessings to those of temporal defence, or even deliverance from moral evil, are announced: the light of God's countenance, and that gladness of the heart, that joy in the Lord, which is better than all earthly increase.^a Under the influence of these blessings, having passed his day in safety, he again lies down and takes his rest. The same expression is used at the conclusion of this part of the Psalm, which occurred at the opening of the corresponding portion of the 3rd: both these forming a noble epanodos.

Sacrifice the sacrifices of righteousness,
 And trust in the LORD.
 Many there be that say, Who will shew us good?
 Lift up on us the light of thy countenance, O LORD.

Thou hast given gladness to my heart,
 More than in the time that their corn and wine increased.
 In peace I will both lay me down and sleep,
 For thou, LORD, only, in hope dost make me dwell.

It is further to be observed, that while the 3rd Psalm is altogether personal, except in the slight allusion to God's people in the last line, the fourth contains, in each division, an address either to the ungodly or the righteous. The Psalmist, according to his frequent usage, turns his secret meditations to profit, in making them lessons to the people of whom Divine Providence had appointed him the ruler.

^a Is there not an allusion here to the feast of tabernacles? "Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine. And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast," &c. Deut. xvi. 13. The religious joy of the heart is greater than that which attends the external observance of the most glad festivals.

Ps. lxxvii.

The 67th Psalm has two general topics, the PROVIDENCE and GRACE of God. The blessings of each are briefly implored in the first division, which forms the prologue, or prosode.

God be merciful unto us, and bless us;
Let the light of his countenance be with us.

SELAH.

The second and third divisions are each an expansion of the first. In the second, blessings more universal than had been prayed for in the two opening lines, namely, the benefits of Grace and Providence to the world at large, are announced in a stanza which forms a perfect epanodos: a couplet being interposed ("Let the people praise thee," &c.), expressive of the praise rendered first by his peculiar people, then by all the world. In the first line, the knowledge of God's providential ways^a is announced; in the last two lines it is fulfilled. In the second line his great salvation is promised, in which salvation the nations are subsequently made to rejoice and be glad.

For the knowledge upon earth of thy way^b,
Among all the heathen thy salvation.^c

Let the people praise thee, O God:
Let all the people praise thee.

Let the heathen be glad and sing for joy:
For thou shalt judge the people righteously,
And the nations upon earth shalt thou lead.

SELAH.

^a The way of God is his Providence, as will appear from a comparison with Psalm lviii. 13. For this view of the distinction between God's Providence and Grace as exhibited in this Psalm, the author is indebted to Bishop Jebb: whose annotations are subjoined as appended to an arrangement of this Psalm, which was submitted to him in the year 1827. These annotations are given as notes in the proper places.

^b God's Providence. (Bishop Jebb.)

^c God's Grace. (Bishop Jebb.)

The conclusion proclaims the perfect fulfilment of religious knowledge and prosperity, and the maturity of blessings both of Providence and Grace. It begins with a repetition of the praise ascribed in the second part, and concludes with an epanodos, the first and last lines of which commemorate the increase of the whole world, an increase in spirituals as well as temporals, and that godly fear which this prosperity, instead of hindering (as now unhappily too much prevails), shall promote; while the central part is God's blessing upon his chosen people.

Let the people praise thee, O God;
 Let all the people praise thee.
 The earth shall give her increase ^a:
 God, even our God, shall bless us:
 God shall bless us ^b,
 And they shall fear him, all the ends of the earth.^c

The 88th Psalm is of peculiar construction. The first part contains two topics, which are reverted to with great concentration in the second part, with greater depth and expansiveness in the last; namely, a prayer for deliverance, and a complaint of a state of present captivity, which may be considered either as temporal or as spiritual. Ps. lxxxviii.

That by "the grave" in this Psalm is understood the natural grave, our Church implies, by her selection of this Psalm as one of those proper for Good Friday; thus considering the deep sufferings here recorded as prophetic of those of our blessed Lord.

O Lord God of my salvation,
 By day I have cried, by night before thee:
 Let my prayer enter into thy presence:
 Incline thine ear unto my calling.

^a God's Providence. (Bishop Jebb.)

^b God's Grace. (Bishop Jebb.)

^c See St. John xvii. 20—23. (Bishop Jebb.)

For full of troubles is my soul :
 And my life to hell draweth nigh :
 I am counted among them that go down to the pit ;
 I am even as a man without strength :
 Free among the dead ^a,
 Like the wounded, that lie in the grave,
 Whom thou rememberest no more ;
 And they from thy hand are cut off.
 Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit,
 In thick darkness, in the deeps.
 On me lieth hard thy wrath ;
 And with all thy waves thou hast afflicted me.

SELAH.

The second part takes up the mournful topic, and represents a state of utter destitution, forsaken by friends, shut up in prison : prayer as yet unanswered : concluding with a sentiment which but darkly and obscurely speaks of the deliverance from these evils, by the resurrection from the dead. “Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead ? Shall the dead bodies arise ? shall they praise thee ?”

- 1.) Thou hast put away mine acquaintance from me,
 Thou hast made me an abomination to them.
- 2.) I am shut up, and I cannot get forth :
 Mine eye faileth for affliction.
- 3.) I have called upon thee, O LORD, all day :
 I have stretched forth to thee mine hands.

^a This passage is in the style of Ezekiel, xxxii. 21—27.

The strong among the mighty shall speak to him,
 Out of the midst of hell with them that help him :
 They are gone down : they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword.
 Asshur is there, and all her company :
 His graves are about him ;
 All of them slain, fallen by the sword :
 Whose graves are set in the sides of the pit ;
 And her company is round about her grave ;
 All of them slain, fallen by the sword,
 Which caused terror in the land of the living.

- 4.) Wilt thou to the dead shew wonders?
 Shall the dead bodies arise? shall they praise thee?

SELAH.

That a belief in the resurrection from the dead, however, is conveyed in this awful interrogation, I collect from the parallel passage in Isaiah, whose style that of this Psalm closely resembles.

Thy dead men shall live:
 Together with my dead body shall they arise.^a

In the thanksgiving of Hezekiah a like sentiment is expressed, but more obscurely.

For the grave cannot praise thee,
 Death cannot celebrate thee:
 They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.
 The living, the living, he shall praise thee.^b

The living here seem to mean those who shall be raised from the dead hereafter, of which resurrection his own recovery was the type.

The Syriac translation makes this clause an affirmation, not an interrogation. I doubt, indeed, whether this division should not be considered as containing the central and cardinal truth of the poem, and whether this Psalm should not be therefore classed among those to be examined in the section following. If this be the proper view, a solution is afforded to the deep and apparently irremediable griefs with which the poem begins and ends. We should thus discover the keystone which binds the whole fabric together: and the objections of certain critics would be overruled, who maintain that this Psalm is imperfect, because it concludes, contrary to the usual practice, without a prayer for deliverance, or a thanksgiving for obtaining it.^c

^a Isa. xxvi. 19.

^b Isa. xxxviii. 19.

^c Vide Kennicott, *in loco*.

Now here, as in many instances, the Diapsalma might seem to interrupt the parallelism: the two concluding lines of the second part forming an obvious connexion with those at the beginning of the third.

But an attentive examination will shew, that the third part forms a perfect epanodos to the second, the most distant objects in one stanza being the nearest in the mirror that reflects it^a; the second part being largely expansive and explanatory of the first; as already seen in the 85th, 20th, and 21st Psalms, which that under consideration resembles, with the addition of a Prosode or Introduction.

Thus the middle part consists of four couplets, each of which has a corresponding sentiment in the third, in most instances amplified; as will be at once seen by the exhibition of that part.

- 4.) Shall thy mercy be declared in the grave,
Thy faithfulness in destruction?
Shall thy wonders be known in the dark,
And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?
- 3.) But as for me, unto thee, O LORD, I have cried:
And in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.
- 2.) Why, O Lord, castest thou off my soul?
Why hidest thou thy face from me?
Afflicted am I, and weary:
From my youth I suffer thy terror: I am troubled:
Over me goeth thy fierce wrath:
Thy terrors have cut me off.

^a "Distichs, it is well known, were usually constructed with a view to alternate recitation, or chanting, by the opposite divisions of the choir, in Jewish worship; and, when one line of the couplet closed with an important word or sentiment, it was often so contrived that the antiphonal line of the couplet should commence with a word or sentiment precisely parallel: a practice obviously in the order of nature; for, if you present any object to a mirror, the part of it which is most distant from you will appear nearest in the reflected image."—*Sacred Literature*, sect. iv. p. 60.

They came about me, like the waters, all day,
They compassed me on every side.

- 1.) Thou hast put away from me lover and friend :
Mine acquaintance are in darkness.

The first of these, "Thou hast put away mine acquaintance," &c., is represented by the two concluding lines of the Psalm :

Thou hast put away from me lover and friend ;
Mine acquaintance are in darkness.

Not only common acquaintance, but the dearest connections, are removed ; and these are alienated, not only through prejudice, which may be overcome, but by obstacles which Divine Providence has interposed.

The next two lines, "I am shut up," &c., describe his imprisonment, and the depth of his grief. In the corresponding portion, consisting of eight lines, this is shown to be caused by the hiding of God's countenance, the absence of the Comforter from his soul. Perils beset his prison-house, and increase the intrinsic terrors of darkness. God's fierce wrath is rolling over him like tempestuous waves, disturbing the unfathomable abysses of a wintry sea, the more terrible, because the sufferer is shut up, and cannot see them. He hears the roaring of the elements ; and his mind, wandering beyond his prison-house, pictures to itself destruction in its most appalling form.

The following couplet, in the second part, "I have called upon thee, O Lord," &c., affording a gleam of hope, which gradually increases and brightens the centre of the poem, though the circumference is so dark, is answered by a couplet, that speaks hopefully of the issue of his prayer.

The Septuagint version has but one Diapsalma, that, namely, after the Introduction. Were this

reading supported by any manuscript, such an arrangement would afford a more obvious, but not so perfect a construction as that given by the Hebrew text.

§ 5. PSALMS OF THREE DIVISIONS, WITH THE CARDINAL TRUTH IN THE CENTRE.

Of the tripartite Psalms, eight are distinguished by a feature alluded to in the conclusion of the preceding section. They contain in the central part, the main action, or the catastrophe of the poem, or some cardinal truth or sentiment, which forms as it were the kernel of the whole composition. From whatever reason it was so ordained by the Divine Wisdom, it is evident that announcements of the deepest moment with respect to the world to come are often similarly enveloped in the Old Testament. Thus, in the intimation of the Resurrection in Job's parable^a, and in the benediction of Jacob^b, dark sayings of this kind are recorded. Perhaps it was because such precious truths require to be guarded from the profane touch of a careless multitude; and the patient investigation of faith was necessary towards obtaining knowledge so profound: according to the frequent usage of parabolical instruction. These Psalms are the 9th, (taken in connection with the 10th, which obviously forms its sequel,) the 49th, the 52nd, the 55th, the 57th, the 76th, the 84th, and the 87th.

Ps. ix. v.

The 9th and 10th Psalms form but one in the Septuagint and Vulgate versions, and in two of Kennicott's manuscripts. The 10th is one of the very few in the first book which has no title prefixed: an argument, according to some writers, of an identity of authorship with the preceding, and in this instance,

^a Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

^b Genesis, xlix. 18.

indicating an identity of subject. The 10th Psalm corresponds, in fact, to the first part of the 9th: the concluding topic of the 10th announcing God's victory over the wicked:—

The LORD is King for ever and ever:
 The heathen are perished out of his land:
 The desires of the meek thou hast heard, O LORD;
 Thou wilt establish their heart;
 Thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:
 That thou mayest judge the fatherless and oppressed:
 That the man of the earth may terrify no more.

This is antiphonal to the thanksgiving with which the 9th Psalm began:—

I will give thanks unto the LORD with my whole heart:
 I will shew forth all thy marvels:
 I will be glad and rejoice in thee:
 I will make a psalm to thy Name, O Most High.

The rest of the first part is a detail of the Divine vengeance inflicted on the heathen: while the corresponding, or first part of the 10th Psalm is a detail of the wickedness which was thus punished.

The central part (that is, the concluding portion of the 9th), contains the awful truth, taught by Revelation alone, of the final punishment of the wicked in hell, and the final reward of the righteous. Evidently this refers to a state of future retribution: since, in the present world, by the confession of the psalmist elsewhere, it is often seen, that the ungodly do actually triumph.

The wicked shall be turned into hell,
 All the heathen who forget God:
 For not alway shall the needy be forgotten:
 The hope of the poor shall not be destroyed for ever.
 Arise, O LORD, let not man prevail:
 Let the heathen be judged in thy sight:

Put fear in them :
The heathen shall know that they are but men.

SELAH.

The concluding lines of the first part, it is to be remarked, form the note of preparation for this more profound truth. God's judgments are there announced: but less distinctly: and there seems to be a more immediate reference to temporal punishment.

The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made :
In the net which they hid, their foot is taken :
The LORD is known by the judgment which he hath done,
In the work of his hands the ungodly is snared.

Another remark remains to be made with respect to this central division; namely, that each of its topics is expanded in direct order in the 10th Psalm: the machinations of the wicked: the sufferings of the poor: the rising of the Lord to judgment.

Ps. xlix.

The terms in which the 49th Psalm is introduced, gives an intimation of its peculiar depth and difficulty. A solemn appeal is made to all conditions and generations of mankind, and there is an announcement of some special and inspired exercise of communicative wisdom, of reflective understanding.

O hear ye this, all ye people,
Give ear, all ye that dwell in the world,
Sons of Adam, and sons of men,
Rich and poor together.
My mouth shall speak of wisdom^a,
And the meditations of my heart shall be understanding.
I will incline to a parable mine ear:
I will open upon the harp my dark saying.

Now the parable and the dark saying appear to be the announcement of the future retributive judgment,

^a Wisdom and understanding are both in the plural, signifying their depth and copiousness.

which is contained in the central portion of the Psalm. For the other portions, though containing profound wisdom, would yet, if disconnected from their cardinal truth, be little more than the results of ordinary philosophy and experience, though clothed in language to which no uninspired poet has ever approached in dignity and depth. An analysis of the first part of the Psalm may, it is hoped, illustrate this position.

The Psalmist opens his subject by intimating that, though encompassed by great and apparently discouraging evils, which seemed to mark an absence of divine retribution, yet some source of real comfort is opened to him.

Wherefore should I fear in the days of wickedness,
When the wickedness of those who would supplant me
compasseth me?

Before, however, he discloses this source of comfort, he enlarges upon that topic of melancholy reflection, obvious to every thinking mind, the vanity, namely, and transitory nature of earthly things; a reflection most gloomy indeed, were there no life to come.

Some men trust in their wealth,
And in the multitude of their riches boast themselves.

For though men may heap up riches, yet not the wealth of worlds could redeem the soul of an human creature from death: the price is more than any could pay: and his state of existence on this earth comes to an end, never to be renewed. All must die, however wise, however gifted, as the experience of every one must shew.

But a brother no man can by any redemption redeem:
He cannot give to God a ransom for him:
[For precious is the redemption of their soul;
And he ceaseth to be for ever.]

Though he may still live long,
 Though he see not corruption,
 For he seeth that wise men die^a,
 Both the foolish and the brutish perish,
 And leave, to those who come after, their wealth.

And yet, with this fact staring them in the face, men are vain enough to act as if their possessions and names were to endure for ever: and not only are they blind themselves, but even their posterity praise this their vanity. "This their way is folly to them;" that is, their inward hopes as to the perpetual stability of their houses and dwelling-places, is the foolish habit of their minds; and acting upon it, they call their lands after their own names, as in the case of Cain; and of this their posterity approve. Notwithstanding, man, however honoured in this life, meets with the same certain doom of death which awaits dumb creatures: a doom, which to the mind uninstructed by revelation, appears to end his existence, like theirs, altogether.

Their inward *thought* is, that their houses shall be for ever,
 Their dwelling-places from generation to generation,
 They call after their own name the lands.

But man that is in honour shall not abide:

He is like unto the beasts that perish.

This their way is folly to them:

Yet those that come after of their sayings approve.

SELAH.

Such is the obvious course of reflection. But in the central portion a higher and more divine philosophy is revealed: namely, the final punishment of the wicked, and final triumph of the righteous, on the morning of the Resurrection; that great truth, without which the reflections of the preceding Psalms

^a The verb is impersonal: "For one sees," or experience shews.

were altogether unavailing, but which gives to them an awful and practical cogency. That redemption which man is unable to accomplish, shall be accomplished by God the Son, who shall redeem the soul from the power of the grave, and receive it into his house for ever.

Like sheep in the hell they lie :
 Death shall feed upon them :
 And the righteous shall have dominion over them in the
 morning :
 And their beauty shall consume :
 Hell shall be a dwelling to them.
 But God shall redeem my soul from the hand of hell :
 For he shall receive me.

SELAH.

The third division contains the application of this deep Parable: being, in every particular, antiphonal to the first. From the knowledge of the great truth just divulged, we are to learn not to be troubled at the prosperity of the wicked, which is short-lived. If riches perish, yet there is no fear to those who have treasure in heaven. The "inward thought" of the rich is again alluded to in the words, "though his soul, while he lived," &c., and also the foolish praise of the worldly, "for men will praise thee," &c.; and the closing of this earthly state of things again appears in the words^a, "she," that is, the soul, "shall go to the generation of his fathers," &c. Greater praise, a more lasting name, a more abiding inheritance, await the good. And this consoling thought modifies the sentiment which is repeated, though less absolutely: "Man that is in honour, *and understandeth not,*" &c. Not all men, but only those "without understanding," who have rejected the

^a Vide margin of English Bible.

teaching of the Holy Spirit, shall be as the beasts that perish, and see the grave of everlasting death.

This modification of a preceding sentiment exactly corresponds to what has been already observed of the burthen of the 39th Psalm: "Verily every man living is altogether vanity."

Be not thou afraid, though a man be made rich:

Though there be an increase to the glory of his house:
For he shall not, when he dieth, carry anything away;

His glory shall not descend after him.

Though his soul, while he lived, be blessed,

[For men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself]

Yet she shall go to the generation of his fathers.

They shall not for a long time see light.

Man that is in honour, and understandeth not,

Is like unto the beasts that perish.

Ps. li.

The first division of the 52nd Psalm contains a remonstrance with a calumniating adversary. But where remonstrance is used, and the conscience, and God's forbearing goodness, are appealed to, there must be yet some hope or chance of reformation. And bad as the wicked man's state is, it is not yet confirmed. He loves evil more than goodness, lies more than righteousness: not absolutely hating the better course. If it were not his interest to deceive, he would probably speak the truth. "Si possis, rectè, si non, quocunque modo." Still, he has become attached, from force of habit, to his wicked practices.

Why boastest thou thyself in evil, O thou mighty man?

The mercy of God *endureth* all day long.

Mischiefs deviseth thy tongue,

Like a razor that is sharp, working deceitfully.

Thou hast loved evil more than goodness,

Lying, more than to speak righteousness.

SELAH.

In the central division, we see a confirmed habit of wickedness unredeemed by any lingering remorse, or

regard of better ways. From the close connection in sentiment of the concluding lines of the first part, with the opening of the second, we may collect that this Psalm is mainly intended to mark the awful approximation of the confines of good and evil: how wicked practices, begun from interested motives, become, gradually, fondly cherished and irreclaimable habits. And now there is no hope of avoiding the just judgment of God, who shall at the last day root the wicked out of the land of the living. The middle part thus forms, as usual, the main action of the poem.

Thou hast loved all words that devour,
 O tongue of deceitfulness.
 Therefore shall God destroy thee at the last,
 He shall take thee, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling,
 And root thee out of the land of the living.

SELAH.

The sequel contains the triumph of the righteous, after having witnessed the Divine retribution: and a contrast is made between the destruction of the wicked branch, and the unfading prosperity of the living tree planted in the house of God: the whole concluding with an expression of praise.

And the righteous shall see and fear;
 And at him shall laugh.
 Behold the mighty man, who made not God his strength,
 But trusted in the multitude of his riches,
 Strengthening himself in his mischief.
 But as for me, I am like an olive that is green in the
 house of God:
 I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.
 I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it:
 And I will hope in thy Name, because it is good before
 thy saints.

The 55th Psalm is, in its construction, sufficiently Ps. lv.
 easy, but, perhaps, the least distinct in its divisions

of any in which the Diapsalma occurs. The first division contains four regular quatrains, consisting of, first, a prayer.

Give ear, O God, to my prayer,
And hide not thyself from my supplication.
Take heed unto me, and hear me ;
I mourn in my complaint, and am vexed.

Then a general allusion to the aggressions of the enemy.

For the voice of the enemy,
Because of the oppression of the ungodly ;
For they cast upon me mischief,
And in wrath they hate me.

Then an expression of overwhelming terror at their meditated violence.

My heart is sore pained within me,
And the terrors of death are fallen upon me.
Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me,
And horrors have overwhelmed me.

Lastly, a desire to escape.

And I said, Who will give me wings?
Like a dove I would fly away, and be at rest :
Lo, I would get me away far off ;
I would remain in the wilderness.

SELAH.

The second part gives all these topics in detail ; with a new feature, that of confident expectation of Divine retribution.

The sufferer may now be considered as having taken his flight ; and being somewhat recovered from his terror, he recounts more in detail the evils which had surrounded him ; shewing that these consisted both of open mischief and covert guile ; the work not only of avowed enemies, but of a bosom friend.

It is now evident that the oppression of moral evil caused that horror which he calls the fear of death.

The commencing words^a of this second division bear, as is frequently the case, a close resemblance to those which concluded the first.^b

I would hasten my escape from the wind of the storm,
from the tempest.

Destroy, O LORD, divide their tongues,
For I have seen violence and strife in the city.
Day and night they go about it on the walls thereof:
And iniquity and sorrow are in the midst thereof:
Mischiefs are in the midst thereof:
And deceit and guile depart not from the streets thereof.
For it was not an enemy that reproached me,

Then I could have borne it:

It was not an adversary that magnified himself,

Then I could have hid myself from him:

But thou, a man mine equal,
My guide, and mine acquaintance;
We took together sweet counsel:
In the house of God we walked in company.

Now follows the prediction of the approaching catastrophe; the punishment of the wicked, and his own salvation: this portion being concluded by an expression of trust in the unchangeable mercy of God.

Let death seize upon them:
Let them go down into hell alive:
For wickedness is in their dwelling, in the midst of them.
As for me, upon God will I call,
And the LORD shall save me.
Evening, and morning, and noon-day, will I complain
and cry aloud,

^a See *antè*, note on 88th Psalm, sect. 4. p. 64.

^b See note (*f*) on this passage in Vol. I. I am disposed to think the Septuagint and Syriac here correct: "I waited for him that saved me:" which marks the division of the Psalm more accurately, and imparts a new moral feature to it.

And he shall hear my voice.
 He hath redeemed in peace my soul from the war that
 was against me,
 For many there were about me.
 God shall hear and afflict them,
 Even He that abideth of old.

SELAH.

Thus the main action of the poem is contained in the central division.

The concluding part gives the moral reason for the discomfiture of his enemies, and for his own redemption. The root of all their calamity was infidelity, a vain presumption that "all things" will "continue as they were from the beginning of the world,"^a a denial of a special Providence. Hence they were emboldened in this faithlessness, deceit, and blood-thirstiness. The secret of his rescue was that spirit of faith, which cast his burthen upon the Lord, and had dependence on him for sustentation. With an expression of this trust the Psalm concludes.

Because there are no dangers with them,
 Therefore they fear not God.
 He laid his hands upon such as be at peace with him;
 He hath broken his covenant.
 Softer than butter were *the words* of his mouth;
 But war was in his heart:
 Smoother were his words than oil,
 Yet were they drawn swords.
 O cast upon the LORD thy burthen, and he himself shall
 sustain thee:
 He will never suffer the righteous to be moved.
 But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit
 of corruption.
 The men of blood shall not have half their days:
 But as for me, I will trust in thee.

^a 2 St. Peter, iii. 3, 4.

The fifty-seventh Psalm is clearly discriminated. In the first part, his sufferings are mentioned in a general way, and the rescue from heaven predicted.

Ps. lvii.

Have merey upon me, O God, have mercy upon me,
 For in thee my soul hath refuge ;
 Yea, in the shadow of thy wings shall I have refuge,
 Until the passing away of *my* calamities.
 I will cry unto God Most High,
 To God, who performeth *all things* for me :
 He shall send from heaven,
 And shall save me from the reproach of him that would
 swallow me up.

SELAH.

In the second part, the nature of their aggression is given in detail, and their defeat is announced. This part is an epanodos ; of which the beginning is a prediction of God's approaching vengeance, the conclusion is its accomplishment : interposed is a description of their wiles, and in the centre is the song of praise which forms the burthen of the poem, "Be thou exalted," &c.

God shall send forth his mercy and his truth,
 My soul is in the midst of lions :
 I lie *among them* that are set on fire, even the sons of men :
 Their teeth are spears and arrows ;
 And their tongue a sword that is sharp.
 Be thou exalted above the heavens, O God,
 Above all the earth thy glory.
 A net they prepared for my feet :
 My soul was bowed down :
 They digged for me a pit ;
 They have fallen into the midst of it.

The absence of connecting particles gives great life to this part of the poem ; and graphically illustrates the suddenness of their fate.

The action of the poem being now complete, the

epode is a song of praise: in which the burthen, "Be thou exalted," &c., recurs, and God's mercy and truth are again commemorated.

Fixed is my heart, O God, fixed is my heart ;
 I will sing, and make a psalm.
 Awake, my glory :
 Awake, lute and harp,
 I will awake early.
 I will give thanks to thee among the people, O LORD :
 I will make a psalm to thee among the nations.
 For great unto the heavens is thy mercy,
 And unto the clouds thy truth.
 Be thou exalted above the heavens, O God,
 Above all the earth thy glory.

Ps. lxxvi.

The third division of this Psalm forms the first part of the 108th, of which latter Psalm it is to be further remarked, that its second division is identical with the latter part of the 60th, both being separated by Selah.

The 76th Psalm has an exordium; the middle part, which contains the main action; and a conclusion, consisting of a moral application.

The exordium celebrates, in general, the Almighty's power and presence among his people. First, his providential greatness. He is specially known in Judah, where his true worship is still preserved. Then, throughout the wide extent of all Israel, however his worship may be neglected there, yet his might is acknowledged as well as in Judah. The two next lines speak of his presence in Jerusalem, and more particularly in Mount Sion. From this his holy fortress proceeded the display of his might in vanquishing the enemies of Judah, the hosts of Sennacherib, to which event this Psalm refers.

Known in Judah is God :
 In Israel great is his Name :

And in Salem is his Tabernacle,
 And his dwelling in Sion.
 There brake he the arrows of the bow,
 The shield, the sword, and the battle.

SELAH.

The second part proceeds to recount this awful event. The first two lines, forming a connecting link with the former part, speaks of the glory of Jerusalem, as God's habitation. Then the sudden death of the besiegers is represented under the sublime image of a deep trance. The effect of this judgment is celebrated in words expressive of most appalling emotions of awe: the earth itself trembles and is still; while to relieve this terrible picture, God's mercy is shown to have been remembered in his wrath, since the object of his visitation was to help all the meek of the earth.

More glorious art thou,
 More excellent than the hills of prey.
 They are spoiled, the stout of heart: they have slept
 their sleep:

And all the men of might have not found their hands.
 At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob,
 Are entranced both chariot and horse.

Thou art to be feared, even thou:
 And who may stand in thy sight at the time of thy wrath?
 From heaven thou didst cause judgment to be heard;
 The earth feared, and was still,
 In the arising to judgment of God,
 To save all the meek of the earth.

SELAH.

The conclusion applies this event to all places and times. The very violence of man shall, as in this instance, be so overruled as to redound to God's praise. And these instances of his power ought to incite that godly fear which shall make the rendering of worship to him more earnest. The last portion is antiphonal to the first: the greatness of God, his worship,

and his judgments, being the three topics in each. The fear of God is the characteristic word of this Psalm.

For the fierceness of man shall praise thee ;
 The remnant of *his* fierceness^a shalt thou restrain.
 Vow, and pay to the LORD your God :
 All ye that are round about him, bring presents to him
 that is to be feared.
 He shall refrain the spirit of princes :
Even he that is to be feared among the kings of the earth.

Ps lxxxiv.

The 84th Psalm, one of exquisite and peculiar beauty, is most accurately divided by the Diapsalma.

The first division expresses a strong desire to return to the house of God, from which the Psalmist is now at a distance, and celebrates the happiness of those who had been enabled to go thither.

How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of Hosts !
 My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of
 the LORD :
 My heart and my flesh rejoice in the God of life,
 Yea, the sparrow^b hath found an house,
 And the swallow a nest where she may lay her young,
 Even thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God.
 Happy are they that dwell in thy house :
 For ever will they be praising thee.

SELAH.

The central division forms the noble Epanodos discovered by Bishop Jebb^c, whose words the author of these pages must indulge himself by transcribing, without marring them by any observations of his own. "The first line seems to contain the character of a confirmed proficient in religion,—*his strength is in*

^a That is, the remnant of the fierce aggressors who have escaped thy vengeance.

^b It is likely that this Psalm was composed while the Temple was in a state of desolation, and while its worshippers were in exile. The expression of the text is inconsistent with the inviolable sanctity of God's altar, while his service was actually performed there.

^c Sacred Literature, p. 55.

God; the sixth line, to describe his final beatification — *he shall appear before God in Zion*. The intermediate quatrain may be regarded as descriptive of the intermediate course pursued by those who desire to be good and happy; they are passengers; but they know their destination, and they long for it: at a distance from the Temple, (the mystical ‘*sapientum templa serena*,’) they are anxious to arrive there; the very highways to Jerusalem are in their heart. And what is the consequence? Affection smooths all difficulties: the parched and sandy desert becomes a rich well-watered valley: and they cheerfully advance from strength to strength; from one degree of virtuous proficiency to another.”

Happy is the man whose strength is in thee :

Those in whose hearts are the ways.

Passing through the vale of tears, a well they make it,

Yea, the pools are filled with water.

They shall go from strength to strength :

He shall appear before God in Sion.

O LORD God of Hosts, hear my prayer :

Give ear, O God of Jacob.

SELAH.

At length he arrives at those courts, the absence from which he had lamented, and the approach to which had been just described. The first two lines, speaking of the Divine Presence, are responded to with a heightening of the sentiment, in the sixth and seventh. God is invoked as a “shield,” he appears as a “sun and shield;” an illuminating and purifying, as well as a defensive power; his grace being the sun; his glory, or a state of perpetual security and exaltation, being the shield. The Psalm concludes with a prayer, which corresponds in sentiment and expression, to the concluding distichs of each of the former parts.

Thou who art our shield, behold, O God,
 And look upon the face of thine Anointed.
 For better is a day in thy courts than a thousand.
 I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God,
 Than dwell in the tents of ungodliness.
 For a sun and a shield is the LORD God:
 Grace and glory the LORD will give:
 He will withhold no good thing from them that walk perfectly.
 O LORD of Hosts,
 Happy is the man that trusteth in thee.

Ps. lxxxvii. The last Psalm of the class now under consideration is the 87th. Its epode is extremely short, and so obscure as to leave room for little more than conjecture as to its meaning.

The introduction speaks of the holiness of Zion, and of the love which God had for it; and allusion is made to the glorious things spoken of it.

His foundation is in the hills of holiness:
 The LORD loveth the gates of Zion,
 Above all the dwellings of Jacob.
 Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God.

SELAH.

These glorious things are recounted in the second part, which contains the central truth of the poem: the high distinction, namely, which Zion or Jerusalem had attained, and should still experience, of having given birth to prophets and wise men and kings, more illustrious than Egypt (here called Rahab), or Babylon, the cities of Philistia, of Syria, or of Arabia could boast. And herein we may believe that a prophetic allusion was made to those spiritual children which the daughter of Zion, the enlarged Church of God, was, under the reign of Christ, to recount, instead of her fathers.

I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me:
 Behold Philistia, and Tyre, and Cush:

This man was born there.
 But of Sion it shall be said,
 This man and that man was born in her.
 And he himself shall stablish her, even the Most High :
 The LORD shall recount, when he writeth up the people :
 This man was born there.
 SELAH.

The epode is so elliptical in its style, that some critics have considered it either as a fragment, or as a musical direction.

And the singers as well as the minstrels *shall say*,
 All my springs are in thee.
 SELAH.

However, interpreting this from analogous passages of Scripture, the meaning seems to be this. Both singers and minstrels, all the choir of Israel, shall in their songs celebrate those glorious things of which mention was made at the beginning of the Psalm, but in so doing, they shall ascribe praise to God, as the source and well-spring of all glory^a: that well of everlasting life, which refreshes those who go through the vale of misery.

This passage may be further illustrated by two, to which the learned Parkhurst makes reference. One is, Deut. xxxiii. 28., where God's providence is called the fountain of Jacob; a word which, though not identical with that in the text, yet conveys an image exactly similar. The other passage, Ps. lxxviii. 25., has a remarkable resemblance in the context to that before us.

First go the singers, then follow the minstrels,
 In the midst are the psalteries with the players on the
 timbrels ;
 In the congregations bless ye God,
 Even the LORD, from the fountain of Israel.

^a Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

That is, ye who derive your source from the fountain of Israel. In the same Psalm, it is remarkable, there is a like juxtaposition of the glories of the Temple of Jerusalem (v. 29.), the progeny of Israel (v. 27.); and Egypt also (here called Rahab) and Cush are mentioned, as in this Psalm: so that a similar association of ideas prevails throughout.

§ 6. PSALMS OF MORE THAN THREE DIVISIONS.

Six Psalms remain to be examined, of more than three divisions; the 32nd, the 66th, the 68th, the 77th, and the 140th, each of which has four divisions; and the 89th, which has five.

Ps. xxxii.

The 32nd Psalm, which bears evidently the hand of David, is divided by Selah into four stages of moral progression: the last containing a change of person. It opens with the general declaration of the blessedness of those who are in a justified state; whose sins have been forgiven, and who are in that guileless frame of mind, the result of true repentance, which alone is consistent with the obedience of faith.

The Psalmist then proceeds to describe the steps by which he had arrived at this happy state. He begins by describing the agony which he had suffered when punished by the Almighty for his sin, before he had formed sufficient resolution to open his heart to God.^a This forms the first division.

Happy is he, whose transgression is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered.

Happy the man, to whom the Lord will not impute
iniquity,

And in whose spirit there is no guile.

^a See *ante*, § 3. p. 43—49., the analysis of the 39th Psalm.

When I kept silence, my bones were consumed,
 Through my roaring all the day.
 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me:
 My moisture was turned into the drought of summer.

SELAH.

The resolution is at length formed, by divine grace, of confessing his sins, and these in all their several stages and particulars, signified by the three terms, sin, iniquity, and transgression. The happy issue follows: he is forgiven.

My sin I will acknowledge to thee,
 And mine iniquity I have not covered:
 I said, I will confess my transgression to the LORD:
 And thou thyself didst forgive the iniquity of my sin.

SELAH.

But this, as will appear by the sequel, is but the first stage of a blessed course. In the expansive spirit of true religious charity he proceeds to promise, from the experience of his own relief, a like result to all who use the same means of sincere confession. As to himself he learns to enjoy the blessings of the Divine Presence, as at once the source of deliverance from evil, and of intrinsic joy.

For this, shall prayer be made by every godly man in the
 time of finding thee:
 Surely in the overflowing of many waters to him they
 shall not come nigh.
 Thou art a hiding place to me: from trouble thou shalt
 preserve me:
 With songs of deliverance thou shalt compass me.

SELAH.

The concluding portion opens in a yet more exalted strain. As in the epode of several Psalms, so here, the Voice of God himself promises not only protection, but guidance, and the teaching of his Providential Wisdom, and the encompassing defence of his mercy. In conclusion, there is an invitation to all the righ-

teous and true-hearted to rejoice in the Lord: forming a strong contrast to the beginning of the Psalm, and an introduction to that which follows.

I will inform thee, and teach thee in the way wherein
thou shalt go,

I will counsel thee: upon thee shall be mine eye.

Be ye not like to horse and mule, without understanding;
With bit and bridle their mouths must be held, lest they
come near to thee.

Many plagues shall be on the ungodly;

But he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him.

Be glad in the LORD, ye righteous:

And sing for joy, all that are upright in heart.

Ps. lvi.

Of the 66th Psalm, the strophes are alternate; the third answering to the first, the fourth to the second.

The first announces the praise of God; and the whole world, as the witness of his great works, is summoned, in general terms, to join in thanksgivings.

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth:

Make a psalm to the glory of his Name:

Make glorious his praise.

Say unto God, To be feared in thy works *art thou*:

In the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies be
found liars unto thee.

All the earth shall worship thee, and make a psalm to
thee:

They shall make a psalm to thy Name.

SELAH.

The corresponding, or third division, repeats the praise of God; and his people, as the witness of the miracles of his special Providence, is summoned to join in the divinely instituted services of the sanctuary.

Bless, O ye people, our God,

And make to be heard the voice of his praise.

Who holdeth our soul in life,

And suffereth not our feet to be moved.

For thou hast proved us, O God:

Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried :
 Thou broughtest us into the snare ;
 Thou laidest trouble upon our loins :
 Thou sufferedst men to ride over our heads ;
 We went through fire and water :
 But thou broughtest us into a place of wealth.^a

I will go into thine house with burnt offerings ;
 I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered,
 And my mouth hath spoken, when trouble was upon me :
 The offerings of fatlings I will offer unto thee :
 I will prepare bullocks with goats.

In the second division, all are desired to behold the visible works and wonders of God, which are specially enumerated. These are of general experience and observation.

O come, and see the works of God,
 Fearful in his doing toward the sons of men.
 He turned the sea into dry land ;
 Through the flood they went through on foot.
 There were we glad in him.
 He ruleth by his might for ever :
 His eyes the nations do behold :
 The rebellious shall not exalt themselves.

SELAH.

In the corresponding fourth division, which begins, like the second, with the anaphora, "O come," not all mankind, but only those who fear God, are desired to behold still greater wonders, those things which he hath done for the soul. And this division ends with praise. Thus, throughout the Psalm, praise alternates with experience. And the praise of God is shown to be a reasonable service ; and each of the second corresponding divisions is more spiritual and internal than the former.

O come, hearken, and I will declare, all ye that fear God,
 What he hath done for my soul.

^a Or rather, a place saturated with rain.

To him with my mouth I called,
 And he was exalted with my tongue.
 If I regard iniquity in my heart,
 The Lord will not hear me.
 Verily God hath heard me ;
 He hath attended to the voice of my prayer.
 Blessed be God, who hath not cast out my prayer,
 Nor *turned away* his mercy from me.

PS. lxxiii.

On the probable authorship of the 68th Psalm, observations will be made in a future Dissertation. The present enquiry will be confined to the subject-matter.

The first division celebrates the glory and providential mercy of God.

1.

Let God arise ; let his enemies be scattered :
 And let them that hate him flee before him
 Like the driving away of smoke,
 So drive them away ;
 Like the melting of wax before the fire,
 So let the wicked perish before God.

2.

But let the righteous be glad : let them rejoice before God :
 Yea, let them be merry with gladness.
 Sing unto God, make a psalm to his Name :
 Magnify him that rideth upon the heavens, by his Name
 JAH,
 And rejoice before him.

3.

A Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widows,
 Is God, in the habitation of his holiness.
 God setteth the solitary in a house :
 He bringeth out those that are bound in chains :
 But the rebellious dwell in a dry land.
 O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people,
 When thou didst march through the wilderness ;

SELAH.

The sense, contrary to the usual method in the Psalms, is carried on to the next division. But the use of Selah is fully vindicated. The exordium finished,

God's terrible Presence described, the action begins in the second part. The scene of the desert is opened upon our view, and all the thunders and lightnings, and wonders of divine power and mercy; the divine manifestation at Sinai; the rain of manna; the miraculous flow of waters; the discomfiture of mighty hosts by supernatural aid from above; the march of the hosts of heaven; God's triumph over all enemies; his bestowal of salvation: all this being typical of his future triumph over his spiritual enemies; the gifts purchased for his Church by Christ; the manna of his Holy Spirit, the living waters, and eternal salvation. The whole forms an accumulation of glorious images, such as have never been collected within the same compass. Now in making the change between the first and second part, where *Selah* marks not only the disclosure of this magnificent scene, but the abrupt transition from an address to a narrative, a skilful musician would obviously direct the raising of a higher strain. The peculiarity of this arrangement (*i. e.* the continuity of the sentence at each division) adds much to the elastic vigour of this sublime ode.

The earth shook: the heavens also dropped at the presence
of God,

Sinai itself at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

A rain of plenty thou didst send, O God, upon thine inheritance,

And when she was weary, it was thou who didst refresh her.

Thy congregation shall dwell therein;

Thou hast prepared, in thy goodness, for the poor, O God.

The Lord shall give the word^a:

Of the women who publish it the multitude shall be great:

Kings of armies shall flee, shall flee;

And she that tarricth at home shall divide the spoil.

Though ye have lien among the pots, *ye shall be as the wings of a dove,*

Covered with silver, and her feathers like yellow gold.

^a Qu. promise (Dathic).

When the Almighty scattered kings in it,
 It was as white as snow in Salmon.^a
 A hill of God is the hill of Bashan^b;
 A hill of heights is the hill of Bashan.
 Why leap ye, ye hills of height?
 This hill God hath desired to dwell in;
 Yea, the LORD will abide in it for ever.
 The chariots of God are thousands of thousands, thousands
 upon thousands:
 The Lord is among them, in Sinai, in the holy place.
 Thou art gone up on high:
 Thou hast led captive captivity:
 Thou hast received gifts for men:
 Yea, even for the rebellious, that the LORD God might
 dwell *among them*.
 Blessed be the Lord, day by day;
 He shall load us with benefits,
 Even the God of our salvation.

SELAH.

The third division (the beginning being linked to the conclusion of the second) speaks of the future conquests and deliverance of the Israelites; the wars in Canaan, foretold in the preceding part, to which the progress through the wilderness was the prelude; and the consequent establishment of God's worship in Jerusalem: typical of the subjugation of the world to Christ, and of the worship of his Church.

He is a God to us, the God of whom cometh salvation,
 And unto the LORD our Lord belong the issues of death.
 But God shall wound the head of his enemies,
 The hairy scalp of him that goeth on still in his trespasses.

^a The meaning I apprehend to be that very generally received; *i. e.*, that the ground was bleached by the bones of those who fell: of unburied myriads. The association of colours in this passage is very beautiful. The word *Salmon* has caused considerable difficulty. That it means a mountain seems probable from the juxtaposition in the text of the hills of Bashan and Sinai. See note *c* on this Psalm.

^b That is (as Bishop Patrick interprets it), high and glorious as was the hill of Bashan, which afterwards became part of the inheritance, there was a hill more glorious, the special residence of God—Mount Sion. This is one of the difficult passages of this very obscure Psalm.

The Lord hath said ^a, From Bashan I will make them return ;

I will make them return from the depths of the sea.

That thy foot may be dipped in blood :

And the tongue of thy dogs, from thine enemies, in the same.

They have seen thy goings, O God,

The goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.

First go the singers ^b, then follow the minstrels ;

In the midst are psalteries, with the players on the timbrels.

In the congregation bless ye God,

Even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.

There is little Benjamin their ruler,

The princes of Judah, their council,

The princes of Zabulon, the princes of Naphtali.

Thy God hath commanded thy strength :

Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.

Because of thy temple at Jerusalem,

To thee shall kings bring presents.

Rebuke the beasts of the reeds ^c,

The multitude of bulls, among the calves of the people,

Till every one submit himself with pieces of silver :

Scatter thou the people that in war delight,

Princes shall come out of Egypt ;

Cush shall stretch out her hands unto God.

O ye kingdoms of the earth, sing unto God ;

Make a psalm unto the Lord.

SELAH.

The concluding division is like the exordium ; ascribing glory to God in somewhat the same terms : “ To him that rideth upon the heaven,” ascending again to God’s heavenly habitation.

To him that rideth upon the heaven of heavens of old :

Lo, he doth send out his voice, a voice of strength.

Ascribe ye strength to God :

Over Israel is his excellency,

And his strength is in the clouds.

^a Vide Amos, ix. 14, 15., and Obadiah, ver. 19.

^b See *antè*, § 5. p. 83, for remarks on this passage.

^c This very obscure passage will admit of a conjectural interpretation only. See note *d* on this Psalm. The beast of the reeds is commonly considered to mean the Egyptian people.

To be feared *art thou*, O God, in thy holy places:
 The God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power to
 the people.
 Blessed be God.

Ps. lxxvii. The 77th Psalm, introductory to the historical Psalms which follow, exhibits accurately the course of the Psalmist's thoughts, agitated at first by strong fears, and finally consoled by the recollection of his Providence.

In the first division his deep distress is related.

With my voice unto God I cried:
 My voice was unto God;
 And he gave ear unto me.
 In the day of my trouble the LORD I sought:
 My hand in the night was stretched out, and ceased not.
 My soul refused to be comforted.
 I remembered God, and was disturbed:
 I communed with myself, and my spirit was overwhelmed.

SELAH.

This is the preface to the complaint, so pathetically expressed in the second division. His bodily weakness has enfeebled his mind, and tempts him to fear that he is forsaken of God. He remembers indeed past mercies, but fears that these will never return.

Thou holdest the watches of mine eyes:
 I am troubled, and I cannot speak.
 I have considered the days of old,
 The years of ancient times.
 I call to remembrance my song in the night:
 With my heart I commune, and search out my spirit.
 Will the LORD for ever cast me off?
 And will he not be favourable any more?
 Is his mercy gone for a long time?
 Is his promise come to an end for ever and ever?
 Hath God forgotten to be gracious?
 Hath he shut up in anger his loving kindness?

SELAH.

But his faith returns. He is conscious that such

despondency is the effect of infirmity, which the Tempter uses as his instrument, and to which it is therefore sinful to yield. He hopefully recalls the wonders of old time, and the deliverance afforded to the chosen people.

Then I said, Mine infirmity is this :

But I will remember the years of the right hand of the
Most High.

I will remember the doings of the LORD ;

Yea, I will remember thy wonders of old,

And I will meditate on all thy works :

And on thy doings I will commune.

O God, in holiness is thy way ;

What God is so great as God ?

Thou art the God that doest wonders :

Thou hast made known among the people thy strength.

Thou hast redeemed with *thine* arm thy people,

The sons of Jacob and Joseph.

SELAH.

These last words form the note of preparation to the strophe which follows, where there is a more particular commemoration of God's special interposition, and to those great wonders which are most frequently dwelt upon in the prophetic and poetical parts of Holy Scripture; namely, the passage through the Red Sea, and the manifestation of the Divine glory at Sinai and in the wilderness.

The waters saw thee, O God :

The waters saw thee : they were afraid :

The depths also trembled :

The clouds poured out water :

The skies gave forth a voice :

Thine arrows also went abroad.

The voice of thy thunder was round about :

The lightnings shone through the world :

The earth trembled and shook.

In the sea is thy way,

And thy paths in the great waters :

And thy footsteps are not known.
 Thou leddest like sheep thy people,
 By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Ps. cxl.

The 140th Psalm has four accurately discriminated divisions, of which the first two are parallel; the third is a continuation of the prayer; the last is its fulfilment.

The first stanza is a prayer against the projected schemes of his enemies; which have as yet proceeded no further than devices and evil words.

Deliver me, O LORD, from the man of evil,
 From the man of violence preserve me :
 Who purpose evil things in their heart :
 All day they stir up wars.
 They have sharpened their tongue like a serpent :
 The poison of asps is under their lips.

SELAH.

A like prayer is made in the second division, in nearly similar terms, imploring protection from the schemes now brought into act.

Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the ungodly :
 From the man of violence preserve me :
 Who purpose to overthrow my goings.
 The proud have privily laid a snare for me, and cords :
 They have spread a net by the wayside ;
 Traps have they set for me.

SELAH.

In the third division the same supplication is repeated (though not in the same terms), with greater confidence, from the recollection of past mercies.

I said unto the LORD, my God art thou :
 Hear, O LORD, the voice of my supplication.
 O LORD, my Lord, the strength of my salvation,
 Thou hast been a covering to my head in the day of battle.

Grant not, O LORD, the desire of the ungodly :
 Their wicked imaginations further not, *lest they* exalt
 themselves.

SELAH.

Each of these stanzas consists of six lines. The epode contains the catastrophe, forming a kind of epanodos to the third division; and refers again to "the man of words," or of evil designs; and "the man of violence," or of evil actions.

As for the head of those that compass me,
 Let the mischief of their own lips cover them.
 Let burning coals come down upon them :
 Into the fire he shall make them fall, into deep pits :
 They shall not rise.
 The man of words shall not be established in the earth :
 The man of violence : . . . evil shall hunt him, to over-
 whelm him.
 I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the poor,
 The judgment of the needy.
 Surely the righteous shall give thanks to thy Name :
 The upright shall continue in thy presenee.

The last Psalm which remains to be examined is Ps. lxxxix. the 89th. The five divisions are clearly each distinctly marked, and the Pseudo-Chrysostom has shown how the diapsalma has discriminated each.^a

The first is the prologue, the theme of which is God's Mercy and Truth, manifested in his promise to David, and in its fulfilment.

The mercies of the LORD for ever will I sing :
 From generation to generation I will make known thy
 Truth with my mouth.
 For I have said, For ever Mercy shall be built up :
 The heavens . . . thou shalt establish thy Truth in them.
 I have made a covenant with my chosen :
 I have sworn unto David my servant.
 For ever will I establish thy seed,
 And build up from generation to generation thy throne.

SEF AH.

The second part is an expansion of the first in all its parts: God's Mercy; his Truth; his Covenant to David. The heavens are called upon to praise the wonders of Him who is to be feared. His power is declared in his doings in heaven and earth; but righteousness and judgment, mercy and truth, are above all his works: the habitation of his throne, the heralds of his presence.

And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD,
 Even thy truth in the congregation of the saints:
 For who among the clouds shall be compared to the LORD?
 Who shall be likened unto the LORD among the sons of
 the gods?

God is greatly to be had in awe in the council of the
 saints,

And to be feared by all that are round about him.

O LORD God of Hosts, who is like unto thee?

The mighty LORD: and thy truth is round about thee.

It is Thou who rulest the raging of the sea:

At the rising of the waves thereof it is Thou who stillest
 them.

It is Thou who hast broken Rahab, as one that is slain^a:

With the strength of thine arm thou hast scattered thine
 enemies.

Thine are the heavens: thine also is the earth:

The world and the fulness thereof: it is Thou who hast
 founded them.

The North and the South, it is Thou who hast created them.

Tabor and Hermon in thy Name shall sing for joy.

Thine is an arm of might:

Strong is thy hand: high is thy right hand.

Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of thy
 throne:

Mercy and Truth shall go before thy face.

Then his Grace is celebrated, and the happiness of that people who walk in the light of his countenance.

^a This is an expression of Ezekiel's.

Happy is the people that know the joyful sound, O LORD :
 In the light of thy countenance they shall walk.
 In thy Name shall they delight all day long,
 And in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.
 For the beauty of their strength art thou :
 And in thy loving kindness shalt thou exalt our horn :
 For of the LORD is our shield :
 And of the Holy One of Israel is our King.

The key-note of the promise is sounded in the last line ; that royal seed, whose line began in David, and which God had promised should last for ever. This promise is then recounted :— the conditional prosperity of his children, but the unalterable establishment of his throne, fulfilled in the person of the Messiah ; and this division ends as it began, with the mention of the heavens as the witnesses of his truth.

Thou spakest sometime in vision to thy saints, and saidst :
 I have laid help upon one that is mighty,
 I have exalted one chosen from the people.
 I have found David my servant ;
 With the oil of my holiness have I anointed him.
 With whom mine hand shall be established ;
 Mine arm also shall strengthen him.
 The enemy shall not do him violence,
 And the son of wickedness shall not afflict him.
 And I will beat down before his face his adversaries,
 And them that hate him I will plague.
 And my Truth and my Mercy shall be with him,
 And in my Name shall his horn be exalted.
 And I will set in the sea his hand,
 And in the floods his right hand.
 He shall call me, My Father art thou,
 My God, and the Rock of my Salvation.
 I myself also my first-born shall make him,
 Higher than the kings of the earth.
 For ever will I keep for him my Mercy,
 And my Covenant shall be true with him.
 And I will make *to endure* for ever his seed,
 And his throne as the days of heaven.

If his children forsake my law,
 And in my judgments if they walk not,
 If my statutes they break,
 And my commandments they do not keep,
 Then will I visit with a rod their offence,
 And with stripes their iniquity.
 But my Mercy will I not utterly take from him,
 Nor will I be wanting in my Truth.
 I will not break my covenant,
 And that which is gone out of my lips I will not alter:
 Once have I sworn by my holiness,
 That David I will not fail.
 His seed for ever shall endure,
 And his throne as the Sun before me:
 As the Moon it shall be established for ever,
 And the Witness in the clouds is true.

SELAH.

The part hitherto commented upon forms of itself a complete and perfect poem, uttered in the sublimest strain of prophetic inspiration.

In the next division the strain altogether changes from a glorious prophecy to deep lamentation, for the desolation and discomfiture of Israel. The style is completely different, resembling, both in structure and in expression, the plaintive elegies of Jeremiah.

But thou, even thou, hast cast off, and hast abhorred,
 Thou hast been wroth with thine Anointed.
 Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant:
 Thou hast cast to the ground his crown:
 Thou hast broken down all his hedges:
 Thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin.
 They spoil him, all that pass by the way:
 He is become a reproach to his neighbours:
 Thou hast exalted the right hand of his adversaries:
 Thou hast made glad all his enemies.
 Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword,
 And hast made him not to stand in the battle.
 Thou hast caused a failing of his brightness,
 And his throne to the ground thou hast cast down.
 Thou hast shortened the days of his youth:
 Thou hast covered him with shame.

In conclusion, there are two parallel epodes, each consisting of supplication to God, contained in six lines: the first two being interrogatory, the third in each commencing with the word "Remember."

How long, O LORD, wilt thou hide thyself, for ever?
 Shall thy wrath burn like fire?
 Remember how short-lived I am:
 Wherefore in vain hast thou created all the sons of men?
 What mighty man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?
 Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of hell?

SELAH.

Where are thy Mercies which were at the first, O LORD,
 Which thou swearest to David in thy Truth?
 Remember, O Lord, the reproach of thy servants,
 Which I do bear in my bosom from all the mighty people,
 Wherewith their enemies have reproached, O LORD,
 Wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine
 Anointed.

Blessed be the LORD for evermore.

Amen, and Amen.

§ 7. THE PRAYER OF HABAKKUK.

The Prayer of Habakkuk, being the only portion of Holy Scripture, besides the Psalms, which contains the Diapsalma, requires a special consideration. In many of its features it resembles the Psalms. Thus the title bears the words "on Shigionoth," or "Shiggaionoth," the plural of the word "Shiggaion," which is prefixed to the 7th Psalm; neither the singular nor the plural form occurring in any other place. At the end there is a musical direction "to the Chief Musician on Neginoth, or stringed instruments," of frequent occurrence in the Psalms. As Habakkuk lived in the time of King Josiah, who restored the Temple

Prayer of
Habakkuk.

^a For a translation of this prayer, see Appendix to the First Volume.

service^a, this ode was probably one of those composed for the revived functions of the choirs. This magnificent prophecy has an obscurity at once, and a sublimity truly archaic. In its general style it does not resemble the other writings of the same prophet. Whether it be a collection or adaptation of ancient songs, or the original composition of Habakkuk, it is impossible to determine: but it is certain that it strongly resembles the poetry of Moses, and of Deborah, and that of the 68th Psalm, which, as will be hereafter shown^b, bears traces of the age of Moses, and of times preceding that of David.

This is evident in the use of single words of rare occurrence in Hebrew, and used by Moses in his songs and blessing, in juxtaposition with the same turns of thought and expression as are found in the song of Habakkuk. Instances of this are reserved for the notes.^c

In the song of Moses and Miriam, Exodus xv., occurs the following resemblance:

The Lord is my strength and my song,
And is become my salvation.—(v. 2.)

Compare this with the passage in the Ode, v. 18.:

Yet as for me, in the LORD will I rejoice:
I will joy in the God of my salvation.

^a 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12., and xxxv. 15.

^b See Dissertation III.

^c פצה (v. 6.) is applied by Moses to the bursting open of the earth to swallow the sons of Korah. Numb. xvi. 30., Deut. xi. 6. . . ברק, the glittering (of thy spear), (v. 11.), is used in Moses' song, Deut. xxxii. 41., and applied to the sword. And in connection with this, Moses (v. 39.) uses the same word as employed in the present context (v. 13.), מחצת thou woundedst. Again in v. 22. he uses the word מוסרי, foundations, as applied to mountains: the same as יסוד, v. 13. of the Prayer. Again, ישרמות, fields (Deut. xxxii. 13.) is found in near connection with "high places," as in the Prayer, v. 17. and 19. The same juxtaposition of both words occurs in v. 13. of Moses' song, Deut. xxxii. In the same song, v. 23., רינה, burning coals, as in v. 5. of the song; and v. 34. קרוב, "the drawing near or approach," used in v. 2. of the Prayer.

Again,

The people shall hear and be afraid. — (v. 14.)

Here the same word^a is used as in v. 7. of the Prayer.

They did tremble, the curtains of the land of Midian.

In Moses' song there are also ellipses, and a paucity of connecting particles: which are characteristic of the Prayer.

In the song of Moses, Deut. xxxii., "He made him ride on the high places of the earth" (v. 13.), is like "And on my high places he will make me to walk. (Prayer, v. 18.) And this is connected with the blessings of plenty, which immediately precede in the Prayer, and follow in the Song.

In the Song, v. 22., "Fire shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundation of the earth." Compare the Prayer (v. 5.), "Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet."

In the Song, v. 40., "I lift up my hands to heaven:" this magnificent personification is like the image in the Prayer (v. 10.), "The deep uttered his voice: on high his hands he lifted up."

In the last words, or Blessing, of Moses, Deut. xxxiii., the second verse,

"The LORD from Sinai came,
And rose up from Seir to them:
He shined forth from Mount Paran,
And he came with ten thousand of his saints:"

is like the third verse of Habakkuk, "God from Teman shall come," &c. As also in the song of Deborah: "O LORD, in the going forth from Seir, In thy marching from the field of Edom," &c. And of the 68th Psalm, "O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou wentest through the wilderness."

^a מַרְאֵה.

In the same verse, "From his right hand went a fiery law for them," is parallel to the passage in the Prayer, v. 4., "He had bright beams out of his hand, and there was the hiding of power." This whole passage bringing to mind the recorded manifestation of the Divine Glory to Moses, and the declaration of the Almighty, that his glorious Presence could not be beheld by man.^a The address to the tribes in the Blessing is cognate to the allusion in the 9th verse of the Prayer: "Because of the oaths unto the tribes:" as also to their individual mention in the 68th Psalm, and in the song of Deborah.

"The ancient mountains and the lasting hills," (v. 13—16.), find a parallel in the 6th verse of the Prayer.^b

The 26th verse, "Who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and his excellency on the sky," has the same image as in the 8th and 15th verses of the Prayer, "That thou dost ride upon the horses, thy chariots of salvation;" and, "Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses." The expressions in the 68th Psalm are similar: "That rideth upon the heavens;" which twice occurs.

And in the 29th verse a similar phrase terminates both the words of Moses and the Prayer: "Thou shalt tread upon their high places;" and, "On my high places thou shalt make me walk." To which may be added, that the "blossoming of the fig-tree," &c., in the 17th verse of the Prayer, is like the picture of temporal prosperity in the 28th verse of the Blessing: "Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew."

In the 11th verse of the Prayer, the allusion to the

^a Exodus, xxxiii. 23.

^b Compare Gen. xlix. 26.: "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of thy progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills:" where temporal blessings are connected with this expression in Jacob's as in Moses' prophecy.

standing still of the sun and moon, has a reference to the event in the time of Joshua, the successor of Moses: the mind of the prophet being evidently impregnated with the revelation of the wonders attendant upon the invasion of Canaan.

The song of Deborah, besides the resemblances already noticed, is similar to the Prayer in the following instances.

In the use of the same word (v. 7.), translated "villages" (Prayer, v. 14.): a word of rare occurrence.^a

In a bold personification (v. 20.): "From heaven they fought; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera:" which is cognate to the personification, already noticed, of the mountains, the waters, the sun and moon, in the Prayer. To the last division of the 77th Psalm, which has all the appearance of being a very ancient ode, the same passage bears a resemblance. "The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee, and were afraid."

I have given these strong features of resemblance between the Prayer of Habakkuk and the more ancient prophetic poetry of Holy Writ, in order, if possible, to afford materials for forming some decision, which I confess myself unable to make with any confidence. That a strong connection exists between the poetry of Moses, of the 68th Psalm, of Deborah, and that now before us, is evident. The tracing out this resemblance may, it is to be hoped, serve a better purpose than merely fixing the time or authorship of each composition. That, though an interesting, and far from useless question, is yet of subordinate moment: since by the mouths of each of

^a See Bishop Horsley's note on this word פְּרוּז (Biblical Criticism, vol. iv. p. 460.) If his sense of "rural judges" be correct, then the meaning is, thou didst strike the magistrates with their own staves of office. Our translators read פְּרוּזִין (with several MSS.), instead of רוּז, the received reading.

these prophets the Holy Spirit spoke in equal fulness : who employed however the peculiar mental endowments of each, as he did their bodily organs, to be the instruments of his truth ; so that each prophecy, though revealed by God, and by him made free from error, bore the impress, to a certain degree, of the intellectual character of the individual. The ultimate use of such an enquiry ought to be, to trace through the identity of style and phrase in each of these divine poems, some common and cardinal truth, which the careful comparison of them, one with another, may more effectually bring home to the understanding of the faithful.

It remains to examine the texture of this Prayer, with reference to the Diapsalma.

In this point of view, it may be said, generally, that it further resembles the 68th Psalm, in having a less obvious discrimination by the Diapsalma than the other poems in which that word occurs. Indeed, it must be acknowledged, that in the present instance it is very difficult to assign any reason for the quadruple division, which might not equally apply to a division into two, or three, or more periods. And this difficulty is not a little increased by the very frequent change of tense which occurs, and which adds to the obscurity of the prophecy, especially when read by those less familiar with the peculiarities of oriental idiom.

The general object of the prayer is to proclaim God's future vengeance on his enemies, and the redemption of his people, like that which he had achieved in ancient times. The prophet looks forward to this, as a consolation under his knowledge of the coming judgments on the chosen people, which had formed the subject of his preceding prophecy. The approaching captivity in Babylon is compared to their former bondage in Egypt : but he foresees a redemp-

tion more wonderful and glorious than that effected when they were led by the hand of Moses and Aaron. He speaks both of his fears and of his hopes. God's coming to judgment will be terrible: but he will remember mercy: and he will come to redeem his people, as he did of old when he came to the land of Canaan from the south, from Teman, and Mount Paran.

O LORD, I have heard thy speech:
 I am afraid, O LORD, of thy work:
 At the drawing near of years^a, do thou revive it:
 At the drawing near of the years thou wilt make *it* known.
 God from Teman shall come,
 And the Holy One from Mount Paran.

SELAH.

He now proceeds to the description of the wonders of old time, to which the concluding words of the prologue had sounded the note of preparation. And the next division may be considered as speaking of signs in heaven and in earth, the prelude to the outpouring of his wrath upon the nations. In this description, the future consequences are spoken of as already brought into act, in that style of anticipation so characteristic of the whole poem.

His glory covered the heavens:
 And of his praise the earth was full:
 And the brightness was even as the light:
 He had bright beams out of his hand,
 And there was the hiding^b of power.
 Before him went the Pestilence,
 And burning coals went forth at his feet.
 He stood, and measured the earth:
 He beheld, and drove asunder the nations:
 And they were burst open, the everlasting mountains:
 They did bow, the eternal hills:
 His ways are everlasting.

^a That is to say, when the appointed time draws near, thou wilt renew thy ancient wonders, and shalt reveal it to thy prophets.

^b That is, the secret place.

The nations of Arabia, and the inhabitants of the desert, hear the rumour of these premonitory signs, and of the doings in the land of Egypt, afflicted by tenfold plagues, and tremble at the approach of this supernatural storm. Meantime God makes the preparation for the passage of the Red Sea. The portion about to be quoted opens in a style similar to that of Balaam's prophecy: the prophet sees these wonders in mental vision.

Under affliction I saw the tents of Cushan ;
 They shall tremble, the curtains of the land of Midian.
 Against the rivers is the LORD displeased?
 Is thine anger against the rivers ?
 Is thy wrath against the sea,
 That thou dost ride upon thine horses,
 Thy chariots of salvation ?
 Thy bow shall be made quite naked,
Because of the oaths unto the tribes, even thy word.

SELAH.

The third division contains, as it were, the main action: the wonders at the Red Sea, at Mount Sinai, the march towards Canaan, and the standing still of the sun and moon, and the conquest of the wicked nations. The destruction of the first-born of Egypt is recorded in the last line: this retrospective allusion heightening the terror of the picture. While the Canaanites are suffering from his present vengeance, the land of Egypt is still wailing the death of her first-born, that last great plague, which marked the departure of the God of Israel. Thus the whole earthly creation joins in one universal cry of consternation. But his mercy is remembered in wrath. The salvation of his Anointed is the end of all these judgments.

With rivers thou shalt cleave the earth:
 They saw thee, they trembled, the mountains:

The overflowing of the waters passed by :
 The deep uttered his voice ;
 On high his hands he lifted up.
 The sun, the moon, stood still in its habitation :
 In light thine arrows shall go forth :
 In brightness the glittering of thy spear.
 In indignation thou shalt march through the land :
 In anger thou shalt thresh the heathen :
 Thou shalt go forth for the salvation of thy people,
 For the salvation of thine Anointed.
 Thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked,
 Laying bare the foundation unto the neck.

SELAH.

In the last division, the first line marks the connection with the last, while the strain of the whole changes. In the first lines the judgments upon the Egyptians are again celebrated ; but the moral reason of these judgments is recorded, their wickedness and oppression. And then a new personification appears : the Prophet speaking in the person of the faithful of the chosen people. He trembles at God's judgments ; but still in the spirit of hope. He looks forward to a future day of rest ; and though, by his coming visitation, God may blight all the temporal prosperity of the land, yet he knows that God's promise will eventually have fulfilment : that he will still be the salvation of those who trust and rejoice in him.

Thou didst strike through with^a his staves the head of
 his villages :
 They came as a whirlwind, to scatter me :
 Their rejoicing was to devour the poor in secret.
 Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses :
 Through the heap of mighty waters.
 I heard, and my belly trembled ;
 Rottenness entered into my bones .
 And in myself I trembled.

^a That is, "Thou didst inflict punishment on their magistrates."

Oh that I may have rest in the day of trouble,
 When he cometh unto the people, (when) he shall invade
 them.

Although the fig tree shall not blossom,
 And there be no fruit in the vines,
 Though the labour of the olive fail,
 And the fields yield no meat ;
 Though the flock from the fold be cut off,
 And there be no herd in the stalls ;
 Yet, as for me, in the LORD will I rejoice,
 I will joy in the God of my salvation.
 The LORD God is my strength,
 And he will make my feet like hinds' feet :
 And on my high places he will make me to walk.

§ 8. SELAH AT THE TERMINATION OF CERTAIN PSALMS.

In four instances (the 3rd, 9th, 24th, and 46th Psalms) Selah occurs at the end of the Psalm. Its occurrence in this place can only be accounted for by supposing a connection between the Psalm in which it is found, and some other, which was, or might be, performed in sequence.

As to the 4th and 9th Psalms, it has been already shown how the 4th forms a sequel to the 3rd, being responsive to it in all its several parts. And the 10th Psalm is evidently a part of the 9th. With respect to the 24th and 46th the case is not so obvious.

The 24th Psalm has no such intimate connection with that which follows. But a question fairly arises, whether the whole, or a portion of this Psalm, may not have been occasionally, on certain festivals, so connected with the whole, or a portion of another, as to form a special hymn for that particular occasion? That such has been the custom of the Church in all times is evident. Thus, on the great festivals, the Psalms are in every part of the

universal Church performed out of their proper sequence, a selection being made appropriate to the season. The versicles and responses of the liturgies both of East and West are eclectic extracts from the Psalms. The anthems in use in the Church of England are, in a very large proportion, parts of different psalms, wrought together so as to form new hymns. And as respects the musical service of the choirs, we know how frequent it is to borrow from the verse or chorus of one anthem and join it to another, as in the occasional use of the Hallelujah Chorus of Handel; or to perform sometimes one division, sometimes another, of a long composition, as in the instance of Orlando Gibbons's unequalled anthem, "O clap your hands."

But of a similar practice in the Choirs of Israel we have the most distinct evidence in the Sacred Volume itself. Thus the 108th Psalm, as before observed, is altogether made up of extracts from two others; its first part being identical (with the exception of a few slight variations) with the third division of the 57th; its second, with the second division of the 60th. And both these borrowed parts are discriminated, both in the 57th and 60th Psalms, from the rest of the context, by the word *Selah*. This is a remarkable fact, and illustrates strongly one of the functions of the *Diapsalma*. These parts were then to a certain degree regarded as distinct compositions, which occasionally were disjoined from their original context: the very change of sentiment and strain which originated the word *Diapsalma* sanctioning such an occasional practice.

In like manner, the 135th Psalm is a compilation from parts of the 115th, 134th, and 136th. The 70th Psalm is identical with the termination of the 40th, which is the same as saying that the latter part of the 40th was occasionally disjoined from its context, and used as a separate Psalm. The *Diapsalma* in-

deed does not occur in these Psalms; but the practice which that word accurately discriminates in other instances is here to be found. It will be reserved for a future Dissertation to observe upon these peculiarities, as bearing upon the authorship and sequence of the Psalm; as also upon the resemblance which several of the Psalms bear to one another, being evidently different modifications of the same original theme.^a It is sufficient to observe, at present, one remarkable instance of this eclectic method recorded in the first Book of Chronicles (xvi. 8.), where David's Psalm, sung at the bringing up of the ark of God to Jerusalem, is composed of a portion of the 105th Psalm, of the whole of the 96th, of that verse of such frequent recurrence, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious," &c., and of the two concluding verses of the 106th.

Now of the 24th Psalm it may first be remarked, that the first portion, or Diapsalma, very much resembles the beginning of the 15th; being, though an abridgment in words, yet an advance in sentiment upon the character of the righteous man, described in the latter. In the 15th, the details of the righteous man's conduct are more full, while the Divine reward is less explicitly announced, and is of a less exalted nature: "He that doeth these things shall never fall." In the 24th, the strong outlines only of the righteous man's character are given; purity of heart, and the rectitude of conduct thence springing; while the blessing announced is not merely security, but the bestowal of spiritual good:

" He shall receive the blessing from the Lord,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation."

^a Compare the 6th and 38th; the 8th and 144th; the 14th and 53rd; the 15th and 24th; the 96th and 98th.

Nor is this the only adaptation observable in the Psalm under consideration. The commencing verse, "The earth is the Lord's," is borrowed from the words of Moses. The second Diapsalma is altogether distinct in sentiment and in construction; and such as might well form the commencement of another hymn on certain occasions, to be followed by a Diapsalma taken from some other part of the Psalter. Now if we take both, or either portion, (especially the second) of the 47th Psalm in connection, one consistent hymn closely corresponding in sentiment, and obviously requiring a similar strain, may be constructed. I do not mean to say that a more callida junctura may not be discoverable; but I think enough has been said to show that this explanation of the final occurrence of the word *Selah* is not only probable, but altogether consistent with the analogy of Sacred Poetry.

As to the 46th Psalm, a similar solution may be offered. Compare its last Diapsalma, at the end of which *Selah* occurs, with the second and fourth of the 66th, which, as we before remarked, are parallel. Each of these begins with the same words, "O come hither;" while the commencement of the third division of the 46th Psalm corresponds to the second of the 66th, in almost identical terms: "and behold the works of the Lord:" "and behold the works of God." And the sentiment is cognate: God's wonders as displayed in his judgments upon men; and his wonders as displayed in his disturbing the course of nature. I am much mistaken if there is not an obvious and most intimate connection between these two Psalms: the comparison of which one with the other will heighten and illustrate the moral force and excellency of each. Ps. xlii.

§ 9. ON THE VARIATIONS OF THE SEPTUAGINT AS TO THE OCCURRENCE OF SELAH.

In seven instances, the Septuagint version varies from the received Hebrew text, in the insertion or omission of the Diapsalma, which it may be well to notice briefly, in order to illustrate more fully the use of the word.

In the second Psalm, the LXX inserts it, without the authority of any existing Hebrew manuscript; and, as it would seem, erroneously, at the end of the second verse: "against the Lord, and against his Anointed." The Diapsalma would naturally occur either at the fourth verse, "He that sitteth in heaven," or at the beginning of God's speech, "Yet have I set my king," &c. It is true it ushers in the speech of the confederate kings; but if occurring here, it ought to be repeated when a change of subject and person takes place.

The 34th Psalm, however, affords an interesting example of its occurrence, which may serve to illustrate a feature of the Psalms already laid down. It has been remarked by critics, that the three distichs about the centre of this alphabetical Psalm, do not contain the word JEHOVAH, or the LORD, which forms the characteristic word of the poem, and occurs in all the other verses, except two, in all of which it is obviously implied. The concluding verse, which forms a quatrain, (all the others being distichs,) contains the word in its third line. Dr. Kennicott^a gives a happy solution of this peculiarity, by observing that these three verses contain the moral lesson; and his remark may be followed up by observing, that here is an instance of the cardinal truth being con-

^a Remarks on Select Passages in the Old Testament, p. 187.

tained in the centre of the poem: these six lines being a practical exposition of the "Fear of the Lord." Now in the Septuagint the Diapsalma precedes the distich which ushers in this Lesson.

DIAPSALMA, OR SELAH.

Come, ye children, hearken to me,
 The fear of the LORD I will learn you.
 Who is the man that desireth long life,
 Loving many days, that he may see good?
 Keep thy tongue from evil,
 And thy lips from speaking guile;
 Depart from evil, and do good;
 Search for peace, and ensue it.

But, according to analogy, another Diapsalma ought to occur here, after the end of the Lesson; since the following part begins a new strain, antiphonal to the first division, and speaking, as that did, of the protecting Presence of God. I would therefore offer a conjecture, that the Hebrew copy, from which the Septuagint was translated, gave in this instance the fragment of an ancient, and perhaps the genuine, reading; the second Diapsalma having dropped out of the text. However, there is this objection to the genuineness of the above reading, that in no other instance does Selah occur in an alphabetical Psalm.

In the 50th Psalm, a second Diapsalma is given by Ps. l. the Septuagint, in the very passage where such a division would naturally have place. It precedes the second part of God's speech, "But unto the ungodly said God." This reading, therefore, though hitherto unsupported by any Hebrew copy, may not improbably be the true one.

The Diapsalma occurring in the Hebrew after the Ps. lvii. fourth verse of the 57th Psalm, is placed, in the Septuagint, at the end of the third. At a cursory view, this

would seem to make a more accurate division; but a reference to the analysis of this Psalm, already given, will show, it is to be hoped, that the received reading is most in accordance with the usual construction.

Ps. lxxx.

But in the 80th Psalm, there appears good reason to believe that the Septuagint is correct, in placing the Diapsalma after the second occurrence of the burthen of the poem, "O God of hosts, turn us again, and shew the light of thy countenance, and we shall be saved." For thus, the main subject of the poem, consisting of that beautiful parable of the Vine, is accurately separated from the prologue, which prologue consists of two parallel stanzas, each terminated by the same burthen.

1.

O Shepherd of Israel, give ear:
 Thou that ledest Joseph as a sheep:
 Thou that sittest between the Cherubim, shine forth:
 Before Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh,
 Lift up thy strength, and come to save us.
 O God, turn us again,
 And shew the light of thy countenance, and we shall be
 saved.

2.

O LORD God of hosts,
 How long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy
 people?
 Thou makest them to eat the bread of tears,
 And thou makest them to drink of tears in great measure.
 Thou makest us a strife to our neighbours,
 And our enemies are scornful to us.
 O God of hosts, turn us again,
 And shew the light of thy countenance, and we shall be
 saved.

The Psalm concludes with the same burthen: but observe the greater intensity of expression in each

instance. First, "O God, turn us again;" then, "O God of hosts; and lastly, "O Lord God of hosts."

The second Diapsalma is wanting in the Septuagint version of the 88th Psalm. But that this was a defect of the text, may be concluded from what has been already said in the analysis of that Psalm. Ps. lxxxviii.

In the 94th Psalm the Septuagint has a Diapsalma at the end of the fifteenth verse: "And all the upright of heart shall follow it:" introducing the third and last division of the Psalm, "Who will rise up for me against the wicked?" Its occurrence here is plausible, as it certainly discriminates one of the three divisions of the Psalm. But the case is not a strong one; and there is no other instance of a Diapsalma in Psalms of this class, namely, those which form the fourth part of the Book, according to the division of the Jews. Ps. xciv.

§ 10. SELAH A KEY TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF OTHER PSALMS.

Since the Diapsalma appears to be an index of construction, it might naturally be expected to find a similar construction in other Psalms, from which it is absent; if it be admitted that plausible reasons may be assigned for the partial occurrence of this mark of discrimination. This expectation will be amply realized by those who give but common attention to the structure of the Psalms. It has been endeavoured, in the arrangement of the whole book which forms the first volume of this work, to exhibit these divisions in such a way as at once to guide the eye, and therefore to assist the reason, in this investigation: an investigation which is a deeply moral exercise, since it regards, not mere words or syllables, or metre, but the due discrimination of sentiments and truths of the deepest cogency.

It will therefore be unnecessary to go into any lengthened detail of proof. But for the satisfaction of the reader, some of the most remarkable instances will be brought forward, of those several species of Psalm, the key to which has been already given.

- Ps. vi. First, then, of bipartite Psalms. The 6th Psalm is obviously bimenbral: the first part is complaint, the second thanksgiving; the change taking place at the words, "Away from me, all ye that work vanity."
- Ps. xi. The 11th contains, in the first part, the machinations of men; in the second, beginning, "The Lord is in the temple of his holiness, &c.," the judgments of God. In like manner the 64th and 70th.
- Ps. lxiv. and lxx. The 19th changes from the visible to the invisible works of God: from the heavens, which declare his glory, to his law, which converts the soul. The 22nd, from that awful complaint, prophetic of our Lord's sufferings, to the song of triumph, in which Christ "telleteth of his name unto his brethren, and in the midst of the congregation praiseth him:" the most glorious contrast which the whole Book of Psalms affords.^a
- Ps. xxviii. Of a like twofold strain is the 28th. The 45th, prophetic of Christ's alliance with his Church, has two divisions: the first being an address to the Messiah, the second to the Church, beginning, "Hearken, O Daughter, and consider; incline thine ear."^b
- Ps. xlv. The 51st has two regular divisions. The first contains the prayer of penitence, with a recurring burthen at equal distances, the same in sentiment, though varying in expression, each speaking of his sin and his iniquity. The second division, beginning, "I will teach transgressors thy ways," speaks of pardon, and the consequent sacrifice of praise. And,
- Ps. li. to mention no other, the 148th affords a magnificent
- Ps. cxlviii.

^a Heb. ii. 12.

^b See Bishop Horsley's four celebrated and unanswerable Sermons, vindicating the prophetic application to our Lord.

instance of two parallel strophes, each terminated by a corresponding sentiment or epistrophe. The first strophe is the praise of the heavenly creation :

Praise ye the LORD.
 Praise the LORD from the heavens :
 Praise him in the heights :
 Praise him, all his angels :
 Praise him, all his host :
 Praise him, sun and moon :
 Praise him, all stars of light.
 Praise him, heaven of heavens :
 And waters above the heavens.
 Let them praise the Name of the LORD .
 For he commanded, and they were created.
 And he hath made them to stand for ever and ever :
 A statute he hath given : and it shall not pass away.

The second part is the praise of the terrestrial creation.

Praise the LORD from the earth,
 Dragons, and all deeps :
 Fire and hail, snow and vapour,
 Wind of storm, fulfilling his word :
 Mountains, and all hills,
 Trees of fruit, and all cedars ;
 Beasts, and all cattle,
 Creeping things, and fowl of wing :
 Kings of the earth, and all people :
 Princes, and all judges of the earth :
 Young men, and maidens also :
 Old men, together with children :
 Let them praise the Name of the Lord :
 For high is his Name alone ;
 His worship is above earth and heaven.
 And he shall exalt the horn of his people,
 The praise of all his saints,
 Of the children of Israel,
 Of a people near unto him.
 Praise ye the LORD.

In this Psalm the first part gradually descends from

the highest heavens to the verge of our earthly atmosphere: the waters that are above the heavens. The second part ascends from the great deep, and its inhabitants, to the elements of air and fire, thence to the earth, and lastly to the inhabitants of earth, man forming the climax. With this arrangement the Song of the three Children mainly corresponds: First, heaven with its inhabitants. Secondly, the heavenly bodies. Thirdly, the elements of air and fire. Fourthly, the seasons and days, influenced by the heavenly bodies and elements. Fifthly, the earth with its inanimate productions. Sixthly, the waters with theirs. Seventhly, the fowls of the air. Eighthly, the beasts of the field. Ninthly and lastly, man: a gradation being observable in this division: first, the visible Church, his chosen people; his most favoured portion of that people, the priesthood; then the Church invisible, that royal priesthood, which consists of his true servants; then his eminent saints, both departed and in the body; and lastly, the ascription of praise is brought home to the utterers of the song themselves, under the personification of Ananias, Azarias, and Misael: this personal interest in the giving of thanks adding to the reality and vitality of the Hymn, like the sublime termination to be found in more than one Psalm, "Praise the Lord, *O my soul.*"

In many tripartite Psalms, the middle portion contains the action, catastrophe, or central truth of the poem, as already noticed. Thus, in the 2nd, while the first part contains the attempts of the wicked, and the third the moral of the poem, the second part contains the cardinal prophecy, announcing Christ as the Messiah, as the King of the earth, and as the destroyer of the enemy. In the central part of the 31st the judgment of the ungodly is declared: "They shall be ashamed and silent in hell," &c.; and also the heavenly rest of the good: "Thou shalt

Ps. ii.

Ps. xxxi.

hide them in the hidden place of thy presence from the provoking of man; thou shalt lay them up in a pavilion from the strife of tongues:” and the Psalm concludes with thanksgiving. The plan of the 58th is the same. In the 73rd, the future judgments on his enemies is revealed to the king, perplexed at the prosperity of the wicked, when he goes into the sanctuary of God, and understands from God’s oracles their end; this Psalm being commemorative of a signal event in the life of King Hezekiah^a, as will be shown in a subsequent Dissertation.

Ps. lviii.

Ps. lxxiii.

The Prologue is found in the 72nd Psalm, and is followed by two parallel divisions, which alike describe the merciful and prosperous reign of the Messiah.

Ps. lxxii.

In other tripartite Psalms there is a progression in the action or sentiment. Thus, the 33rd has in the first part, five stanzas; the first an introductory couplet, the other four quatrains speaking in general of God’s power. The second part celebrates his judgment on the heathen. The third speaks of his protection of his people; the whole being descriptive of the Exodus, and the events preceding and following. The 69th has first two parallel divisions, exactly antiphonal in all their parts: a deep prayer of complaint, the similar imagery of the mire, the deep waters and floods of misery: the like mention of his faithless friends and persecutors: the last division being a song of thanksgiving. This prophetic Psalm the Church has ever interpreted as speaking of the sufferings and the resurrection of Christ, and is parallel to the 22nd, both of which are used in the course of the service for Good Friday.

Ps. xxxiii.

Ps. lxi.

The 102nd Psalm has three accurately marked divisions: the first, the prayer of the afflicted; the

Ps. cii.

^a 2 Kings, xix. 14. to the end.

second, the arising of the Lord, to have mercy upon Sion, and the restoration of the people: the last, an epode, containing a summary of the whole; beginning at the words, "He afflicted in the way my strength," &c.

Ps. cxxxii.

In the 132nd, the prologue speaks of the preparation of the temple: the second part is the prayer to God on its opening: the third, God's answer; which is expansive of the prayer, and gives more than was asked. The righteousness and the joy implored for Sion is granted; and added to this, "her provision in blessing he will bless; her poor he will satisfy with bread." This will be seen by placing both prayer and answer in juxtaposition: the corresponding portions being marked by similar numbers.

THE PRAYER.

1. Arise, O LORD, into thy resting place:
Thou, and the ark of thy strength:
2. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness;
And let thy saints sing for joy.
3. For the sake of David thy servant,
Turn not away the face of thine Anointed.

THE ANSWER.

3. The LORD hath sworn to David in truth:
He will not turn from it.
Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.
If thy children keep my covenant,
And my testimonies which I shall learn them,
Then their children for ever shall sit upon thy throne.
1. For the Lord hath chosen Sion,
He hath desired it as a dwelling for himself.
This is my rest for ever:
Here will I dwell, for I have desired it.
2. Her provision in blessing I will bless;
Her poor I will satisfy with bread:
And her priests I will clothe with salvation:
And her saints in singing shall sing for joy.

3. There will I make to bud the horn of David :
I have ordained a lantern for mine Anointed :
His enemies I will clothe with shame :
But upon himself his crown shall flourish.

Each division of the 147th Psalm begins with a similar expression of praise: "the LORD" and "thy God" occurring in each. Ps. cxlvii.

1. Praise ye the LORD :
For it is good to make a psalm to our God.
2. O sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving
Make a psalm to our God on the harp :
3. Rejoice, O Jerusalem, in the LORD :
Praise thy God, O Sion.

In each division God's works of providence and grace are spoken of: but in the second his power is mercifully operative, and the moral reason of his mercy is shown: while in the last his special blessings to Israel are recorded, and his works are shown to be types of his spiritual influence.

A recurring burthen frequently discriminates the parts. Thus, the 42nd and 43rd, which obviously form but one poem, are each discriminated by an epistrophe, or concluding burthen, which also terminates the whole:— Ps. xlii.
and xliii.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul,
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Wait thou for God, for I will yet praise him,
The salvation of my countenance, and my God.

And observe the advance in sentiment of the last portion; which thus expands the expression, "the Presence of God," occurring in the first; and shows the spiritual nature of the service which he desired to render in his sanctuary.

O send forth thy light and thy truth: they, even they shall lead me:
 They shall bring me unto the hill of thy holiness, and unto thy tabernacles.
 And I will go unto the altar of God,
 Unto God, the gladness of my joy;
 And I will give thanks to thee upon the harp, O God, my God.

Ps. lvi. The 56th Psalm has, in three divisions, a twice recurring epistrophe:

In God will I praise his word:
 In God have I trusted:
 I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

But its second recurrence has an amplifying sentiment interposed; "In the LORD will I praise his word." And this middle division may be considered as containing the action.

Ps. xci. An epistrophe, similar, though in each instance amplified, occurs twice in the body of the 99th, a tripartite Psalm, and at the end.

1. Let them give thanks unto thy Name, so great and to be feared:
 Holy is He.
2. Exalt ye the Lord our God:
 And worship him at his footstool:
 Holy is He.
3. Exalt ye the Lord our God:
 And worship him at the hill of his holiness.
 For holy is the LORD our God.

Ps. cvii. The 107th Psalm is apparently the most regular, in its whole structure, of any in the Psalter. The strophes and antistrophes are discriminated with an accuracy that is not exceeded in any Greek choral ode, by that remarkable epistrophe,

Then they cried unto the LORD in trouble;
 From their distresses he delivered them.
 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his mercy,
 And for his wonders to the children of men.

But on this it is needless to enlarge; since the illustration of this Psalm has been given at length, in the highest strain of moral criticism, by one to whose elucidation the author feels it would be presumptuous in him to add a word.^a

The 90th Psalm contains five divisions: the first Ps. xc. being a prologue: the second, beginning, "Thou turnest man to destruction," is parallel in its topics to the three following, all being reflections on the shortness and misery of human life: but the last announces, in antiphonal strains, the only remedy — the never-failing mercy of God: and concludes with an evident allusion to a more excellent creation than that spoken of at the beginning of the Psalm.

But it is needless to enter upon more instances: and indeed it is to be feared that the detail even already given may appear to intellectual minds redundant. There are few things more wearisome to a quick apprehension than the minute enlargement on particulars, when once the key to their investigation has been afforded. It is now therefore time to draw the present Dissertation to a close. The examination of the Psalms, as given in the first volume of the present work, will, it is hoped, bear out, to a considerable degree, the theory offered in the preceding pages.

I would now offer a few practical remarks bearing upon the subject of this treatise. There is a growing disposition in the members of our communion (and may God's Spirit prosper it!) to recur to the Psalter with a more kindly affection, as the genuine voice of the Church militant. It is to be confidently expected that this spirit of true catholic piety may gradually promote the better apprehension, both moral and

^a See the translation and arrangement of this Psalm, with observations on it, in the Appendix to Mr. Forster's Life of Bishop Jebb.

intellectual, of that inexhaustible storehouse of divine wisdom. Still, it cannot but be evident, that in the musical recitation of the Psalms in our choirs, we are far from having attained to any regular and consistent plan, by which a sober and decorous *expression* may be given to songs so varied in their sentiment. The writer of these pages, after a long and attentive consideration of the subject in all its bearings, is convinced, as surely as of any position he has ventured to support in the course of his work, that great attention to this *expression* was paid in the divinely instituted music of the Temple. The very structure of the Psalms themselves seems to suggest, that, on more solemn occasions at least, they were sung to strains very much resembling our more elaborate verse anthems, with alternations of single or fewer parts and chorus^a: and that, even when sung in a simple method, there was nothing of that monotonous mode of performance which is recommended by some authorities, of no ordinary learning and piety, in the present day. The arguments against a varied expression in music might just as well apply to expression in poetry itself. If the one is to be discouraged, no reason appears that the other should be retained. But if it be alleged,

^a This is the opinion of a learned writer, who is acknowledged to be an authority in these matters; Mr. Bedford, in his *Temple Musick*, pp. 90, 91., who shows that in all the various parts of our choral service we assimilate to the Temple precedent. 1. The antiphonal chanting, as in the Psalms: 2. the simultaneous recitation: 3. the louder recitation, in the Gloria Patria: 4. the lower, in the Confession: 5. the uniform method of response, as in the Litany: 6. the varied method, as in the suffrages of Morning and Evening Prayer. "And lest all this should not be sufficient, we have an anthem to be sung, where the composer is at liberty to use the utmost strains which either art or fancy can invent, either in a single part, or in a concert. . . . And therefore our Cathedrals are the only places in England" (he might add in the world) "which have gathered up all the fragments of antiquity, (in relation to Church music,) that nothing might be lost, and at the same time hath left a skilful artist wholly at liberty to make the utmost improvements which the age is capable of."

that the poetry is a divine ordinance, no reason whatever can be shown to prove that the other was not divinely ordained. No argument can be drawn from the supposed precedent of the early Christian Church. The ancient music of the Jews had been long judicially withdrawn from the memory of man: and music in the early Christian ages, as the very labours of Gregory the Great attest, was in a rude and degenerate state. I must therefore beg here to reassert an opinion (expressed more than once before) that to limit the chanting of our choirs to the Gregorian tones, and especially to their unisonal method, and their more artificial singing to our full anthems only, is really to go back to a state of imperfection. That God's Spirit has been with the Church of England, to approximate our music to something nearer the ancient melodies and harmonies of the Temple, I am fully persuaded: though fully conceding that ornament and studied effect have often been carried too far, as they must always be, if a religious end be for a moment forgotten.

But to apply these remarks. Is it too much to hope, that the ecclesiastical rulers of our choirs may yet, in their several sanctuaries, make the chanting of the Psalms a matter of more strict regulation than hitherto; one upon which the learning even of theologians may yet be brought to bear? The diligent pains of a Dean or Precentor, mindful of the labours of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, might well be bestowed on some fixed regulation, by which should be defined the elevation or depression of the voices of the choir, and the use of the varied stops of the organ, which represent the instrumental concert of Israel; and this, with a careful regard to the intrinsic character, and peculiar construction, of each Psalm. By such a method, the alternation of verses or of stanzas, the strophes and antistrophes, the moral gradations,

and all the other peculiarities of the Psalter, might be faithfully exhibited. And if this one rule were attended to, namely, that at every occurrence of the Diapsalma (or Selah), some marked change should take place, either from verse to chorus, from the choir organ to the swell or great organ, or from the major to the minor key, or the contrary, it is hardly to be doubted but that the Psalms would be better understood, not only by the ignorant, but by minds of the highest intellectual and moral cultivation. These considerations are earnestly submitted to the judgment of the Church, from a conviction of the necessary connection of two great objects, which ought never to be separated, namely, the private edification of the faithful, and the promotion of God's visible service in the midst of the congregation.

NOTE ON DISSERTATION I.

THE following is a classification of the various interpretations which have been given of the word *Selah*, referred to in page 3.

1. *For ever*. This meaning derives its authority from Jonathan Ben Uzziel, the author of the Chaldee Paraphrase, who translates it by לְעוֹלָם. He is followed by Aquila, who renders it *ἀεί*. Symmachus follows him in Habakkuk only, rendering it elsewhere by *δαΐψαλμα*. The same meaning is given by the following Jewish writers: Rabbi Joseph Paraphrastes, Jarchi, Mardochei Nathan, Rabbi Sal Ben Melec, and others. For these and other Jewish authorities, see a lengthy and pedantic dissertation, in Ugolini's *Thesaurus Antiq. Sacrar.* vol. xxxii. p. 689., by Johannes Paschius: "Dissertatio de *Selah* philologicè enucleato;" also in the same work and volume, p. 680. "Excerpta ex Bibliothecâ Rabinicâ Julii Bartoloccii de Você *Selah*." Bartolocci asserts that "Universa Synagoga Judaica pro *semper* accepit;" to which meaning he adheres. But this is incorrect, since many of the Jews give other interpretations, as will be presently shown.

Among the Christians, St. Jerome avowedly follows Aquila, deferring to his knowledge of Hebrew, (*Epist. ad Marcellam*. Bened. edit. vol. ii. 707.) though giving it merely as his opinion, and enumerating other meanings. So St. Chrysostom: *μήποτε ὑψωθῶσιν ἀεί, τὸ γὰρ δαΐψαλμα τοῦτό ἐστιν. . . . Ἐβραϊστὶ σὲλ εἶρηται τὸ δαΐψαλμα*. (*Expos. in Psalm. 139. v. 8. et seqq.*) But luminous and comprehensive as are this eminent father's doctrinal and practical expositions of holy writ, he is often vague and contradictory upon points of verbal criticism, which was not his province. It appears, however, from Theodoret, that in the Eastern Church at least this opinion was not general, as he says *one* writer follows Aquila's interpretation: *εἷς δὲ, τῇ τοῦ Ἀκύλα χρησάμενος ἐρμηνείᾳ, τὸ ἀεί τίθεικεν ἀντὶ τοῦ δαΐψαλματος*. (*Pref. in Psalmos*.) That learned writer of the middle ages, Augustin Justiniani, in his *Glossmata in Octaplum Psalterii*, as also Santes Pagninus and Steucus Eugubinus, have followed St. Jerome.

2. *Amen*; or *ita est*. St. Augustine (*Enarr. in Psalm. iv.*), mentions *fiat* among the various meanings. Aben Ezra is the principal maintainer of this opinion among the Jews, rendering it by בְּנֵי הַהָהָה and כִּבְהָה (in Psalm iii. 3.), and is followed among Christians by Tremellius, Junius, Osiander, and Beermannus.

3. *The initial letters of three words.* Gottlieb Reine (Ugol. Thes. xxxii. p. 727.) and Michaelis so consider it.

4. *The divine name or attributes.* Paschius (already cited) renders it, the most high God; and Bytmeister (Ugol. Thes. vol. xxxii. p. 731.), “propitius (est Deus).”

5. *Nota Bene.* Bythner: Clarius, Ravenellus, Zeiroidus, who considers it to mean something like Sursum Corda.

6. But the notion of a *musical note* is supported by Kimchi (in Psalm. iii. 3.) deriving it from שָׁשֵׁב, to elevate: by John Forster, (in the 16th cent.) in his Hebrew Dictionary: by Calvin, Stephanus, Bodinus, Mariana, Drusius, Mollerus, Buxtorf, Grotius, Leigh, Hammond, Geierus, Bishop Patrick, Vriemoct, Rabbi David, Heumann, Selneceerus, and Dathe. Their different shades of opinion it would be needless to notice. But Buxtorf, Grotius, and Hammond compare it to the *Evroæ* of the Latin Church; *i. e.* a short formula which contains the notation of the conclusion of the chant.

7. *A pause.* So Justin Martyr and Optatus, as cited in page 5., and rendered by them *diapsalma*. It is rendered δίαψαλμα by Symmachus (in the Psalms) and by Theodotion. St. Gregory Nyssen, after stating the opinions of others, considers it a pause in the Psalmody, in order to receive some special inspiration: μεταξὺ τῆς ψαλμωδίας γενομένη κατὰ τὸ ἀθρόον ἐπηρέμησις, πρὸς ὑποδοχὴν τοῦ Οὐόθεν ἐπικρινομένου νοήματος. (Tractat. in Psalmos c. x.) Euthymius Zigabenus and St. Augustine mention this as one of the conjectural meanings: the words of the latter are, “intervallum psallendi: ut Psalma sit quod psallitur: diapsalma verò interpositum in psallendo silentium.” (Enarr. in Psalm. iv.) So Tarnovius, Calovius, and Pfeiffer (the latter deriving it from the Arabic سَلَام, to be tranquil,) Deutschmannus, Olearius, and Meiremburgius.

8. *Change of sentiment, metre, or tune* (the opinion adopted in the text). Origen (in Psalm. Bened. ed. ii. 522 C.) mentions this among other opinions: ἔοικε μουσικοῦ τινος μέλους, ἢ ῥυθμοῦ τροπῆς γενομένης, ἢ τοῦ διαψάλματος παρακείσθαι παρυσμεύωσις· πολλάκις δὲ καὶ καινοίας ἐναλλαγὴ . . . ἢ ῥῆ δὲ ποτε καὶ προσώπων μεταβολή. So Eusebius (in Ps. iv.) ἢτοι τῆς καινοίας ἐναλλαγὴν . . . ἢ τάχα μεταβολὴν τοῦ μέλους . . . ἢ τὸν ῥυθμόν. He adopted this opinion in exchange for one which he had held before, based on an absurd tradition. (Pref. in Psalm.)

St. Gregory Nyssen, in the passage cited above, gives very valuable testimony. He expressly says that this interpretation was held by those of former times: τοῖς πρὸ ἡμῶν, μεταβολὴν τοῦ νοήματος, ἢ προσώπων, ἢ πράγματος σημαίνειν ἐνομήσθη τὸ διάψαλμα.

So St. Jerome (though not his own opinion): “Commutationem metri, alterius sensus exordium, rhythmī distinctionem, ejusdam

musicæ varietatis silentium." Theodoret, a reverent follower of the opinions of antiquity, states as a generally received opinion, that the diapsalma meant a change of metre: ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἐρῶ-
μήκοιτα, καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἄπιωτας τῆς θείας γραφῆς ἱρμυρευτὰς τῷ
διαψάλματι κεχρημένους εὐρίσκων, οὐ δίκαιον ἠγοῦμαι τοσοῦτων μὲν
καὶ τοιούτων καταφρονῆσαι, εἰδὸς δὲ μότου διανοία πιστεῦσαι οὐδ' ἰὴ
χάριν μέλους ἐναλλαγὴν ὑπολαμβάνω σημαίνειν τοῦ διαψάλματος τὴν
γραφὴν. (Præf. in Psalmos.) Cosmas Indicopleustes (as cited by
Calmet, and in the Collectio Nova Patrum, vol. ii. p. 223.) considers
it to mark the strain that is begun by another choir: this latter
part being called Diapsalma; the former, Canticum diapsalmatis.

Thus too the ancient Lexicographers. Hesychius: μουσικῶν μέ-
λους ἢ ῥύθμον τροπῆς γενομένης, ἢ διανοίας καὶ ἐνάρμεως λόγου ἐναλ-
λαγῆ. And Suidas: μέλους ἐναλλαγῆ. Euthymius Zigebeus has the
same words. And Cassiodorus gives as his own opinion; "Sermo-
num rupta continuatio, docens ubicunque fuerit, aut personarum,
aut rerum fieri permutationem." (Præf. in Psalm. c. xi.)

Among the moderns, De Dieu and Micælius support the inter-
pretation of a new strain: Geierus, (as one of his meanings,) the
concert of the whole choir or congregation, in which remark Heu-
mannus joins. Meibomius considers it as the termination of vocal
and beginning of instrumental music. "Ob id Selah ferè semper
in illis Psalmis poni credidi, qui מְנוּחָה *h. e.* cantiones et voces et
organo per vias decantandæ inscribuntur." But the most decided
opinions are those of three writers, two of ancient and one of mo-
dern times.

The first authority is St. Hilary of Poitiers, who thus gives his
own opinion, applying his rule when commenting on several Psalms
in which it is found: (*i. e.* the 51. 53. 54. 58. 59. 60. 61. 65.
66. 67. 142.) "In diapsalma verò, quod interjectum in plurimis
psalmis est, cognoscendum est, demutationum, aut personarum, aut
sensus sub conversione modi musici inchoari; ut si ubi diapsalma
intercesserit, aut aliquid aliud dici, aut etiam ab altero dici, aut in
altero artis musicæ modulo cantari intelligendum est." (Prologus
in Lib. Psalmorum.)

The second is a critic of no mean powers, whose works are joined
with St. Chrysostom's, and have been falsely attributed to that
father. He considers Selah to indicate a change of person or sen-
timent, and sometimes an alternation of choirs: διαψάλμα ὁ προ-
φήτης ἐπήγαγεν, ἐπειδὴ τὸ τὸν Θεοῦ πρόσωπον ἐναλλαξίας, αὐτὸς πάλιν
τὸ οἰκείον εἰσήγαγε, δοξάσαι τὸν Σαὼν ἐξ οἰκείου χαρακτήρος βουλόμε-
νος (in Ps. lxxxvi. 2. Bened. ed. vol. v. 757. : εἰ δὲ πάλιν ἐδοκί-
μασε κατὰ τὸ μέσον τοῦ ψαλμοῦ καὶ ἄλλῃ χορῶ παραδοῦναι τὸ λοιπὸν
τοῦ ψαλμοῦ, τότε αὐτῇ ἢ διαδοχῇ τοῦ ψαλμοῦ ἐκαλεῖτο διαψάλμα
(Proœm. in Psal. v. 540.) He illustrates this function of the

diapsalma in several places: Vol. v. 757. and 759. a. -- 761 E. -- 767. c. 768. E. 769. B. &c. His illustration of the 89th Psalm is peculiarly happy.

The modern authority is that of the eminent critic, mentioned at large in the introduction to this work, namely, Burkus. In his note on Ps. iii. 3. he says, "Vox hæc (Selah) optime exprimitur per Græcorum διάψαλμα, *interstitium* in ipso psalmo, forsan etiam *pausam* in ipso cantu musico denotans. Finis hic est partis psalmi primæ," &c. And he applies this principle to the word as often as it occurs.

9. *The cessation or suspension of inspiration.* Eusebius. This was his first opinion, as already stated, which he afterwards changed. St. Jerome gives as one of the meanings, "paustrationem spiritus; and Theodoret, τῆς τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐνεργείας παύλαν.

THE
BOOK OF PSALMS.



DISSERTATION II.

DISSERTATION II.

ON THE TITLES OF THE PSALMS.

§ I. GENERAL REMARKS.

THE Titles prefixed to the Psalms do not admit of the same definite elucidation which has been attempted, in the preceding Dissertation, with respect to the word SELAH.^a Indeed, so great are the difficulties attending this enquiry, that, in many instances, little more than conjectures can be offered. Still these conjectures have been carefully based upon the examination of the scanty evidence, both external and internal, which can be brought to bear upon the subject.

Two definite assertions, however, may be confidently made. The first is, that the Titles stand upon the same ground as the word Selah, as to their authenticity and antiquity, and therefore are to be considered as a part of the sacred text. The second assertion is, that they are intended as an index to the primary and literal, not to the secondary and mystical, intention of the Psalms, and to the circumstances of their liturgical performance.

^a The biblical scholar need hardly be reminded of Sonntag's elaborate work "Tituli Psalmorum in methodum anniversariam redacti." This deeply learned writer may be considered as having exhausted the subject, as far as the statement of the various opinions of critics is concerned. But to the present writer, the book appears, as a whole, to be ill digested, and far from satisfactory. There is too great a tendency to adopt fanciful and allegorical meanings.

That the Titles were anciently considered as part of the sacred text, appears from the fact of their being retained by the authors of the Septuagint version. That they are of great antiquity, may be presumed, from the apparent ignorance of their real meaning, which those translators frequently betray. They evidently endeavoured to translate the words before them with scrupulous fidelity; but many of the circumstances of the Temple worship having been forgotten, they often mistook the meaning of those words, giving a sense which etymology would abstractedly permit, but which in no way harmonized with the context.

If our second assertion be correct, namely, that the Titles have a direct, not a secondary meaning, this assumed fact will account for the obscurity of the Septuagint translation, which is often perfectly unintelligible. For the perfection of the Temple service and music having long declined, or at least the translators having been long estranged from the land of their fathers, the details of that service would, in all probability, have been forgotten. There is reason to believe, that even to Levites themselves, who lived contemporaneously with the Greek translators of the Psalms, many of the technical terms, which form a considerable portion of the Titles, had lost their meaning.

That the Titles are not mystical, may be gathered from the following considerations.

First, it is the very purpose of a title to be clear, simple, and explanatory. It is contrary to the ordinary course of literature, whether sacred or profane, to make an enigma of that which the reader naturally expects to find a guide; or to give, as the title of a composition, a term more obscure than any part of the text, which it thus would not illustrate, but

perplex. But if we look to the titles of the books or other portions of Holy Scripture, we shall find that the course there observed is exactly that which common sense would lead us to expect. They are very matter-of-fact and simple; for example, "The Proverbs of Solomon, the Son of David:" "This is the book of the generations of Adam," &c. The Psalms recorded in the historical books are prefaced by clear and unequivocal statements of the occasions upon which they were composed. And even one of the most mystical books, the Song of Solomon, has no enigmatical title, but simply this, "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's." "The vision of Isaiah, the Son of Amoz," is the title prefixed to those prophecies which announce most emphatically the mystery of godliness. And so of Daniel, and the Prophets, and other books of the Old Testament. Where these are mysterious or prophetical, we are told so; but the titles themselves are not mysterious, but intelligible announcements.

Now if the mystical theory be adopted, its effect must be, to cause far greater perplexity to the understanding than the deepest or most difficult parts of the sacred context itself. For it must be remembered, that those who uphold this theory, of whom St. Augustine is well known to be the most conspicuous, rarely venture upon its application, except in those cases, where the title, in whole or in part, is so very obscure, as to admit of a wide, if not an illimitable range of conjecture; but where, it must be fairly conceded, a literal would be at least equally plausible with a figurative sense. No analogous method of mystical designation is found in passages the sense of which is clear beyond dispute; and then it is to be remarked, this supposed figurative title has rarely any connection, or but a very slight and fanciful one, with the context. For example, when St. Augustine

understands that word, which we render “to the Chief Musician,” to mean, “to the end,” as signifying “the end” or object “of the Law of Christ;” when he interprets “Nehiloth,” as “the Church, which has received the inheritance,” and Jeduthun, as “he who passes over,” who does not see that all this is vague and conjectural; that these meanings have no peculiar adaptation to the text; that they may equally apply to any prophetic part of Holy Writ (the whole of which is more or less indicative of Christ); and that this method of interpretation is at variance with the exactness and distinctness of the sacred writers, so economically sparing, even in the darkest parables, of that which is obscure?

But further. The context of the Titles itself refutes this theory. For we find this to a considerable degree perfectly, and beyond all cavil, intelligible and matter-of-fact. We find mention of David, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and the sons of Korah; in other words, of the known directors of the Temple service, and the participators in its performance. We find the words *Song* and *Psalms*, and a term [שִׁיר] confessedly appropriated in Holy Scripture to the performance on stringed instruments. We find, besides, plain statements of the occasions upon which many of the Psalms were composed. These clear facts ought surely to afford a strong presumptive argument against the notion, that the plainest statements of the most literal circumstances are incongruously mixed up with a more than oracular envelopment of the deepest mysteries, couched in phrases for which the rest of Holy Scripture affords no analogy whatever.

Having made this general statement, it remains to examine the Titles in detail. These may be divided into four classes: each of which will be considered in a separate section. The first class contains the terms

which designate the composition itself, whether Psalm, Song, Prayer, Michtam, or Maschil. The second class contains those much-disputed terms, which seem to indicate the manner of musical accompaniment. The third class relates to the authors or performers. The fourth and last class contains the historical notices of the occasions upon which particular Psalms were composed or publicly performed.

§ 2. OF THE TERMS PSALM, MASCHIL, MIGHTAM, SONG, PRAYER, AND SONG OF PRAISE.

Of these several designations it may be remarked in general, that they each present the same object under a different aspect. A careful analysis of the Psalms will show that they cannot severally be appropriated to any particular species of poem, such as Ode, Elegy, Monody, or Hymn; and that it is vain to seek a characteristic peculiarity, whether in sentiment, style, or construction, defined by any one of these terms.

The fact appears to be, that these terms were severally applied by the collectors or editors of the Psalms, at those various periods when the different recensions took place, upon which observations will be made in the third Dissertation. And this opinion will, it is hoped, be sufficiently borne out by considering the etymology of the words. It is first to be observed, that three of these terms are nouns of precisely similar construction. They are formed from verbs, by prefixing the letter M. Thus, *Mi-z'mor*, (translated by us *Psalm*) is formed from *Zamar*; *Mi-ch'tam* from *chatam*, and *Ma-s'chil* from *Sachal*. They therefore appear analogous at the first view.

Mizmor.

The first word, MIZMOR, or Psalm, is the designation of forty-four sacred poems, thirty-two of which are ascribed to David.^a The English reader must observe, that this word is not the same in the original Hebrew as that which forms the general title of the book of Psalms; the latter expressing a Hymn of Praise. The word *Psalm*, however, as used both in the context and in the titles of the individual compositions, is uniformly *Mizmor* in the original; a term which accurately defines their poetical character. To explain its proper meaning, I must have recourse to the beautiful and accurate definition of Bishop Lowth.^b

“The word *Mizmor* signifies a composition, which in a peculiar manner is cut up into sentences, short, frequent, and measured by regular intervals.”. . . He adds that *Zamar* means to cut or prune, as applied to the removing superfluous branches from trees; and, after mentioning the secondary sense of the word, “to sing with a voice or instrument,” gives it as his opinion, that *Mizmor* may be more properly referred to the primary sense of the root, so as to mean a poem cut up into short sentences, and pruned from all superfluity of words, which is the peculiar characteristic of Hebrew poetry. . . . Metrical speech is called *Zimrah*, that is, cut and pruned in every direction, having its sentences, like branches, distributed into regular form and order; like the vine,

^a Those ascribed to David are the iii. iv. v. vi. viii. ix. xii. xiii. xv. xix. xx. xxi. xxii. xxiii. xxiv. xxix. xxxi. xxxviii. xxxix. xl. xli. li. lxii. lxiii. lxiv. ci. cix. cx. cxxxix. cxl. cxli. cxliii. The others are the xlvii. xlix. l. lxxvii. lxxix. lxxx. lxxxii. lxxxiv. lxxxv. xcviii. c. These do not include the Psalms called Mizmor Shir, which will be noticed separately.

^b Adeoque apud eos ipsum carminis vocabulum מִזְמוֹר *cam vim* habet, ut designet orationem, peculiari quodam modo in breves, crebras, certisque intervallis demensas sententias intercisam. (Praelectio iii.)

whose luxuriance the vine-dresser checks with his knife, and which he puts into shape by amputation.^a

We are to observe, that in the many passages where *Mizmor* or *Psalm* occurs, it is always connected with the ascription of religious praise. It is also found in frequent apposition with the word *Song*^b; and in several places is joined with the *harp, psaltery,* and *ten-stringed lute*.^c So that the proper definition of the word appears to be *a lyrical Poem*; its poetical structure being the prominent feature, but the musical accompaniment of vocal and instrumental modulation being always included as a secondary ingredient.

The Greek language has happily and accurately rendered this word by $\Psiαλμὸς$, which we have adopted in our word *Psalm*. But we have not adopted the root of the noun, the verb $\Psiάλλω$, which means, to sing to a stringed instrument. Hence in the translation attempted in the former volume, the awkward periphrasis, *to make, or sing, a Psalm*, was of necessity adopted.

The word *MASCHIL*, on the other hand, designates Maschil. the sacred poems under the aspect, not of their poetical construction, or lyrical adaptation, but of their moral purport. The root of this word signifies *to direct*

^a זָמַר, incidit secuit, putavit, amputavit; superflua nimirum et luxuriantia ex arboribus. . . . Potest enim (זָמַר) ad priorem radicis notionem proprius referri, ut denotet carmen in breves sententias concisum, et ab omni verborum luxurie resectum, quæ Hebræorum præcipue carminum est ratio. . . . Metrica oratio est זָמַרָה, præcisa undique et amputata, sententias, veluti palmitibus, in certum ordinem et formam distributis; quasi vitis, quam vinitor luxuriantem falce compescit, fingitque putando.

^b See in particular 1 Chron. xvi. 9.; Judges v. 3.; 2 Sam. xxii. 50.; Ps. xxi. 14., xxvii. 11., xxxiii. 2., lvii. 10., lix. 20., lxxviii. 4., ci. 2., civ. 34., cv. 2., &c.

^c Ps. xxxiii. 2., lxxi. 22., lxxxii. 2., xeviii. 7., exliv. 10., exlvii. 7., cxlix. 3.; Amos, v. 23., &c.

wisely^a; its obvious meaning is, therefore, a wise direction, a moral lesson, a didactic composition. Now this sense is applicable to the Psalms of which it forms the title, in the same degree only that it may be applied to every portion of the Psalter, as doubtless it may. For though, as Rosenmüller justly observes, the 32nd Psalm, where it first occurs, may with peculiar propriety be called a didactic poem^b, yet the other Psalms so designated are far from having this distinctive character. The 78th is, indeed, didactic, but only as an historical Psalm, the other compositions of the same kind having no such title prefixed.

That it means a sacred composition, is evident from the sixth verse of the 47th Psalm, where the passage which we render, "Sing ye praises with understanding," is literally, "Sing ye a *Maschil*," or song of instruction. This word occurs as a title in thirteen places^c; and six times is prefixed to compositions of David's. In several instances it occurs in consecutive psalms; *i. e.* in the 42nd (of which the 43rd is the sequel), the 44th, and 45th: the 52nd, 53rd, 54th, and 55th: the 88th and 89th. A circumstance which favours the notion that the term was one peculiarly used by some particular editor or collector of a certain portion of the Psalter.

Michtam.

But this consecutive use of the same designation is still more remarkable in the occurrence of MIGHTAM. This is prefixed to six^d Psalms, and to five of these (from the 56th to the 60th inclusive) in regular sequence: all being compositions of David. The

^a It is specially applied to the prudence of David's conduct. 1 Sam. xviii. 14. and 30.

^b See also Archbishop Leighton's Meditations in Psal. xxxii. Qui cum adeo insignem religionis *κρηται* *ὁδὸν* continent, merito Maschil inscribitur. (Prælectiones, edit. Scholfield, p. 299.)

^c Ps. xxxii. xlii. xliv. xlv. lii. liii. liv. lv. lxxvi. lxxviii. lxxxviii. lxxxix. cxlii. Those ascribed to David are the xxxii. lii. liii. liv. lv. cxlii.

^d Ps. xvi. lvi. lvii. lviii. lix. lx.

proper meaning of the root of *Michtam* is to engrave, or to stamp a metal. It therefore, in strictness, means an engraving or sculpture. Hence in the Septuagint it is translated *στηλογραφία*, an inscription on a column. Rosenmüller considers the root [כתם] to be identical with a word which signifies writing, [כתב]^a and which differs only in one letter; namely, B at the end, instead of the cognate liquid M, two letters of frequent interchange in oriental languages.^b

If this conjecture be allowed, then, as *Mizmor* defines the style and form of the poem, and *Maschil* its moral object, so *Michtam* defines its authorship: a *Michtam of David*, signifying a *Psalm composed or written by David*.

But I would venture to offer a conjecture in perfect harmony with this view. It appears by the titles of four out of these six Psalms, that they were composed by David while flying and hiding from the persecutions of Saul. What then should hinder us from imagining that they were inscribed on the rocks and on the sides of the caves which so often formed his place of refuge? This view would accord with the strict etymological meaning of the word, and explain the rendering of the Septuagint. That this was the ancient manner of recording not merely historical facts, but poetical sentiments, we are shown by the recent wonderful discoveries in Arabia^c, the forerunners, it is to be hoped, of extensive researches into the primitive history of mankind. The rocks were the books of the ancient Oriental nations, as Petra, Arabia, and Egypt abundantly testify.

It remains to notice one interpretation of the word, which will not stand the test of internal evidence.

^a Hezekiah's Song (Isaiah xxxviii. 9—20.) is called *מִכְתָּב*.

^b Thus *Νεβρωδ* occurs in the Septuagint instead of *Νεμρωδ*, &c.

^c See Mr. Forster's *Historical Geography of Arabia*, vol. ii. sect. 7., and the Appendix at large.

This is, "a golden Psalm," the root of the word bearing the meaning of *gold* among its other significations. But there is nothing in the style or sentiment of the Psalms in question which can claim for them a peculiar preeminence above the others in the book.

Shir. The word *Shir*, the meaning of which (*Song*) is unquestioned^a, is prefixed to many of the Psalms^b, three times simply, and thirteen times in connection with *Mizmor*.^c There is no mark of peculiarity in their composition. The meaning of the word seems to be discriminated from *Mizmor*, as signifying a thing to be sung, without reference to its poetical structure. Possibly *Mizmor* may have more peculiar reference to the accompaniment of the harp; though internal evidence does not encourage this view. When the two words occur together, the meaning seems to be, *a lyric poem appointed to be sung*.

The SONGS OF DEGREES will be noticed in their place in the third Dissertation, as they have a specially historical interest.

Tephillah. The designation, TEPHILLAH, or *Prayer* is of rare occurrence, only in the 17th, 86th, 90th, and 102nd. This speaks for itself, referring simply to the religious object of the Psalms; and in the instances where it occurs, the sentiments are deeply supplicatory.

Tehillah. TEHILLAH, or *Song of Praise*, (appropriated as the general designation of the whole book) occurs as the title of the 145th Psalm, ascribed to David; and is accurately significant. This Psalm is generally supposed to form the first portion of that continuous hymn of thanksgiving which forms the remainder of the book.

^a In 2 Chron. v. 13., the expression occurs כלי השיר *instruments of song*; that is, instruments which accompany song.

^b Psalms xviii. xlv. xlvi.

^c Psalms xxx. xlvi. lxxv. lxxvi. lxxxiii. lxxxvii. lxxxviii. xcii. cviii.

§ 3. ON THE MUSICAL OR CHORAL TITLES: VIZ. THE CHIEF MUSICIAN, NEGINOTH, SHEMINITH, SHOSHANNIM, ALAMOTH, MUTHLABBEN, GITTITH, ABELETH HESHARAR, AL-TASCHITH, JONATH-ELEM-RECHOKIM, MAHALATH, NEHILOTH, SHIGGAION, AND HIGGAION.

This division of the Titles is confessedly the most obscure. Of many of these little more can be confidently said, than that they have relation to the choral performance of the Psalms. That this, however, is the case, may be reasonably argued from the connection of some of these terms, as *Alamoth*, *Sheminith*, and *Neginoth*, in the original text of Holy Scripture, with the instrumental performance of the Temple Songs, as will presently be shown.

The first of these terms^a, translated in the English Bible, “to the Chief Musician,” has given rise to many conjectures. In the Septuagint, the Hebrew word is translated, *εἰς τὸ τέλος*, *to the end*; a meaning so utterly vague, as to defy all reasonable conjecture. The fact seems to be, that the translators, having lost all memory of some circumstances of the Temple service, took at hazard one of the secondary meanings of the Hebrew root, which signifies *continuance* or *termination*. Another secondary meaning of the word, *preeminence*, has encouraged the lovers of mystical interpretation to translate it thus, *to the Conqueror*, or *to the Giver of victory*, applying the term to Christ. It is strange that Bishop Horsley, so eminent for manly and vigorous good sense, and critical acumen, should in this respect have adhered to an interpretation so much at variance with the real mysticism of Holy Scripture. But he is not always consistent, since he renders the title of the 49th Psalm, *to the Precentor*. That the learned Mr. Parkhurst should have taken the same mystical view, is no more than might have been

The Chief Musician.

^a לְכַנְנִיחַ.

expected from his peculiar notions, which, though in no way interfering with his orthodoxy, in some instances perverted his deep and well digested erudition.^a

I have the satisfaction of appealing to the high authorities of Dr. Hammond and Bishop Patrick, for adhering to the sense given in our authorised translation: *to the Chief Musician*. As Dr. Hammond remarks, the word in question signifies in 2 Chron. ii. 1. the overseers of the hewers of wood, which was destined for the building of the Temple. The same sense is given in the 18th verse of the same chapter, and in the 12th of the 34th chapter. But in 1 Chron. xv. 21. the verb whence the noun is derived is distinctly applied to the superintendence of the Levitical choirs: "And Mattithiah and Elipheleh (&c.) with harps on the Sheminith, *to oversee*" (as the margin of our Bible renders it); that is, the men here mentioned were the directors of the several bands of the performers on eight-stringed harps.

There can be no reasonable doubt, therefore, that we are justified by the etymology of the word, and by its scriptural application elsewhere, to give it this sense, which is not only *à priori* probable, but confirmed by internal evidence. For we find it joined, in its very first occurrence (the Title to the 4th Psalm), with *Neginoth*, a word which unquestionably means *stringed instruments*; and in many other instances with terms which analogy encourages us to consider choral or musical designations: whereas the mystical interpretation is not only farfetched in its etymology, but strained and vague in its application. All the Psalms are indeed

^b It surely is a reproach to our country that the valuable Hebrew Lexicon of this distinguished scholar should be so much neglected. A strong conviction must here be avowed, however old-fashioned it may appear, that it is at least equal in real learning to the popular work of Gesenius, and far superior to it in philological science and philosophical arrangement.

more or less prophetic of Him who giveth us the victory, our blessed Lord. But some of those which speak most markedly of this victory, want this title, while in very many instances the spiritual conquests of Christ do not form the prominent subject of the Psalm.

The meaning of the term, then, appears to be this. The Psalms in which it occurs were given in charge by their inspired authors to the Chief Musician overseeing some specific band of music, whether harps, psalteries, or wind instruments. In many instances, however, I apprehend that this direction has peculiar reference to the strain with which the Psalm begins; sometimes, that it should begin by an accompaniment of one species of instrument only, the full band joining in subsequently, as possibly after the first Diapsalma: sometimes that the leader should begin with a solo on a particular kind of harp (as on that called *Gittith*), to accompany but a single voice, as in our verse anthems.^a This latter usage seems consistent with the commencement of many of the Psalms.

As to the next term, *NEGINTH*^b, (or in the singular number *Neginah*;) there is no difficulty. It is applied, in many passages of Scripture, to the playing on the harp, being the technical word used in connection with the species of harp called *Kinnor*^c; not with that called the *Nabal*, or Psaltery. In many places^d it is

Neginoth :
Neginah.

^a To those who are competently skilled in the musical antiquities of the Church of England, it is well known that this species of anthem, so often condemned as a modern innovation, was in frequent use during the reigns of James I. and Charles I., as appears from many compositions still extant. I must acknowledge a conviction, that similar compositions were in use in the Jewish choir, and think it very probable, that in the Temple the use of the Psalms was twofold, as with us; viz., that they were both chanted, and sung as Anthems.

^b Occurs in Ps. iv. vi. liv. lv. lxi. lxxvii. lxxvi.

^c 1 Sam. xvi. 16. 23.; Isaiah, xxiii. 16. In Isaiah, xxxviii. 20., it is joined with *neginoth*.

^d 1 Sam. xvi. 17, 18., xviii. 10., xix. 9.; 2 Kings, iii. 15.; Ps. xxxiii. 2

used absolutely. In the 68th Psalm, at the 27th verse, there is a remarkable passage: "First go the *sharim* (or singers), then follow the *neginim* (or the harps called *kinnor*), in the midst are the *alamoth* (or the harps called *nabal*, or psalteries), the players on timbrels." Owing to the obscurity which envelopes the instrumental music of the Hebrews, we cannot trust to Jewish tradition for any accurate definition of their various species. Even Josephus is not altogether accurate: since he speaks of the *nabal* or psaltery as an instrument of twelve strings^a; whereas we know from the second verse of the 33rd Psalm that it had but ten. But there seems good reason to credit his assertion, that the *kinnor*, which we translate *harp*, and to which he erroneously assigns ten strings, was struck with a bow, or plectrum. It is natural to suppose that a technical term was applied to the more artificial way of playing; and indeed we know from the testimony of classical antiquity, that this was the ancient method of striking stringed instruments among the Greeks.

The word *Neginoth*, then, may be understood to be synonymous with the *kinnor* or harp: that is to say, the instrument of eight strings, probably played with a bow or plectrum.

Sheminith.

That the *kinnor* had eight strings may be gathered from a consideration of the next term to be considered, *Sheminith*.^b That this word has reference to some quality or peculiarity of the *kinnor*, or harp, is proved from a passage already cited, 1 Chron. xv. 21., where *harps on the Sheminith* are spoken of. This term is an epithet peculiar to the harp, as that of *Alamoth* is to the psaltery. But as to its meaning, commentators are

^a Antiq. vii. 12. 3. ἡ μὲν κινὴρ, ἕκκα χορδαῖς ἐξημνῆρη, τύπτεται πλὴκτροῦ ἢ ἔτε γάβλα, ἑὸς ἕκκα φθόγγων ἔχουσα, τοῖς ἑακτύλοις κρούεται.

^b It occurs in Ps. vi. and xii.

not agreed. Setting aside the mystical meanings^a, which as usual are no more than conjectural, the etymology of the word refers us to *eight*. Some^b suppose the eighth band or course of the Levitical choir to be signified: but this would be inconsistent with the passage in the Book of Chronicles just now cited, the whole context of which evidently speaks of the permanent arrangement of the choral service, and of the various species of instruments, not of the twenty-four courses. Vatablus interprets it, “a tune in which the octave note is prevalent.” But this is equally inconsistent with the above passage: for thus we should understand the harpers of the temple to be restricted to but one key, and its relative major or minor. Mr. Bedford, in his *Temple Service*^c, has ingeniously endeavoured to show that this and the other titles indicate the tones or keys in which the Psalms were sung, and gives specimens illustrative of his theory; but the objection now stated stands in his way. The Septuagint renders it *ὄπερ τῆς ὀγδόης*, *on the eighth*; and Dr. Hammond and others consider it to mean an instrument of eight strings; an opinion which seems plainly borne out by analogy, as may appear from the following considerations.

We have no less than four numerical terms in the Hebrew Text, connected with the titles of the Psalms. Two of these are, unquestionably, designations of musical instruments. The first is the *ten-stringed lute*, (literally, the *ten*, עשׂר) which we know to be identical with the nabal, or psaltery. The second is, the *three-stringed instruments*^d, [שׁלשׁ] which were

^a St. Augustine (Enarr. in Ps. vi. et xi.) considers it to mean the day of judgment, that day which follows upon the completion of the seven great mystical periods of time.

^b See Calmet; whose notes upon all the titles of the Psalms are very copious.

^c Chapter ix.

^d 1 Sam. xviii. 6. This is the marginal reading in the English Bible.

played by the women who came out to welcome Saul and David after their victory. There is no other instance of the occurrence of this term; which, however, exactly corresponds with the three-stringed guitar represented on the Egyptian monuments^a; a rude and simple instrument, probably of merely secular employment, and unworthy of being used in the Temple; as we find no trace of it in the sacred orchestra of the Jews. Analogy would therefore plainly indicate that the *Sheminith*, or *eight*, and the *Shushan*, and *Shoshannim*, or *six*, would mean instruments of six or eight strings. And thus we find each more perfect species of harp used in the Temple distinguished from the others by an accession of two strings; six, eight, ten: and if we suppose, as we may reasonably do, that these instruments were either provided with frets, or stopped with the fingers, like our viols, there appears sufficient latitude provided for the most extended melody, and most perfect harmony.

By SHEMINITH, then, may be understood *the harp of eight strings*: the terms *Neginoth*, *Sheminith*, and *Kinnor*, having all reference to one and the same instrument: the first signifying the mode of playing it, the second its compass, the third its specific designation.

Shushan
and Sho-
shannim.

The next term to be considered is SHUSHAN^b, and its plural SUOSHANNIM. As already observed, analogy would lead us to consider it as meaning a harp of six strings. If this view be correct, then it is derived from the Hebrew term for six [שש] with the letter N added at the end. The word *Shushan* has, however, other meanings. One of these is *change*, which is

^a See the plates representing musical instruments, in Sir J. G. Wilkinson's *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, vol. ii. pp. 286. 301, 302. &c.

^b *Shoshannim* occurs in the title of Ps. xlv. lxix. and lxxx.; in the latter joined to *Eduth*. *Shushan*, joined to *Eduth*, in Ps. lx.

adopted by the Septuagint^a, and by St. Augustine, who considers it to mean the conversion of the heathen to Christianity. Another is a *lily*, of which nothing satisfactory or consistent can be made; unless we imagine (a supposition which must be admitted to be merely fanciful) that it designates a harp in shape like a lily, thus resembling one of the most common forms of the Grecian lyre. But the numerical signification of *six strings*, is the most obvious and consistent.

In conjunction with this word, in two out of the four places where it occurs, is found the term EDUTH. The meaning of this is *testimony*. Schleusner translates the two words thus associated, *the hexachord of testimony*. Now it is recorded in the First Book of Chronicles, (xvi. 37—42.) that before the final removal of the tabernacle service to Jerusalem, a part of the choir was stationed at Gibeon, where the tabernacle was pitched, and the sacrifices performed: another part (the company of Asaph) was stationed at Jerusalem, before the *ark of the testimony*. I conceive, therefore, that *Shushan Eduth* means a harp of six strings, first or principally used in the psalmody which was performed at Jerusalem before the ark, a designation retained when all the choirs were united, on the completion of the Temple of Solomon.

Shushan.
Eduth.

The term ALAMOTH, which occurs in the Title of the 46th Psalm only, and in the text of the 68th, though doubtful as to its actual meaning, is clearly an epithet applied to the *Nabal*, or psaltery, one of the two principal species of stringed instruments. This appears by a passage in the First Book of Chronicles, (xv. 20.) connected with that in which the *Shewinith* is mentioned, where a certain portion of the choir is described as playing on the psalteries *on Alamoth*. But the meaning of the word is involved in the

Alamoth.

^a ἐπὲρ τῶν ἀλλοιωθησομένων.

greatest obscurity. It may signify either *hidden things*, or *things pertaining to youths*. The former signification is adopted by the Septuagint, and by St. Augustine, who applies it to the mysteries of the Gospel. Bythner, with others, conjectures it to mean a song performed by youths or virgins, or else an acute symphony, in high or treble notes. Now the Psalm in which it occurs is certainly not characterized by any deep mystery: it is animated, and most clear and intelligible in its subject and expression. Besides, the signification of *mystery* is utterly out of place in the 68th Psalm, where, as already observed, it is connected with terms plainly musical or choral, "the songs, the stringed instruments, the timbrels." That it means the performance of young men or women, is also repugnant to the intimations of Scripture History, since the psalteries on Alamoth were the stated instruments of one of the choirs, composed as these were both of men and boys, and not of women. But it is not at all inconsistent with etymology to suppose, that it signifies instruments of a high pitch, unisonous with youthful voices, (as we speak of tenor, treble, and bass viols,) perhaps tuned an octave above the kinnor, or harp. By some the word has been ingeniously translated *virginals*, which is literal; meaning, however, not as the term used to be employed by us, an instrument commonly played by young women, but one resembling, in its pitch and compass, the female voice.

But there is another conjecture which I would offer, which it will be in place to mention when examining the words *Gittith* and *Aijelath*.

At present it will be sufficient to determine this much, that *Alamoth* and *Nabal* are synonymous, meaning the psaltery or lute, of ten strings. From two passages in the Psalms, xxxiii. 2. and cxliv. 9., it appears that the *Nabal* had ten strings; so that the

latter term [עֶשְׂרֵי], where it occurs absolutely, is to be understood as designating the psaltery.

In connection with *Alamoth*, I am strongly of opinion we ought to take that very obscure title, which occurs but once, in the 9th Psalm, MUTH-LABBEN. If the present reading, or rather division of the words be correct, the meaning is, *the death of the Champion*, referring, as some have supposed, to Goliath.^a This, however, is not supported by the internal evidence of the Psalm; and it is at variance with the usual clearness of the historical notices found in the Titles. Were reference to Goliath intended, he would have been mentioned by name. But there is good reason for believing that the present Hebrew reading is corrupt; and that with the Septuagint^b, instead of [עַל מוֹת לַבֵּן] *Al muth labben*, *On the death of the Champion*, we ought to read [עַל עֲלֻמוֹת לַבֵּן] *Al Alamoth Labben*, “On Alamoth of Labben.” This is Kimchi’s reading. But the meaning of Labben is altogether uncertain. Some consider it to refer to the proper name of a singer, *Ben*, mentioned in 1 Chron. xv. 18. But this reading has been justly suspected as corrupt. All that the present writer can bring forward on the subject, is a conjecture made by some, that [לַבֵּן] *Labben* is, by a casual transposition of the letters, an anagram for *Nabal* [נָבַל], the Psaltery. Of such transpositions we have several instances in the text of the Old Testament.^d

Next, as to the word GITTITH, or rather ΗΑ GITTITH; the word *Gath*, of which *Gittith* is a regular formative, means a *wine-press*, and so it is translated by the Septuagint. But it is also the

^a Bythner.

^b ὑπὲρ τῶν κρυφίων τοῦ υἱοῦ.

^c Vide Bythner.

^d As, *algum*, 2 Chron. ii. 8., for *almug*, 1 Kings, x. 11. And in proper names, Betah, (2 Sam. viii. 8.), for Tibbath, 1 Chron. xvii. 8. Ard, (Numb. xxvi. 40.) for Addar, 1 Chron. viii. 3., &c. &c.

proper name of more than one city both in Philistia and in the Holy Land. As many have understood it, it may mean a harp or instrument of *Gath*, brought by David from the Philistian city of that name. It has not, however, been sufficiently considered, that one of the Levitical cities was *Gath-Rimmon*. And here a conjecture would be hazarded, which, in the total absence of all direct evidence, I would be disposed to consider the most probable. It is to be observed, that there are three Levitical cities, whose names resemble three designations in the titles^a, *Alemeth*, *Aijelon*, and *Gath Rimmon*. What is there, then, to hinder us from supposing that the designation *Alamoeth* may mean harps constructed or improved by some Levite of *Alemeth*; that *Aijelath-he-shahar* means a harp of *Aijelon*, and *Gittith* one of *Gath*; just as we now speak of a German flute, or a Cremona violin?

Aijeleth-
he-shahar.

The second of these terms, *Aijeleth-he-shahar*, (which occurs in the 22d Psalm,) is utterly obscure, if the ordinary interpretation be adopted. It may mean *the hind of the morning*, or rather of the dusky dawn, or *the interposition of the morning twilight*. The *interposition of the darkness*, is the conjecture of Bishop Horsley, referring to the miraculous darkness that took place at the crucifixion of our Lord, of which the 22d Psalm is prophetic. But the objection to this mode of interpretation has been already anticipated, at the beginning of the present Dissertation. I therefore rather incline to the meaning suggested in the preceding paragraph, though utterly unable to assign any probable meaning to the epithet *Shahar*.

Al Tas-
ciith.

The words, AL TASCITH, occur in the titles of

^a 1 Chron. vi. 60. 69. Alemeth is called Almon in Joshua, xxi. 18. Aijalon may in like manner have been called Aijelath: as Salmon, (Ruth, iv. 20.) is called Salmah, 1 Chron. ii. 11.

but four Psalms^a, three of which are in sequence, are entitled *Michtam*, and are assigned to David. The words may mean, *destroy not*. The Targum refers this to a saying of David's: and some to the 12th verse of the 59th Psalm, "Destroy them not, lest my people forget it." But how is this applicable to the other Psalm in connection, or to the 75th? Some understand by it a tune beginning with these words, to which the Psalms in question were set. It is possible that it may be a direction to the transcriber, when a recension of the Psalms was made by Hezekiah, Josiah, or Ezra; that these three *Michtams*, or autographs, may not be destroyed.

Still, it appears to the writer of these pages far more probable, that *Taschith* is the name of some instrument. Its termination *ith* is the same as that of *Sheminith* and *Gittith*: and the word *Al* [לָא] may legitimately be interpreted *on*, instead of *not*; the words לָא and לֹא being in this sense synonymous.^b It is likely that *Taschith* is synonymous with some other instrumental designations.

The title JONATH ELEM RECHOKIM is perhaps the most difficult in the whole Book of Psalms. It occurs but once, in the title to the 56th Psalm. The apparent meaning of the words, according to the Targum (adopted by Bythner), is, *the dove silent (in) distant places*: the Targumists understanding this of the captivity and dispersion of the Jewish church and nation. The Septuagint had evidently another reading in the text before them, since their rendering is, ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ τοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁγίων μεμαρτυρημένον which reading St. Augustine, as usual, follows: "pro populo qui a sanctis longè factus est." The second

Jonath
elem rechokim.

^a Psalms, lvii. lviii. lix. lxxv.

^b לֹא occurs in most instances; but we have לָא נהלות (Ps. v.) אל שינים ערות (Ps. lxxx.)

word, *elem*, אֵלֶם, is very obscure: it may mean either *silent*, or a *band* or *company*.

Now it must be admitted, that the mystical or figurative interpretation of these words is a good deal favoured by a passage in the preceding Psalm, the 55th (with which the 56th is evidently connected), where two of the very same terms are used; *the dove*, יוֹנָת, and the escaping to *distant places* אֲרָרֵיק. It might seem as if there were in this Psalm an allusion to its author under the image of a dove, who had already made her escape to a distant resting-place.

It may therefore be just possible, that these words contain a direction to connect the 56th Psalm, on some particular occasion of its performance, with the first Diapsalma of the 55th, which terminates with that beautiful simile. It has been already seen, that such occasional selections of portions from different compositions, forming one concrete psalm, were by no means uncommon. Still this is but a conjecture, offered with much misgiving.

I am rather disposed to think, that these words announce the name of some instrument, with epithets of its specific nature, which it is now impossible to determine. May we, however, without the imputation of profaneness, offer a conjecture, that the title, affixed in days posterior to the days of David, may allude to some instrument of Grecian origin, adopted into the Jewish church? *Jonath* will bear the meaning of Grecian; and *rechokim* may apply to that distant nation. So it is applied by king Solomon, in his prayer at the Dedication of the Temple.^a And it appears that in the time of King Hezekiah, many strangers did come to Jerusalem, and joined in the public services.^b

^a 2 Chron. vi. 32.

^b 2 Chron. xxx. 25.

It is perfectly certain, that at the time of the captivity, instruments with Grecian names were adopted by the Chaldeans. Thus, at the dedication of Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, we find the *Symphonia* and *Psanterin*, or Psaltery, &c.^a This is enough to show that some of the artistic designations of Greece were adopted by one of the oriental nations: and there is no direct evidence to contradict the supposition, that the Hebrews may possibly have received some aid in the details of art from Greece, through Phœnicia, the channel through which they had themselves imparted letters, and the first notions of sacred poetry, to that most highly gifted and intellectual family of the Gentiles.

There can be no reasonable doubt, that the word next to be considered, MAHALATH^b, is connected with the Temple music. For this term, either in the singular or plural number, is continually used in connection with the Timbrel, [תִּמְרָל] and often with the harp.^c In some passages of our translation, it is rendered *dances*; but this is obviously wrong. The root of the word signifies *to make a hole* or *perforation*, hereby indicating a perforated instrument, a pipe or flute. This is borne out by a passage in Isaiah^d, where *Mahalath* means the perforations in the rocks. In most of the passages where the word occurs, it is connected with rejoicing, and not always with the ritual service of the temple or tabernacle: the tabret, with which it is commonly associated, being the uniform accompaniment of songs of gladness. But the two Psalms to which it is prefixed are of an elegiac, not of a joyful character. From which it may be collected, that although its general, and especially

^a Daniel, iii. 5.

^b Occurs in Psalms liii. and lxxxviii.

^c Exodus, xv. 20.; Jer. xxxi. 4. 13.; Ps. cxlix. 3., cl. 4. In all these instances, occasions of rejoicing are mentioned.

^d Isaiah, ii. 19.

its secular use, was at times of rejoicing, yet in the Temple service it was not so restricted.

Mahalath-le-annoth.

In the 88th Psalm, the word LE-ANNOTH follows. About this there can be no difficulty. The Hebrew word נָעַן means to sing or to perform antiphonally, or alternately, a sense in which it is employed in the Psalms themselves.^a *Mahalath-le-annoth* therefore means pipes or flutes played alternately by each division of the choir.

Mahalath may be considered synonymous with the *Hallil* (a word formed from the same root), which means a pipe; and was employed both in secular and sacred music. According to the traditions of the Jews, as Dr. Lightfoot relates^b, the *Hallil* and the Hautboy were used in the Temple service on certain occasions only, at twelve stated times in the year. This tradition may account for the rare occurrence of the word in the titles of the Psalms.

Nehiloth.

The word NEHILOTH, which occurs but once, in the title to the 5th Psalm, may be regarded as synonymous with or cognate to Mahalath: a regular formation from the same root הָלַל . The Septuagint, understanding it to be derived from נָחַל , to *inherit*, have translated it by $\kappa\lambda\eta\rho\sigma\iota\sigma\mu\acute{\iota}\alpha$, *an inheritance*. Dr. Hammond, by a somewhat forced method of interpretation, understands *inheritance* to imply *succession*; and that the word signifies the succession or alternate performance of the two sides of the choir. But the meaning suggested above seems the most probable and consistent.

Shiggaion.

The term SHIGGAION occurs twice: once in the singular number, as the title to the 7th Psalm; and

^a Ps. cxlvii. 7. . . . Adnotari potest, verbum נָעַן , quod proprie significat respondere, usurpári latius de quavis cautione; vel a præcipua specie ad reliquas translato vocabulo, vel quod apud Hebræos omne fere carmen Responsorii quodammodo formam haberet. — *Bishop Lowth, Præl.* xix.

^b Temple Service, chapter vii. § 2.

once in the plural, in the title to the Prayer of Habakkuk, ΣΗΓΓΙΟΝΟΘΗ.

The root of this word means, *to wander*; and, in consequence, by the greater number of interpreters, it is understood to signify *a wandering song*.^a Bishop Horsley, with great felicity, thus defines it: “a wandering ode: in different parts, taking up different subjects, in different styles of composition.” This definition will strictly apply to both the poems with which the word is connected: their construction being irregular, and their transitions singularly abrupt. Tremellius and Junius, in accordance with this view, understand *Shiggaion* to mean, an ode of various metres.

There seems no difficulty in the way of adopting this interpretation. By *Shiggaion*, therefore, may be understood an ode composed in various measures, and consequently adapted to different modes of recitation and accompaniment. By the words *on Shiggaionoth* may be understood, *on various instruments*, whether as regards their compass or their quality: this variety harmonizing with the varied style and sentiments of the poem.

It remains to notice one word more, strongly resembling the last in its construction, and occurring but twice in the Psalms.^b Though not a title, still as a musical designation, it may be in place to observe upon it, before concluding the present section. This is ΗΙΓΓΑΙΟΝ. That it is a musical designation is plain from the fourth verse of the 92nd Psalm.

Upon the ten (stringed instrument), even upon the psaltery.

Upon a *higgaion*, on the harp.

^a The LXX simply renders it ψαλμός, in Ps. vii. and μετὰ φθῆς in Habakkuk. Bythner, and Parkhurst, a wandering song. Rabbi David, a musical instrument, or tune unknown. Kimchi, “cum cantico.” Dr. Adam Clarke absurdly supposes the Title of Habakkuk’s Ode to be posterior to the composition.

^b Ps. ix. 17., and xcii. 4.

The *Higgaion* is therefore put in apposition with the ten-stringed instrument, as the harp is with the lute. And since it plainly appears from other passages that the word translated "ten stringed," is an epithet of the nabal or psaltery, it follows that *higgaion* is an epithet of the kinnor or harp. It is translated *a loud instrument* in our Prayer Book, but more accurately in the English Bible by *a solemn sound*. The root of the word signifies *to meditate, to murmur, to make a low murmuring sound*. It occurs in a moral, not a musical sense, in Psalm xix. 5., "the meditations of my heart," or, as it may more properly be rendered, in apposition to "the words of my mouth," the *mutterings* of my heart; the less audible language of my inmost soul. In the Book of Lamentations (iii. 62.) it is applied to the insidious mutterings of malignant enemies.

The second passage in which it occurs, with an apparently choral meaning, is after the first Diapsalma of the 9th Psalm, where it precedes the word *Selah*. By which may be understood, that here a low and subdued symphony, possibly on the harp, but more probably with trumpets, is to be played. While in the 92d Psalm, in the passage just now cited, the deeper and more subdued tones of the harp may be opposed to the more acute and lively notes of the psaltery. This greater depth and softness of tone is evidently more consistent with an instrument like the harp or kinnor, which we know was the more peculiar accompaniment of the voice, especially in solos. It was David's favourite instrument.

This appears the most probable interpretation of a very obscure word. But I must remark, in conclusion, that some connection may possibly exist (though of its nature I cannot pretend to form a conjecture) between this word and *Shiggaion*, which so strongly resembles it, occurring in the title of the

7th Psalm, a composition analogous to the 9th, in its sentiment, style, and subject matter.^a

§ 4. OF THE TITLES WHICH INDICATE THE AUTHORSHIP:
AND FIRST, OF THE PSALMS ATTRIBUTED TO DAVID.

We now leave the uncertain and bewildered mazes of conjecture for a clear and well defined path, plainly indicated by the internal evidence of the sacred poems themselves. For though the musical or choral titles are involved in great obscurity, it is not so with the titles which indicate the several authors of the Psalms. Incidental difficulties, indeed, may occur; but the general theory is sufficiently plain and consistent.

This especially holds with respect to those Psalms expressly attributed to David. It will be impossible, it is believed, for any person of a fair understanding, and sober judgment, to examine with attention the characteristics of the several Psalms, without perceiving a great diversity of style between many, and at the same time such a strong resemblance in sentiment, in style and expression, between a considerable portion, as to suggest, *à priori*, an identity of hand. This presumption is fully borne out by the titles. The instances in which these indications do not fully correspond with the internal evidence, are so few, as to be fairly taken as rare exceptions to a clearly established rule: and even these exceptions are not of such a nature as to exclude the notion of an identity of authorship. These will be examined in their proper place. Meantime we would invite any intelligent reader, versed in the style of the Psalms, to make the experiment for himself. Let him, putting out of view for a time the titles, examine the Psalms by the light of their internal evidence, and I doubt not but

^a For some observations on the Jewish musical instruments see note (a) at the end of this Dissertation.

that he will be able to determine with accuracy which Psalms are Davidical and which are not, in those books or divisions of the Psalter where the compositions of the royal Psalmist are of rare occurrence, and intermixed with those of other prophets. I allude particularly to the 4th and 5th books.

The character of the Davidical Psalms is eminently that which modern critics, Mr. Coleridge especially, has distinguished by the epithet, *subjective*. The mind of the prophet is evidently conscious and observant of its own workings, of the alternations of hope and fear, of joy and sorrow: it is acutely sensitive of the suggestions of conscience; it is full of meditation, and loves to analyse the course of its own thoughts, their sources and their results. You always feel the author to be present: his personality is identified with all he describes or imagines. His concerns, whether spiritual or temporal, are inseparably associated with the images of external nature which he delights to paint, or with the moral lessons which he inculcates; with the recollections of the past, and the visions of the future. Though a patriot in the truest and holiest sense, his patriotism is most intimately connected with the concerns of his individual condition: though a prophet and an instructor of the people, he does not merely speak *ex cathedrâ*, like Asaph and Ethan, and as the awful oracle of God who inspires him, but as one whom the Holy Spirit has instructed to draw the deepest lessons of moral wisdom and of religious faith, hope, and charity, from the sources of individual experience: so that the very burthen of all his instructions may be concentrated in these words: "O come hither and hearken, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul!"

The leading characteristics of David's mind are shown to be, as we learn from the historical account

of his life, a singular depth of affection, a sensitiveness of conscience, and a moral courage, the result of an elastic and indomitable faith. Of all the characters in Holy Scripture, perhaps, his may be said to afford the most interesting picture of human nature; chastened indeed, but purified by the Spirit of God. Apart from his moral endowments, we see proofs of a mind cultivated and refined to the utmost. He is an accurate observer of the external face of nature; one in whom was deeply seated the very spirit of pastoral and descriptive poetry, as attested by the 8th, the 23rd, the 68th, and the 29th Psalms; but yet one who could never contemplate these visible indications of God's majesty and goodness, apart from considerations of a more religious and abiding moment. Thus, in the 18th Psalm, he could describe with the utmost justness and accuracy, and in language unequalled for its sublimity, because perfectly true to nature, the course of a thunder-storm, and the terrors of the firmament; yet so as but to heighten his consciousness of the Divine power, of the saving health of him who sitteth above the water-flood, and remaineth a King for ever. He is a master of human language, of poetry, and of music, yet so as to make them minister to the inward melody of the heart; using these divine endowments not as ends, but as instruments to ends indestructible and eternal. Though as a father, as a friend, as a subject, and as a king, he overflows with the kindest affections of humanity, and of that true philanthropy which invests every even the most exalted social relation with a character that may be fitly esteemed domestic, yet all these are but subordinate indications of that love, which finds its highest and most congenial employment in things divine, and in aspirations such as these: "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength; the Lord is my stony rock, and my defence; my Saviour,

my God and my might, in whom I will trust; my buckler, the horn also of my salvation, and my refuge." And again: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee."

And yet with this exquisite gentleness and tenderness of feeling are united, as we continually find among the noblest natures, the highest attributes of personal courage and moral fortitude. That heart which would quail beneath the stings of conscience, and feel affrighted at the power, still more than at the consequences, of sin, which would dread like a child the displeasure of God, was yet the heart of one who was emphatically the man of war, the single champion who rescued his country, when king and people alike trembled before their adversary, and who, till the evening of his days, led the armies of Israel, and taught them to conquer, and to claim preeminence over the surrounding nations. But his was no animal courage; it was unmingled with any spirit of pride or presumption. He ever acknowledges God to be the source of his prowess: as Him who taught his hands to war, and his fingers to fight. He considers himself to be but as an instrument in the hands of the Lord God of armies: and the source of his courage is shown to be moral, not physical: it depends upon the consciousness of Him who giveth him strength to war, and teacheth his hands to fight, so that his arm can break even a bow of steel. And there is the fullest indication in the Psalms, that the mind of David was brought, through the discipline of the Holy Spirit, to that happy condition which our Lord compares to the spirit of a little child: that thorough dependence on his special Providence, which is consistent with, nay, is productive of the truest diligence, and the vigorous performance of the duties of our allotted callings.

To enlarge upon qualities so varied, so profound, and so interesting to every humanized mind, would require, not an essay, but a volume. But it remains to notice one eminent characteristic, which has been shown by the most accomplished and profound critic of our day^a to be the essential ingredient of a poetical spirit. This is that emotion of the mind which the ancients, by an epithet incapable of translation, have called "*desiderium*:" that tender and enthusiastic recollection of things past, that recurrence, not unmixed with sadness and regret, to circumstances of life, whether personal, social, or political, to habits or localities, which are either beyond our present reach, or have irrecoverably gone by. To this feeling we owe the most lasting monuments of genius in all languages, and without this there can be no true and lasting poetry.^b But while the poetry of David strongly exhibits this feeling as regards the past, there is a kindred exercise of the same feeling as regards the future. This is a characteristic peculiar to the inspired instruments of divine revelation. He looks forward to the city of God, and the companionship of the Holy Spirit, with that same *desiderium* which human affection limits to earthly objects. For his heart is in heaven: his citizenship is there: he is a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, and he looks upon his future approach to that Presence where there is the fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore, rather as a return to a long-lost home, than as the entrance into a new state of being; for it is no longer mere human affection that speaks, but that

^a Mr. Keble, in his PRÆLECTIONES.

^b Perhaps in no secular poet is this feeling shown with more genuine force, than in CAMOENS, one of the noblest, and most truly patriotic spirits that ever breathed. His long estrangement from his beloved country, and his sensitive recollection of her passing glories, gave rise to strains as real, generous, and unselfish as any which human art can show.

Heavenly Spirit, which has entered into him, and taken up his abode with him.

It is a matter of peculiar and intense interest to find, that the circumstances of David's life are so minutely recorded in the historical books, as to illustrate in the fullest manner these most characteristic effusions. His various vicissitudes, his alternations of peril and security, of hope and fear, of prosperity and adversity, the extraordinary but providential change in his circumstances; that remarkable course of life, so chequered in its details both moral and external, find their reflection in that portion of the Psalms, expressly ascribed to him. Hence their varied expression, and the apparent abruptness and irregularity, at times, of their sequence. The analysis of these Psalms will form one prominent object in the 3rd Dissertation of this work, in which both the personal and prophetic application of the Davidical Psalms will be fully examined. But meantime we may observe in general, that while a perfect consistency and identity of character is observable throughout, we have no obscure indications of the different periods at which several were composed. Thus the 8th displays all the freshness, the innocence, and the spirit of calm enjoyment, characteristic of the youthful shepherd, keeping watch over his flock by night, and, according to his wont, making his intense perception of the magnificence of external nature subservient to meditations most deeply religious, the germ of that inspired prophecy into which this exquisite Ode expands. Now compare this with the 144th, also a Psalm of David's. The identity of hand it is impossible not to recognize. We have, in the first part, the recurrence of the same reflection:

O LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him,
The son of man, that thou makest account of him.

And in the latter part we have a like mention of those creatures which God has subjected to man's dominion.

That our sheep may be thousands ten thousands in our folds :

That our oxen may be strong to labour, that there be no decay.

But these reflections and topics have now received a different application. The Psalmist no longer speaks as a simple individual, apparently alone, amidst the immensity of the creation, and conscious of his own insignificance. He is the king of a prosperous nation : sensible of his responsibilities, solicitous for the welfare of his people, awfully impressed with the sovereignty of God, and at the same time deeply thankful for his providential goodness. The 144th Psalm is the prayer of long experience, of matured wisdom both political and religious : but both in this and in the 8th is recognized alike the same childlike spirit of dependence upon the Father of the Creation, the peculiar God of Israel ; the same spirit of faith that worketh by love.

If there be some Psalms of David less remarkable for the personal characteristics already noticed, this may be accounted for by his peculiar position in the advanced years of his life, when he was the instructor and prophet of his people. For example, the 2nd and the 110th are both prophetic, and there is an absence of many of the usual expressions of deep feeling and tenderness. But it is plain that this arises from the nature of the subject. The same may be said of the 105th, which is, from its very nature, strictly didactic. Still, if taken in connection with the two preceding and the two following, so as to form but a portion of one magnificent poem, the usual characteristics will be found.

There are two Psalms, the 71st and 72nd, which, if taken in connection, give a striking and affecting picture of the last thoughts of the Royal Prophet. The 71st Psalm is the song of an aged man. It speaks of a long life, signally favoured by Divine Providence, and now near its termination.

For thou art my hope, O Lord, the LORD :
 My trust, even from my youth.
 Through thee have I been holden up, even from the womb :
 From the bowels of my mother thou hast taken me.
 Cast me not off in the time of old age :
 In the failing of my strength forsake me not.
 And now when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake
 me not,
 Until I have declared thy power to this generation,
 To all those that are to come thy might.

The desire expressed in these words is amply fulfilled in the succeeding Psalm, that glorious prophecy which shall be presently examined. In the Psalm before us, we have exhibited all the hopes, the fears, the faith, and hope, and at length the joy and thankfulness, which characterize the Songs of David. It has indeed been objected, that in David's old age his enemies were vanquished, and all cause for apprehension was removed. But surely the whole tenor of Scripture history shows, that there were the seeds of faction and rebellion still latent among the people, though, by God's mercy, for a time restrained: nor were his surrounding enemies finally subdued. His parting words (as recorded in 2 Sam. xxiii. 6, 7.) speak of the wickedness of the men of Belial. And he knew, from past experience, and from matured conviction, that God's power alone can preserve from evil, whether temporal or spiritual: that under circumstances the most prosperous, we must walk with fear and trembling, and seek the continuance of the Divine protection by constant prayer; and that a

leading maxim of life should be this: "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

But at the last we find that all care and mis-giving was dispelled. For in the Psalm that follows, all is hope and joy.

That the 72nd was the last which he was inspired to compose, appears not only from the notice subjoined, ("The prayers of David the Son of Jesse are ended") but from the internal evidence. It exhibits the expiring brightness of the prophetic flame, foretelling, under the immediate notion of the reign of his beloved son Solomon, the glories of Christ's dominion. It is full of paternal affection, of piety, of faith and hope; of the most exquisite imagery, at once sublime and beautiful.

The mountains shall bring peace to the people:
 And the little hills, in righteousness.
 They shall fear thee, as long as the sun *endureth*, and
 before the moon:
 For generations of generations.
 He shall come down like rain into the grass,
 As showers that water the earth.

And he shall reach from sea to sea,
 And from the river to the ends of the earth.

There shall be an handful of corn on the earth, on the top
 of the hills,
 His fruit shall shake like Lebanon,
 And they shall flourish out of the city like the grass of the
 earth.

Where it is to be observed, that this imagery has a strong resemblance to the "last words of David," as recorded in the Second Book of Samuel (xxiii. 4.)

And *he shall be* as the light of the morning *when* the
 sun riseth,
 Of a morning without clouds;
 As the tender grass *springing* out of the earth
 By clear shining after rain.

But this is not the chief beauty and excellence of the Psalm, when regarded apart from its high prophetic functions. There is a pervading tenderness of the moral sense, rejoicing in the merciful nature of the coming dispensation, as the chief ground for his thankfulness. The mention of mercy to the poor continually recurs, and is interspersed amidst the most magnificent imagery.

He shall rule thy people in righteousness :
And thy poor in judgment.

He shall judge the poor of the people ;
He shall save the children of the needy,
And shall break in pieces the oppressor.

For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth,
And the poor, and him who hath no helper :
He shall spare the simple and needy,
Yea, the souls of the needy he shall save :
From falsehood and wrong he shall redeem their soul,
And precious shall their blood be in his eyes.

Thus every feature is eminently Davidical. The only characteristic that is absent, is the prayer of deliverance from personal evil : but this was now needless. The peace of God was with him ; and his eyes, before they were closed to the view of earthly things, could look forward with an unclouded gaze, to the blessings of that dominion which his God had promised to establish for ever.

I doubt not, but that those who have studied the spirit of the patriarchal prophecies, especially in the parting words of Moses, and of Jacob, and who believe that at the approach of death, the inspiring Presence of God is specially with his servants, will feel a conviction, that this Psalm does indeed contain the last prophecy of the King of Israel, and that in it the words of David the son of Jesse are ended.

§ 5. OF THE PSALMS OF ASAPH.

The meaning of this title is not so clear as that which defines the Davidical Psalms. There are many difficulties in the way of attributing all the "Psalms of Asaph" to one individual. It is certain, however, that there was an individual composer of that name. For we are told by the express words of Holy Scripture, that Hezekiah commanded the Levites "to sing praises unto the Lord in the words of David, and of "Asaph the Seer,"^a a notice which plainly designates Asaph as the author of the words, not of the music only, of one or more Psalms. In the Book of Nehemiah^b, Asaph is mentioned in the same sentence with David, as one of the chief promoters of the Temple Psalmody: "For in the days of David and Asaph of old, there were chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God." The obvious inference would be, that the Asaph mentioned in these passages was the contemporary of David, one of the directors of the three Temple choirs. But Bishop Patrick justly observes, that several of the Psalms of Asaph, so far from having reference to the times of David, contain strong indications of being composed in a later age, during the reigns of Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah. He therefore refers them to another author of the name of Asaph, whose name is mentioned casually in the Scriptures.^c And he observes, that the elder Asaph is nowhere called a Seer.

The last objection seems to admit of an easy reply. That Asaph, and all the directors of the Temple service, had a portion of special inspiration, may be clearly gathered from the whole tenor of the historical account of the Temple service; a service which was instituted by the express command of God, and in

^a 2 Chron. xxix. 30.^b xii. 46.^c 2 Kings, xix. 18.

the direction of which the prophets Nathan and Gad bore a part. It appears also difficult to believe that Asaph, the director of one of the two principal choirs, should have no part in the composition of those holy Songs, when his coordinate brethren, Heman and Ethan, had, if the titles of the Psalms are to be regarded as historical.

Still the first difficulty stated by Bishop Patrick is obvious. It might indeed be solved by the supposition that Asaph, the contemporary of David, was inspired to prophesy the events of Jehoshaphat's and Hezekiah's reign, in the same manner as Isaiah foretold the destinies of the Jewish people, and even mentioned Cyrus by name. But this supposition is not consistent with the economy of miracle, so visible in the Divine dispensations. Isaiah foretold some of the cardinal events of prophetic history, intimately connected with that great scheme of redemption, of which he was the emphatic herald. Not so with the events of Hezekiah's reign. Again, in the Psalms of Asaph, the prophet evidently performs "actoris partes:" he is individually concerned and interested in the events which he relates. And lastly, we have in the style of many of these Psalms, strong indications of the style and circumstances of King Hezekiah, and of the prophet Isaiah, his contemporary.

The conclusion to which the present writer has arrived, and which he will endeavour to substantiate by a brief analysis of the Psalms themselves, is this, that the title "Psalm of Asaph," bears a considerable latitude of meaning. It is quite evident, that the word *of* (as well as the Hebrew particle לְ, of which it is the translation) may indicate either the author, or the arranger, or the director of the Psalm. Thus the *Psalms of David* are clearly to be assigned to David, for the most part, as their author, sometimes as their arranger. The *Songs of the Sons of Korah*,

seem as evidently to mean the Psalms appropriated to that division of the Temple choir. So that the Psalms of Asaph may mean, sometimes the compositions of Asaph, sometimes the Psalms which were delivered into the hands of Asaph and his brethren.

Now from an examination of the Psalms themselves, as well as of that sentence of Holy Scripture which expressly mentions Asaph as a composer, I would infer, that at least one of the Psalms was written by Asaph, the contemporary of David, and performed by that choir of which he was the director: while the greater part were composed in later times, and performed by the sons of Asaph; the title *Psalms of Asaph* being retained, but being elliptical in its meaning. As Jacob, and Joseph, and Ephraim, are continually used to signify the descendants of those patriarchs, so Asaph may be understood to mean that portion of the choir which was composed of his descendants.

This appears the more probable, from the fact that there are exactly *twelve* Psalms bearing the name of Asaph, and also *twelve* appropriated to the sons of Korah.^a There were three choirs: 1. That of ASAPH, composed of the descendants of Gershom. 2. That of HEMAN, composed of the descendants of Korah, and ultimately of Kohath; and called indifferently in Holy Scripture, KORHITES (or SONS OF KORAH), and KOHATHITES. 3. That of ETHAN, or JEDUTHUN, the descendants of Merari. The last-mentioned choir seems to have dwindled away, or to have been merged in the two former choirs, after the time of David, since no subsequent mention is made of it. The choir of Asaph would seem to have been the smallest in David's time, since out of the twenty-four courses but four were appropriated to it, while six were given to Ethan, and fourteen to Heman, or the Korhites^b;

^a Vide note (b) on this passage, at the end of this Dissertation.

^b Vide note (c) at the end of this Dissertation.

but in after times it increased, so as to share the service with the Korhites. After the captivity, as appears from Nehemiah^a, the children of Asaph only constituted the choir.

From this equal appropriation of Psalms between Asaph and the sons of Korah, I would therefore infer, that whoever were the authors of the Asaphic Psalms, they were appropriated to the use of the choir at a time when the sons of Ethan had either become extinct, or ceased to form a separate body.

It remains to illustrate this theory by an examination of the Asaphic Psalms themselves.

In general it may be remarked, that the Psalms of Asaph do not show an identity of hand. With one exception (the 67th), and that probably apparent only, they are not Davidical. Sometimes they have, like the 50th, a stern, sententious character, unmingled with personal feeling, more like the oracle of a seer than the voluntary effusions of a psalmist. At other times they show indeed deep feeling, but more that of Isaiah than of David. The fears and solicitude they express are rather national than personal; the effect of certain specific and external aggressions and calamities, not of the trials and temptations which ordinarily beset the human soul. They are hortative, didactic, and respective of public, not of individual concerns.^b

The 50th Psalm, already analyzed in the first Dissertation (§ 2. p. 13.), has all the stern and majestic features of a message from the Almighty, in which the Prophet is completely abstracted from all personal thoughts. It is a warning to the people, not to neglect the spiritual homage of their hearts, while offering to

^a vii. 44.

^b Spiritus Asaphi hoc habet peculiare, ut de rebus Ecclesie tristibus meditatur, unde hic tertius liber continet fere perpetuas querimonias. — *Genhard in Ps. lxxiii.*

God the external sacrifices of the Law: to observe purity of conduct and of thought, as more essential than even the outward conformity to the prescribed ritual. Now it appears to me more than probable that this Psalm had for its author Asaph, the contemporary of David, and also that it was the very composition which Hezekiah made use of when restoring the Temple service.

That it was composed in David's time would appear from the place it occupies in the Psalter, as connected with the 51st Psalm, which unquestionably is the composition of David. The topics of the two Psalms are similar. The 50th speaks of the essential accompaniments of the material sacrifices, of the spirit in which they should be offered: the 51st enlarges upon those secret sins, which the 50th had reprehended, and recurs to the true nature of sacrifice, in terms of deep personal feeling.

For thou hast no pleasure in sacrifice, that I should give it:
 In burnt offering thou delightest not.
 The sacrifice of God is a spirit that is broken:
 A heart that is broken and bruised, O God, thou wilt not
 despise.

And having thus mentioned his own peculiar sacrifice, his thoughts recur to his beloved Jerusalem, and to his people. He ends the Psalm with a prayer, that when the walls of Jerusalem shall have been built, when the Temple (that great object of his heart) shall have been finished, the sacrifices there offered may be such as God requires, accompanied with that contrition and purity so largely insisted on by the messenger of the Almighty.

Do good in thy pleasure to Sion:
 Thou shalt build the walls of Jerusalem:
 Then shalt thou have pleasure in the sacrifices of righteousness,

In burnt offerings and oblations:
Then shall they offer upon thine altar young bullocks.

This view of the concluding lines will obviate a prevalent notion, that the 51st Psalm was written during the Captivity. It is not sufficiently remembered, that in David's time, the most characteristic and holy features of Jerusalem, those temple walls, which were the admiration of future generations, were not begun. And thus the ancient tradition, and the title of the Psalm, ascribing this to David, after the most unhappy event of his life, are vindicated.

It might be *à priori* expected, that in a collection which speaks so largely of repentance and sin, and which alludes so markedly to the circumstances of his own life, his great offence should have been prominently mentioned. There is not a word in the 51st Psalm but harmonizes with the generally received notion that it was the outpouring of an awakened conscience, after Nathan the prophet had spoken to him. But one apparent difficulty stands in the way; namely, this assertion, —

Against thee, against thee only have I sinned,
And this wickedness in thy sight have I done.

It is true that David's offence was not only against God but against man.^a But the meaning of the expression is this, that God alone was cognizant of the offence in its full extent. It was done secretly, as the prophet Nathan declares. Even the accomplice in the adultery was ignorant of one great feature of it, his design to put her husband Uriah to death. No human creature was privy to his sin in its beginning, and in all its complicated progress. The expression is of one who is making full confession to Almighty God,

^a See Dr. Townson's 7th Discourse.

laying open to him his wickedness in every particular of thought, word, and deed.

But how awfully is the moral effect of both these Psalms heightened, if we conceive (as we surely may do, by taking them both in their obvious meaning and their present sequence) that at the very time when David was plotting or effecting his great sin, the prophet Asaph, stationed as he was with his brethren at Jerusalem^a before the ark, was inspired to pronounce this fearful warning, which reprobated all secret sins, not more heinous than that in which the ruler of the people was now engaged. We may well conceive how vividly he must have felt its application, when recalled by another prophet to a sense of his wickedness: and with what earnestness and sincerity he poured forth that prayer of contrition which forms a sequel to this oracular Psalm. The subject of both is evidently connected, while the individual character of their several composers is most distinctly marked.

That the 50th Psalm was adapted by Hezekiah to the Temple service, I would infer chiefly from the general tenor of the Scriptural narrative in the 29th Chapter of the Second Book of Chronicles, where it is recorded, that he made a solemn assembly of the people, proclaimed a great passover, and invited all the tribes of Israel to join in the renovated services of the Temple, desecrated during the reign of Ahaz. The speeches of the king, recorded in that and the following chapter, contain a confession of guilt, and an earnest exhortation to repentance. And as we are expressly told, that upon these occasions the words of Asaph were used, we can hardly imagine a more appropriate opening of that solemn festival, when the sacrifices of the law were restored, than this

^a 1 Chron. xvi. 37.

oracular exhortation to purity of worship and contrition of heart. The exordium in particular would form an appropriate type of the final assembly of all nations at the final judgment, in this solemn convocation of the tribes of Israel, one of the greatest assemblies that ever was held, as we are assured by the words of the inspired narrative: "For since the time of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, there was not the like in Jerusalem."^a

The other eleven Psalms of Asaph are found in immediate sequence; and none of these, if the theory now proposed be tenable, are the work of the earlier prophets. They have, for the most part, reference to circumstances connected with the reign of Hezekiah, or shortly preceding it.

For example. It has been allowed by many critics, that the 73rd Psalm refers to the fears and misgivings of Hezekiah, and the subsequent events, as related in the 18th and 19th chapters of the Second Book of Kings, when Sennacherib invaded Jerusalem. The passage, especially at the 16th verse, is strikingly indicatory of the occasion.

And I thought to know this,
 A trouble it was in mine eyes,
 Until I went into the sanctuary of God;
 Then understood I their end:
 Truly in slippery places didst thou set them:
 Thou makest them fall into destruction.
 O how are they brought to desolation, as in a moment!
 They perish, they are consumed with terrors!
 As a dream when one awaketh,
 So, O LORD, from the city their image thou shalt make to
 vanish.

Here it is surely unnecessary to remind the reader of the Scriptural narrative, which tells us that Hezekiah, after having heard those blasphemous speeches

^a 2 Chron. xxx. 26.

of Rabshakeh, alluded to at the beginning of this Psalm, went into the house of the Lord, and immediately was comforted by the Divine message, through the mouth of Isaiah, assuring him of that Divine judgment which he shortly afterwards beheld.^a

There are some passages in this Psalm resembling the style of Isaiah; especially that verse:

With thy counsel thou shalt lead me,
And afterwards with glory shalt receive me:

which finds its parallel in Isaiah, lviii. 8.:

The glory of the Lord shall be thy reward.

And the concluding line, preserved in our Psalter, though not found in the Hebrew,

In the gates of the daughter of Zion,

has an expression common to Isaiah; especially in that very passage which speaks of the destruction of Sennacherib:

The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and
laughed thee to scorn.

The 74th Psalm speaks of the desolation of Mount Zion, and the desecration of the Temple. Hence it has been commonly assigned to the times of the Captivity. But it is too commonly forgotten, that a great desolation took place during the wicked reign of the predecessor of Hezekiah, Ahaz, who plundered the Temple, and shut it up, and who for his sins was punished by the invasion of his enemies.^b To his reign this Psalm would strictly apply. And its whole style and strain is in the manner of Isaiah, who seems to have been its author. Especially in the following passage:

^a The case of Jehoshaphat, as related in 2 Chron. xx. 5—18., is strikingly parallel to that of Hezekiah.

^b 2 Chron. xxviii. 16—25.

But God is my King of old,
 Working salvation in the midst of the earth.
 It was thou who didst break asunder by thy strength the
 sea,
 Thou didst shatter the heads of the dragons in the waters :
 It was thou who didst crush the heads of Leviathan :
 Thou gavest him for meat to the people of the wilderness.
 It was thou who didst cleave the fountain and the flood :
 It was thou who didst dig up rivers of might.
 Thine is the day ; thine also is the night :
 It was thou who hast prepared the light and the sun :
 It is thou who hast set all the borders of earth :
 Summer and winter, it is thou who hast made them.

Compare this with the following passages of Isaiah.
 In the first is to be observed the remarkable simile of
 the dragon, so characteristic of Isaiah.

Art not thou it that hath cut Rahab,
 That hast wounded the dragon ?
 Art not thou it which hath dried the sea,
 The waters of the great deep ;
 That hath made the depths of the sea a way
 For the ransomed to pass over.

. The LORD thy Maker,
 That hath stretched forth the heavens,
 And laid the foundations of the earth.^a

Now the connection between this Psalm and the
 79th is evident. The topics are the same, so is the
 general flow of the sentiment, and some of the expres-
 sions ; especially that of the “ sheep of thy pasture.”
 Which last expression is repeated in the 80th Psalm,
 evidently its sequel ; and this Psalm, as will be pre-
 sently shown, is much in the style of Isaiah. So that
 from this chain of evidence, there is strong reason for
 attributing the whole to him as the author.

The 75th, however, bears marks of an earlier date.
 It is stern and sententious in its style : nor can it be

^a Isaiah li. 9, 10, 13.

said to be characteristic of any one known composer. This, and the 82nd, which closely resemble one another, both in style and subject matter, I would refer to the earlier reign of Jehoshaphat, the great restorer of justice and law in Judah. Both these Psalms correspond to the charge which Jehoshaphat gave to the judges appointed by him in every city. "Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you: take heed and do it; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts."^a

The occurrence of this Psalm and its companion, the 82nd, among the other Psalms of a later date, may be accounted for by the remarkable coincidence between the events of Hezekiah's reign, and that of Jehoshaphat. Both experienced the same miraculous interference from heaven against their enemies, and both were the providential restorers of the worship and civil polity of Judah. It is therefore perfectly consistent with the tenor of his history to suppose that Hezekiah adopted those Psalms composed in the reign of Jehoshaphat, and delivered them to the choir of Asaph during its course of attendance.

There can be no difficulty with respect to the succeeding Psalm, the 76th. This manifestly speaks of the miraculous discomfiture of Sennacherib's army. The style is awful and sublime to the highest degree, and apparently distinct both from that of David and Isaiah.

But the 77th Psalm seems to be strongly Davidical. The whole course of reflection, and the use made at the concluding part of the sublime imagery, are exactly in his manner. The title, however, has its dif-

^a 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7.

ficulties. The Psalm is ascribed to both Jeduthun and Asaph. I would account for this by supposing, that it was delivered by David to the hand of Jeduthun, for the use of his choir; and that subsequently, when that choir was extinct, Hezekiah assigned it to the Asaphites. The circumstances were very similar to his own, both when assailed by the Assyrians, and when threatened with approaching death; and the course of reflection, though not the style, resembles that of the 74th.

At the same time it is to be observed, that a distinction may be drawn between the Elegies of David and the present Psalm. The prophet is overwhelmed, indeed, with sorrow; and he is employed in searching out his spirit, and in midnight meditations. Still the subject of his care is not personal affliction, but national disasters. He is deploring those calamities of God's people, whether threatened or experienced, which mainly form the theme of the adjoining Psalms. It is therefore far from improbable, that Asaph the seer may have been its author.

At all events, its location is a beautiful instance of design. The last stanza and the concluding words especially, "Thou leddest like sheep thy people, by the hand of Moses and Aaron," form the note of preparation for the magnificent historical poem next in sequence; that great Parable, which so fully shows how God had redeemed his people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph, and divulges the moral cause of the frequent punishments of the chosen people, and answers the question, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he shut up in anger his loving-kindnesses?"

The whole of the following Psalms, to the 81st included, are in sequence; and form but parts of one sublime poem. For, the historical parable finished, the prophet recurs, in the 79th and 80th Psalms, to the desolation of Jerusalem, still recognizing God's

care for the sheep of his pasture, still trusting in that Providence, the scheme of which he had unfolded; while the 81st is the *Peripetia*, as it were, of the drama; a joyful change in the fortunes of the people; the providential history of Israel being still borne in mind. But we must now proceed to a more particular analysis.

The 78th Psalm is purely didactic. By whom it was composed does not appear. Not, however, by David; since its style is severe and monitory: the theme being the offences of the people, to which the prophet continually recurs: and the mercies of God are shown to be altogether undeserved by them.

The oracular announcement of the beginning is in the manner of Asaph the seer, the author of the 50th Psalm.

Give ear, O my people, to my law :
 Incline your ears to the words of my mouth
 I will open my mouth in a parable,
 I will utter dark sayings of old.

This parable and these dark sayings are evidently the secrets of God's special Providence; his settled plan of redeeming and establishing his people, known indeed to the fathers of Israel, but unknown to the other nations of the world. And hence this passage is applied to our blessed Lord^a; who spake of yet higher instances of God's Providence in the establishment and revelation of the kingdom of heaven.

Compare this exordium with that of the historical Psalms of David, (the 105th, and that which follows,) and the difference of character will at once be evident. David's are full of heartfelt thanksgiving: the doctrine of Asaph is divested of every thing personal.

The composition of this Psalm is in the highest degree regular. After the exordium, which sets forth, in general terms, the establishment of God's covenant, and the rebellious spirit of those with whom the covenant was made, the prophet proceeds to mention in detail the various deliverances and the monitory chastisements of God, regularly alternated with a mention of their reiterated rebellions. This alternation is exhibited in the arrangement made of this Psalm in the former volume of the present work. The poem may, perhaps, be not unfitly termed an historical epic, since by the same artifice employed by Homer, and imitated by subsequent poets, the history of the wonders in Egypt is introduced as an episode, and most gracefully connected with the main subject, both preceding and following.

Before proceeding to the next Psalm, it may be well to observe upon the extremely beautiful arrangement of one of the portions of this Psalm, which could not be conveniently exhibited in the translation of the whole. The reader will perceive, in the following lines, an exact epanodos: the wrath of God being the commencing and terminating topic; and the intermediate inversion of the stanzas is also very remarkable.

Then the Lord heard, and was wroth,
 And a fire was kindled in Jacob,
 And anger also came up in Israel.
 For they believed not in God,
 And trusted not in his salvation.

So he commanded the clouds from above,
 And the doors of heaven he opened:
 And he rained down upon them manna to eat,
 And the corn of heaven he gave them.
 The food of the mighty ones man did eat:
 Bread he sent them to the full.

He made the east wind to blow in heaven;
 And he brought in by his power the south wind:

And he rained upon them flesh as the dust,
 And as the sand of the sea the fowl of wing;
 And he let it fall in the midst of their camp,
 Round about their habitations.

And they did eat, and were filled exceedingly;
 And their own desire he gave them:
 They were not disappointed of their desire,
 While their meat was in their mouths.

But the wrath of God came upon them:
 And slew the fattest of them,
 And the chosen men of Israel smote down.

The 79th Psalm is to be referred to the desolations under Ahaz, for the same reasons that have been assigned in our observations on the 74th. For though the history of the oppressions of Judah at that time are but briefly given, we know from the spirit of the narrative in the Second Book of Chronicles^a that these were most severe. One hundred and twenty thousand of the most valiant among the Jews were slain in one day: two hundred thousand were carried away captive: and the Lord made "Judah naked:" Tiglath Pilneser, king of Assyria, distressed their king; and the Temple was pillaged and profaned.

The style of the Psalm, and its general topics, closely resemble the 64th chapter of Isaiah, especially in its concluding verses.

Be not wroth very sore, O LORD,
 Neither remember iniquity for ever:
 Behold, see, we beseech thee,
 We are all thy people.
 Thy holy cities are a wilderness,
 Zion is a wilderness,
 Jerusalem a desolation.
 Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised
 thee,

^a Chapter xxviii.

Is burnt up with fire ;
 And all our pleasant things are laid waste.
 Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O LORD ?
 Wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore ?^a

It is to be remarked, that there is a strong resemblance between the seventh verse of this chapter and the ninth verse of the 74th Psalm. Isaiah bewails the dearth of true servants of God, of prophets :

And there is none that calleth on thy name,
 That stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.

The Psalm laments that “ we see not thy tokens, there is not one prophet more : no, not one is there among us that understandeth any more.”

The expression, “ sheep of thy pasture,” forms the note of preparation for the following Psalm, which was written either at the same time, or during the reign of Hezekiah : when the desolations of Israel had been witnessed, and those of Judah were apprehended.

Of this most beautiful Psalm (the 80th) the style strongly resembles that of Isaiah, especially in the similitude of the vine. Compare with this the simile in his 5th chapter.

My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill, &c.
 And now go to, I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard :

I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up,
 And break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down.

For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of
 Israel,
 And the men of Judah his pleasant plant.^b

The beginning of the Psalm also reminds us of the prayer of Hezekiah : “ O LORD God of Israel, which

^a v. 9—12.

^b v. 1—7.

dwellest between the cherubims.” So that I am disposed to attribute this Psalm to the time of Hezekiah, and its authorship to Isaiah.

The 81st Psalm has already been fully examined in the second section of the first Dissertation in this work. It need only be observed that its style is not Davidical: that its subject, like that of the other Psalms of Asaph, is national, and that there is nothing to prevent us from assigning its present position at least, if not its composition, to the time of Hezekiah.

The 82nd Psalm has already been examined in the same section; and the observations made on the 75th apply also to it. The last in the collection, however, the 83rd, seems to allude most pointedly to events in the reign of Jehoshaphat, when the children of Ammon and of Moab, and the Ishmaelites, combined against Judah. And this would seem to be the very counterpart of Jehoshaphat’s prayer, recorded in that chapter, which was answered by the miraculous discomfiture of his enemies.

It is here observed, however, by critics, that the mention of Assur, or the Assyrians, would bring it down to a later date than the reign of Jehoshaphat: since there is no record of so early an invasion by that nation. Besides which, the similitudes of the “wheel, and the stubble before the wind,” find a strong parallel in Isaiah, a prophet of a later age.

The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters:
 But God shall rebuke them,
 And they shall flee far off,
 And shall be chased as the chaff of the mountain before the
 wind,
 And like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.^a

But we may either suppose Isaiah to have amplified the more ancient Psalm, or to have applied the

^a xvii. 13.

circumstances of Jehoshaphat to those of his own time, when, under both Ahaz and Hezekiah, such powerful combinations were made against the kingdom of Judah.

§ 6. OF THE PSALMS OF THE SONS OF KORAH.

The meaning of this Title has been sufficiently shown in the preceding section to refer to one of the three choirs of the Temple. That the Psalms to which it is prefixed were composed before the Babylonish Captivity, is evident from the fact, that on the return from Babylon, the choir of Korah no longer existed; the performance of the Temple Music being confined to the sons of Asaph. The apparent allusions in many of these Psalms to the circumstances of the Captivity, can be referred to the desolation of the Temple and of Jerusalem, and the sufferings of the Jewish people, during the reign of Ahaz.

To the Psalms of the sons of Korah may be applied in general the same remarks as have been made on those of Asaph. Like the latter, they are twelve in number: they are, for the most part, consecutive; and they appear to have been composed partly by David, and partly in the time of Jehoshaphat and of Hezekiah. By Hezekiah they seem to have been appropriated to the Choir of the Korahites, during their seasons of attendance at the Temple.

A remarkable circumstance is to be observed of these two classes of Psalms. The second Book of Psalms begins with those of Korah, which succeed, eight in number, in regular order: then succeeds one Psalm of Asaph: the rest of the book being in the titles entirely Davidical; with one exception, the 66th Psalm, which however is evidently David's. The third book begins with Psalms of Asaph, which proceed in

regular succession, till their number (twelve) is completed. Then follow the four remaining Psalms of Korah; their succession being broken by one of David's (the 86th). And it is further to be observed, that in this book, there are but two Psalms which are neither Asaphic nor Korhite, namely, the 86th and the 89th.

This arrangement evidently shows design. The following explanation of it is offered, as one which to the present writer appears strongly supported by evidence both historical and internal.

It is well known that Hezekiah took pains with the revision of Holy Scripture. He rescued from oblivion one portion of it, as appears from the 1st verse of the 25th chapter of the Book of Proverbs: "These are also Proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah King of Judah copied out." That he should have performed the same pious service for the Psalms, may be reasonably supposed, especially since he was a restorer of their ritual performance. Now the first Book of Psalms is Davidical throughout. This we may assume to have been already published for the use of the Jewish Church, like the former portion of the Proverbs. The second book appears to have been copied out, or restored to liturgical use, by Hezekiah; he having prefixed to them the Psalms composed or adapted during the reigns of himself and his predecessor, Jehoshaphat. At a subsequent period of his reign, the third book, consisting almost exclusively of Psalms of this later adaptation, was probably put together: the 86th and 89th being inserted, either because they were then first recovered, or amplified: or because they seemed fitly to harmonise with the adjoining Psalms.

Possibly this third book was adopted into the canon during the reign of Josiah, who was also instrumental in recovering from obscurity portions of Holy Writ.^a

^a 2 Chron. xxxiv. 15—31.

However this may be, it is certain that these three Books of the Psalms are distinctly discriminated from one another. This observation will be more fully treated in the third Dissertation. Meantime it is sufficient to observe, that the Psalms of Asaph and Korah are found in close connection, as might be expected in a collection which was specially made for the use of the two Temple choirs.

The first two in this collection, the 42nd and 43rd, which in fact form but one Psalm, are so eminently characteristic of David, that it seems impossible to resist the conviction that they are his. The imagery, so deeply poetical in itself, and derived from a kindly perception of natural objects, is intimately associated, according to David's habit, with personal feelings and religious affections, and a most pathetic *desiderium*. The localities, the land of Jordan, Hermon, and the hill of Mizar, characterize his various wanderings. The Altar and Tabernacle, but above all, the illuminating Presence of God, mark out the favourite aspirations of the royal prophet: and the whole circumstances of the composition fully justify the notion, very commonly adopted, that this Psalm was composed during his temporary banishment from his kingdom, by those enemies to whom evident allusion is made in the latter portion, which, according to our division, constitutes the 43rd Psalm.

Why then do we find these among the songs of the sons of Korah? The reason appears to be this: that when the Temple service was restored by Hezekiah, there was a peculiar fitness in appropriating the earnest desires of David to those pious Jews who had so long been banished from the Altar of God, during the reign of Ahaz. The two passages, therefore, which form the key note of the Psalm, and which point out the fitness of this appropriation, are these:

For I would go with the multitude :
 I would go forth into the house of God :
 In the voice of joy and praise of the multitude keeping
 holiday.

And toward the end :

They shall bring me to the hill of thy holiness, and to thy
 tabernacles.
 And I will go unto the altar of God,
 Unto God, the gladness of my joy :
 And I will give thanks unto thee upon the harp,
 O God, my God.

The 44th Psalm, already analysed in the first Dissertation, is discriminated from those of David, by being, like so many of the songs of this class, national, and not personal. Its sentiments and style remind us of the times of Hezekiah and of Isaiah. They correspond with the lamentation of that king when threatened by Sennacherib. The phrase, “a shaking of the head among the nations,” occurs in the oracular speech of Isaiah on that occasion: “The daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.” And these passages, “Thou sellest thy people for nought, and “thou hast shattered us in the place of the dragons,” and the concluding prayer, “Arise for a help unto us, and redeem us, for the sake of thy mercy,” are all in the style of that prophet.

The latter part of the Psalm, at least, would therefore seem referable to those times. Whether the former part, divided by *Selah*, differing in style or arrangement, was a more ancient Psalm of triumph, may admit of a question. But the whole tenor of the latter part harmonizes with the reverses experienced under Abaz, the captivity of Israel, and the threatened overthrow of Judah.

The 45th Psalm has all the dignity and solemnity characteristic of those Psalms, like the 110th, which

are purely prophetic. There is nothing in this one to forbid us attributing its original composition to David. But its place among the Songs of Korah is vindicated by its national character. The Daughter here spoken of is evidently the Church of Israel: and her glories, both present and future, harmonize with the celebration of the city and people of God, which forms the subject of the Psalms which follow.

It would be presumptuous to add here anything to what Bishop Horsley has said in his four sermons on this Psalm. His just and vigorous criticism has proved incontrovertibly that the subject of this Psalm is prophetic, signifying the union between Christ and his Church; and that to apply it to the marriage of Solomon would be unjustifiable, since his reign was eminently one of peace, not of conquest, like that announced in the first division of the Psalm. The passage, "Thy throne, *O God*," could never be applied to any human creature.

Still it is not out of place to conjecture that David had the marriage of his son in his mind when he began the Psalm; but that, filled with the Spirit of Prophecy, he was impelled to speak of a far higher union, and of Him of whom Solomon was in some respects a type; the Prince of Peace. By "the daughters of kings," and "the virgins that be her fellows," are to be understood the other Christian Churches, which in the fulness of time are to be associated with the Jewish under their one Divine Head; and in this respect the connection between the present Psalm and the 47th is very apparent.

The imagery of the second part, "all glorious is the daughter of the king within, her clothing is of wrought gold: in raiment of needlework she shall be brought to the king," seems suggested by the rich furniture of the Tabernacle and Temple, which occupied so much of the cares both of David and Solomon.

The Psalm is most regularly constructed; and divides itself obviously into two parts; the first celebrating the king, the second the bride.

The connection of this Psalm with the following is obvious. The subject of the 46th is still national, not personal; being God's supernatural protection of the Holy City; while the 47th refers to the chosen people. In the first Dissertation, § 3., this has been already analyzed. Its character is the same as that of the 48th and 76th, both in subject and style, and refers to the discomfiture of the armies of the heathen, in the reign either of Jehoshaphat or Hezekiah.

The 47th is in evident connection, and is an advance upon the former, both in the comprehensiveness of its subject, including not only the city, but the nation of the Jews, and all the kingdoms of the earth, converted to the faith, and also in the more jubilant expression of praise. This Psalm is eminently prophetic of the Ascension of Christ, and of the calling of the Gentiles, as the church has signified, by making it part of the service for Ascension Day.

But of all the Psalms of Korah, the 48th is perhaps the most strikingly characteristic. The occasion of this Psalm, as more than one critic has remarked, seems graphically indicated in the twentieth chapter of the Second Book of Chronicles.

In that chapter it is recorded, that Moab, the Ammonites, and others came against Jehoshaphat to battle. The king, in fear of this great array, proclaims a fast; the people meet; and he makes a prayer, recorded at full length, in the house of the Lord, in the midst of the company. Then *Jahaziel, one of the sons of Asaph*, was inspired to prophesy the destruction of the enemies on the following day; and Jehoshaphat and the people fell down and worshipped the Lord. Then "the Levites, of the *children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites*, stood

up to praise the LORD God of Israel, with a loud voice on high." The next morning they rose, and went towards the wilderness of Tekoah: and Jehoshaphat having encouraged the people to trust in God, appointed the singers to accompany the army, and to say, "Praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever." "And when they began to sing, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah, and they were smitten. And when Judah came toward the watch-tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped."—"And on the fourth day, they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah: for there they blessed the Lord: and they came to Jerusalem with psalteries, and harps, and trumpets, unto the house of the LORD."

In this narrative, every circumstance is in accordance with the Psalm. The gathering of the kings: their sudden discomfiture: the assembling in the Temple, and the hope and comfort derived from the assurance of the Divine protection there promised: and the mention of the two choirs of the Asaphites and Korhites. I have no doubt whatever that some of the Psalms ascribed to either choir are connected with this event: and it is likely that one of the many Psalms of thanksgiving, with the burthen, "For his mercy endureth for ever," was used upon this occasion.

Three objections, however, have been made to this appropriation of the Psalm. The first two are started by Bishop Horsley, who remarks, that this army never came in sight of Jerusalem, and that it was discomfited, not in consequence of any supernatural panic, but of a quarrel between the troops of the three different nations of which the army was composed. To the first of these objections I would answer, that it is

not necessary to suppose that they were in sight of Jerusalem. The city is mentioned in order to show that this, the object of their attack, was defended by Almighty God. By a just and striking poetical figure, indeed, the city and invaders are brought close together. That which is the object of their hearts, is represented as seen by their eyes. It is not stated directly, but the collocation of the topics leaves this impression on the mind of the reader. As to the second objection, it is true that God made use of the ambushments as his instruments; but there is nothing to contradict the very obvious supposition, that when they met with the unexpected check, they were terror-struck, and recognized the hand of God.

The third objection, made by Dathe, is, that the breaking of the ships of Tarshish took place some years subsequent to this event. But it is not by any means necessary to suppose that the Psalm was composed, either in whole or in part, at the very time of the event now mentioned. For my own part, I must confess, that it is chiefly from the occurrence of this line, that I am disposed to assign this Psalm to the time of Jehoshaphat, and not of Hezekiah. The breaking of Jehoshaphat's ships is so conspicuous an event in sacred history, as almost to forbid the application of the line in question to any other circumstances. The inspired poet, too, seems to have gone out of his way to introduce it. The structure of the stanza, and the sentiment of the Psalm, are each complete, without this allusion. It is introduced metaphorically. The overthrow of a mighty army by the blast of God's displeasure is compared to the wreck of mighty ships by the east wind. The prophet, impressed with the recent recollection of that signal visitation of God, intended to check the presumption of the king, introduces it not only as a magnificent and appropriate

simile, but as a tacit warning to those whom prosperity might make too confident.

Still, were it not for this line, I acknowledge there are considerations which would seem to point the application of this Psalm more exactly to the overthrow of Sennacherib's army. That army was literally in sight of Jerusalem, and was destroyed by the immediate judgment of God. Their destruction was seen from the city: while the other circumstances correspond to those of Jehoshaphat's time. As then, the king went into the Temple, made his prayer, and was assured by the prophet of the approaching destruction of his enemies. And it is to be further remarked, that the expression, "daughters of Judah," reminds us of the prophecy of Isaiah then delivered.

The extraordinary coincidence of many events in the history of the two kings, renders the appropriation of certain Psalms to the reign of either, a question of no small difficulty. However, this much may be plainly inferred; that at whatever time composed, this Psalm was included by Hezekiah among his collection, and was sung by the Korhites to commemorate some of the special events of his reign.

The character of the 49th Psalm differs completely from those which went before, and is, indeed, a composition *sui generis*. It is sententious, oracular, and stern: evidently archaic in its style, and full of ellipses. It may have been far anterior to the reign of David: but as to its authorship there are no data for making a conjecture. Its place, however, in the collection of the Korhite songs may be accounted for by that remarkable circumstance in the life of Hezekiah, his miraculous recovery from mortal sickness. The redemption from everlasting death is the topic which we know that his respite from temporal death suggested^a, as appears from his song of thanksgiving

^a Isaiah, xxxviii. 18, 19.

recorded by Isaiah, though the style of that composition is very different. The last verse of Hezekiah's song plainly shows that he intended to make his recovery a subject of public thanksgiving in the Temple.

Therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments,

All the days of our life in the house of the Lord.

And it appears probable that to this occasion were appropriated both the 49th and 88th Psalms.

The 84th Psalm is like the 47th and 48th in its general subject; but there is a distinction in its style. There is not that same degree of deep personal feeling which marks the others to be Davidical. The Temple of God is the more prominent feature in this Psalm; the sadness is caused by absence from the sanctuary; while in the 47th, the public worship of God is considered as the alleviation of sorrows that spring from other and deeper sources.

I would attribute the composition of this Psalm to the time of Ahaz, not to the Babylonish captivity, since it is a song of the sons of Korah, who were then extinct, at least as a choir. It was written during the temporary desolation of the Temple, by one of the faithful who was in captivity. Hence the verse,

The sparrow hath found an house,

And the swallow a nest where she may lay her young;

Even thy altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God.

A passage which seems perfectly inexplicable, if we suppose it to refer to a time when the Temple service was kept up, and when the sanctuary was so carefully preserved from all profanation or defilement.

In the 85th Psalm this desolation and captivity are reversed. For the reason already assigned, namely, that this is a Song of the Sons of Korah, the Baby-

lonish captivity is not here alluded to. Besides, the whole character of the Psalm is that of the evangelical prophet, Isaiah. Compare with the magnificent personification of Mercy, Truth, Righteousness, and Peace, and indeed with the whole tenor of the Psalm, the following passages of the prophet.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.
 Speak comfortably to Jerusalem:
 And cry unto her,
 That her warfare is accomplished:
 That her iniquity is pardoned.^a

Then Judgment shall dwell in the wilderness,
 And Righteousness remain in the fruitful field:
 And the work of righteousness shall be peace:
 And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for
 ever.
 And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation:
 And in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.^b

Drop down, ye heavens, from above,
 And let the skies pour down righteousness,
 Let the earth open:
 And let them bring forth salvation,
 And let righteousness spring up together.^c

Again, the 87th, obscure and elliptical as it is, contains that very theme of which Isaiah is so full; the glory of Jerusalem, as the birth-place of Christ. Like most of the Songs of Korah and Asaph, the Psalm is national in the highest degree.

But that deeply mystical parable, the 88th, perhaps the most awful in the whole book of Psalms, which closes the Korhite songs, is very different from all that precede and follow. It has already been observed, that its present position may be accounted for, from the circumstances of Hezekiah's sickness. As has been shown in the 1st Dissertation, § 3., the

^a xl. 1, 2.^b xxxii. 15—18.^c xlv. 18.

central part of the poem intimates, though with an oracular obscurity, that cardinal truth upon which the whole turns, namely, the Resurrection from the dead.

As for its author, the title instructs us that it was appropriated to Heman the Ezrahite^a, either as its composer, or as the director of the choir by whom it was performed. The style appears too oracular for that of David: and the construction of the Psalm is so peculiar, so uniformly terrible and obscure, that it appears the work of an ancient seer, and so far vindicates the authenticity of the title.

The correspondence of the lines, “Wilt thou to the dead show wonders,” &c., with those four in Hezekiah’s prayer, is very remarkable:

For the grave cannot praise thee:
 The dead cannot celebrate thee:
 They that go down to the pit cannot hope for thy truth.
 The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day.

But this can be accounted for by supposing that Hezekiah had this ancient parable in his mind; that he in part adopted its expressions, but gave a happy solution to its awful interrogations.

§ 7. OF THE PSALMS INSCRIBED WITH THE NAMES ETHAN AND HEMAN.

ETHAN, or JEDUTHUN^b, (for he is called by both names,) was the leader of the third choir, which became extinct long before the captivity. Heman, as has been already observed, was the leader of the KOHATHITES or KORHITES.

There is, however, considerable obscurity respecting the application of these names in the titles to the

^a See the next Section.

^b Compare 1 Chron. vi. 44., with ix. 16. and xxv. 1. 3. 6.

Psalms. In the titles to the 88th and 89th, Ethan and Heman are called respectively "the Ezrahite;" the meaning of which designation it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to define.

That it is not a patronymic appears evident. For if these two persons were the leaders of the Temple choirs, as there is every reason from analogy for supposing, there are none of their progenitors in the Levitical genealogy of these two men of the name Ezrah, or Zerah.

But it is remarkable, that in a passage in the First Book of Chronicles^a Solomon is said to have been "wiser than Ethan the *Ezrahite*, and *Heman*, and *Calcol*, and *Darda*, the sons of Mahol (that is, of music, or of song). These four names we find among the great grandsons of *Judah*; and it might therefore naturally seem that the Ethan and Heman here referred to were of this family: especially since their father had a name very much resembling Ezrah, namely, Zerah: wanting merely the initial A. But this is not conclusive. The recurrence of the same sequences and associations of family names is by no means uncommon in Holy Scripture. However this may be with respect to Solomon, it is certain that the recurrence of two similar names is found in the tribe of Levi: Ethan and Heman being the associates of Asaph in the Temple service. I make no question, therefore, that they are meant in the designation of the Psalms. The epithet *Ezrahite*, however, is either an interpolation, or corruption, or signifies an epithet now involved in obscurity. The word *Ezrahite*, as frequently employed in the Law of Moses, means a stranger and a sojourner; and may possibly be a title assumed by these Levites, as signifying the sojourning of their tribe among their brethren: "the *stranger* within thy gates" being often found in connection with the same

words which elsewhere accompany the *Levite*.^a This epithet, however, is a question involved in great obscurity, of which the present writer cannot attempt to give more than a conjectural and far from satisfactory solution.

The only Psalm ascribed to Heman is that already commented upon in the preceding Section, the 88th, which is one of the Psalms appropriated to that company of which he was the leader, the Korhites.

This Psalm, however, is immediately followed by the 89th, a *Muschil* (like the 88th) of Ethan (or Jeduthun) the Ezrahite, and these complete the third Book of Psalms; so that there is evident design and order in the location. Of the 89th, a portion only would seem to be the work of Jeduthun. How much, it is hard to determine: but certainly not any part of the latter divisions, beginning at the Peripeteia, "But thou hast cast off and abhorred thine anointed." That portion was obviously written during the desolation of Jerusalem, and both from its position, and its general style, I would refer it to Isaiah, or to his times. The latter part of the 63rd, and the whole of the 64th chapters of that prophet, strongly resemble the two concluding epodes: and the passage, "Thou hast broken down all his hedges: thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin: all that pass by the way spoil him:" reminds us of the parable of the vine in the 80th Psalm, which has been already pointed out as characteristic of Isaiah.

The resemblance, however, as to style, extends to the second division or Diapsalma of the Psalm, beginning, "And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord." Here, that whole period, beginning, "Thou rulest the raging of the sea," resembles that passage, noticed in the preceding section, occurring in the 74th Psalm, which I have attributed to Isaiah: while for

^a Deut. xii. 12. 18., xvi. 11. 14., xxvi. 11. 13.

“ the Dragon ” is here substituted “ Rahab,” (a name for Egypt,) both which terms are used in conjunction by Isaiah: “ Art not thou it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? Art not thou it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep?” There is also the personification of Mercy and Truth, as found in the 85th Psalm, and as employed by him.

From these circumstances I would collect that the Maschil of Ethan extends only to the first Diapsalma, *i.e.* the first five verses. Or that, if any portion of the second belongs to him, it is the portion beginning, “ Then thou spakest in vision unto thy saints, and saidst.” These two portions would form of themselves a complete poem, and would contain the substance of that promise made by the Almighty to David, as recorded in the history of his life.^a

But this Psalm has been taken out of its regular sequence, in order to show its connection with the preceding Psalm of Heman. There are three other Psalms inscribed with the name of Jeduthun, not as their author, but as leader of the band by whom they were performed. The first is the 39th, a Psalm of David: about which there is no difficulty. The 62nd and 77th, however, are inscribed not *of* or *to* Jeduthun, but *on*^b Jeduthun; as if the term was a musical instrument. It is difficult to understand this: unless we suppose (which appears to me highly probable) that the text is corrupt. We ought either to read “ to” instead of *on* (by the omission of one letter), or, instead of “ on Jeduthun,” “ by the hand of Ethan,” making a very slight alteration in the text, a reading which is justified by a passage in 1 Chron. xxv. 2.^d

Of the 77th, it has been already observed, that it is also a Psalm of Asaph. It appears to have been appropriated to the choir of Asaph after that of Jeduthun had become extinct, in the reign of Hezekiah.

^a 2 Sam. vii. 8—16.

^c Instead of על יד איתן—על יד חתן

^b ל instead of על.

^d על יד חתן.

§ 8. OF THE PSALM ATTRIBUTED TO MOSES.

This Psalm is the 90th ; which, it is observable, begins a new book, of a very distinct character, for the most part, from those which preceded. Its whole internal structure is in harmony with the title.

The only objection which has been made to the genuineness of this ascription is founded on the passage : —

As for the days of our years, in them are seventy years ;
 And if by reason of strength they be fourscore years,
 Yet is their vigour but labour and sorrow,
 For it is cut off soon, and we fleet away.

It has been argued, that the average life of man exceeded seventy years in the time of Moses. But it is by no means apparent that this was the case, except in the instance of a few favoured individuals, as Moses, Joshua, &c. On the contrary, it is evident, that a judicial limitation of the lives of the Israelites had been assigned by God during the ministry of Moses : a limitation which would necessarily include the greater portion of that nation within this average. For, in consequence of their rebellions, it was decreed that none of those who were twenty years and upwards, should survive the forty years which should terminate the wanderings in Egypt.^a Bishop Patrick is of opinion that to this divine decree the 90th Psalm specially alludes. And he well argues, that the 605,650 males who were twenty years old and upwards at that time, must have formed a considerable portion of the nation ; and that out of these, those who were but twenty and thirty years of age, whose life consequently could not exceed seventy years, must have probably formed the larger proportion : so that eighty years should be the exception, not the rule, of human life among the Israelites.

^a Deut. i. 35. ; Numb. i. 32., xiv. 29, 30.

But by a construction which the words will easily admit, indeed more easily than our authorized version, and which seems sanctioned by the ancient versions, the Bishop would obviate all difficulties.

The days of our years,—in them are seventy years:
 And if in strength, (they are) eighty years:
 And the vigour^a (or overplus) of them is labour and sorrow.

By the term in the last line, vigour, or overplus, he would understand all those under twenty years, for whom a longer term of life was destined: but a life of labour and toil; for such was the condition of those who were reserved for the heavy wars in the land of Canaan.

But even according to the ordinary acceptation, as applied to human nature in general, the passage is perfectly consistent with the authorship of Moses. And so it is considered by Bishops Patrick and Horsley, and, as Rosenmüller remarks, by the title of the Chaldee Paraphrase.

This objection being disposed of, the whole tenor of the Psalm reflects the sentiments of the divinely appointed Legislator. Or rather, this passage, so far from being a hinderance, but corroborates the other inferences to be drawn from the internal structure of the Psalm, and draws them, as it were, to a focus.

No incident in the wilderness can be conceived more likely to have suggested a sacred elegy, which should be at once a contrite prayer and indirect warning to the people, than this judgment of the Almighty; forming as that did, one of the cardinal points of sacred history.

This being assumed, the very opening of the Psalm seems to indicate the writer of the Book of Genesis.

^a רֵהוּבִים Aben Ezra and R. Solomon, as the Bishop remarks, interpret this as “the strength of youth.” The LXX translate it τὸ πλεόνωσιν αὐτῶν, and the Vulgate, quod amplius eorum.

“ Before the mountains were brought for, or the earth and the world were formed.” An idea which is also found in one of the sublimest passages of his Blessing :

For the chief things of the ancient mountains,
And for the precious things of the lasting hills.^a

And in the very next passage, we are reminded of the primeval curse, pronounced by the Almighty, and recorded by Moses : “ Till thou return unto the ground ; for out of it wast thou taken.” But the deeply subdued spirit of the whole Psalm, its intercessional character, its humility, and its affectionate solicitude for the people, and the total absence of anything personal, are altogether in accordance with the recorded supplications and the whole conduct of Moses, the man of God.

This view, however, is more strongly borne out when we take in connection with this Psalm, that which follows, the 91st. It is an ancient maxim of Biblical interpretation, that an uninscribed Psalm is generally to be attributed to the author of the last preceding which had a title. This rule is frequently found to hold good : eminently so, it would appear, in the case before us. For what is the whole tendency of the 91st Psalm ? It is to give a soothing antidote to the melancholy sentiments of that which preceded ; to elevate and expand that expression of hope which formed the conclusion of the elegy : to show the means by which even these short-lived children of men might attain to more lasting habitations than can be afforded by the longest duration of temporal life. But not only is there this connection. The sentiments evidently come from the same hand. They are marked with the same spirit of reflection, of patience, of religious awe ; but elevated by an access of higher inspiration, so as to be prophetic of some of the highest mysteries of Christianity. And it can

^a Deut. xxxiii. 15.

hardly be questioned, that the hand of Moses is here peculiarly visible. He begins with speaking of the dwelling place of the Most High, the shadow of the Almighty: an image deeply stamped in the mind of him who had entered into the cloud on Mount Sinai, and had seen, as no man had ever seen heretofore, the glory of the God of Israel. When he speaks of God as his stronghold, he but uses that image so characteristic of the Mosaical songs, "the Rock" of his salvation. And in this beautiful simile,

With his feathers he shall be a covering to thee,
And under his wings thou shalt have refuge,

who is not reminded of that more expanded picture, perhaps the most finished in all the range of Sacred Poetry, which at once marks the tenderness of the prophet, and the love of that heavenly Father who inspired him?

As an eagle stirreth up her nest,
Fluttereth over her young,
Spreadeth abroad her wings,
Taket them, beareth them on her wings,
So the LORD alone did lead him." ^a

The line which follows,

A shield and buckler shall be his truth,

is a reflection of the image towards the conclusion of the Blessing,

Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD,
The shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy
excellency.^b

And again, in that prophetic passage,

His angels he shall give charge concerning thee,
To keep thee in all thy ways;
In their hands they shall bear thee up:
Lest thou dash against a stone thy foot.

^a Deut. xxxii. 11. 12.

^b Deut. xxxiii. 29.

We find a counterpart of the assurance in his Blessing:

The eternal God is thy refuge,
And underneath are the everlasting arms.*

In this Psalm also we have the imagery of the desert, "the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon." And there is no indistinct allusion to the judgments of the Almighty, to the plagues and pestilence which had afflicted the rebellious people;

Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night,
For the arrow that flieth by day,
For the pestilence that in darkness walketh,
For the destruction that wasteth by noon day.

In which four lines are enumerated, first, the threatened plagues by night and by day; secondly, the plagues in actual operation: the types of all the moral evil and spiritual pestilence which either secretly or openly have afflicted mankind since sin entered into the world.

It does not appear that any other Psalms are attributable to Moses. Those which follow evidently begin a new series: and on them observations will be made in the 3rd Dissertation.

§ 9. TITLES CONSISTING OF HISTORICAL NOTICES.

These are thirteen in number. And it is to be remarked, that they all refer to incidents of David's life, and eight of them are found in rather close connection. I cannot but regard these circumstances as presumptions of authenticity. For, were the titles inserted from conjecture, by a later hand, it is not to be doubted but that they would have been prefixed

* Deut. xxxiii. 15.

to many Psalms which appear to speak more distinctly of prominent historical events, as those of Hezekiah's and Jehoshaphat's reign, or incidents of David's life himself. Besides, a conjectural annotator would not have hazarded a title, announcing events, of which the Psalm makes no distinct mention.

But having already assumed the titles to be a genuine part of Holy Scripture, no sound reason can be found for rejecting them, unless one which the internal evidence of the Psalms may supply. Now this cannot be fairly said of any one of the titles. In no instance are they at variance with the subject matter, although, (as might be expected in devotional exercises such as these,) in many places there are no allusions to particular circumstances.

Neither is the obvious want of strict chronological arrangement any objection. When the Psalms were collected for the use of the sanctuary, either by David himself, or by prophets of later times, it is plain that a sequence other than chronological might often be thought proper; such as bringing together into groups Psalms which had a moral connection, or selecting certain songs for certain occasions. In the first Dissertation, it has been already shown that portions of various Psalms were often disjoined from their accustomed context, and incorporated with others: and to any careful reader of this book of Holy Scripture, many reasons for like transpositions will obviously occur.

Let us now briefly examine in order this class of titles. The first which occurs is prefixed to the 7th Psalm, "which he sang unto the Lord, concerning the words of Cush, the Benjamite." This is an incident of which Holy Scripture furnishes no record; unless, as the marginal note of the English Bible intimates, we are to take Cush as another designation of Shimei, the Benjamite, whose blasphemies are

recorded in the sixteenth chapter of the Second Book of Samuel. This interpretation is sufficiently consistent with the general tenor of the Psalm, and no commentary is in general more worthy of all deference than the admirable references afforded by the margin of our authorized translation.

On the title of the 18th Psalm it is unnecessary to enlarge, since this is a transcript of undoubted Scripture; the first verse of the twenty-second chapter of the Second Book of Samuel.

The title of the 30th Psalm, "at the dedication of the house of David," has no apparent connection with the subject matter, but at the same time it does not contradict it. The same may be said of the 34th, which is entitled "A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed."

In the observations on the Psalms of Asaph, the consistency of the title of the 51st Psalm has already been shown. Those of the 52d, 54th, 56th, 57th, and 59th are all consistent with the subject matter, which speaks of the aggressions of personal enemies. The 60th is also in accordance with its title, which records David's conquest over the Syrians, as recorded in 2 Sam. viii.

But to every one who has the slightest imagination, or the faintest sense of sacred imagery, the peculiar truth of the title prefixed to the 63d Psalm must appear. "The wilderness of Judea" is pictured in the exquisite allusion in the second verse :

My soul thirsteth for thee,
My flesh longeth after thee,
In a land of drought and barrenness,
Where no water is.

No Psalm is more eminently Davidical than this. The only title of this class which remains to be

noticed is that of the 142nd Psalm: which is said to be a prayer of David, "when he was in the cave." This alludes to that portion of his history when he hid in the caves of Adullam and Engedi, in order to escape from Saul.^a Now this Psalm occurs immediately after one which refers, not obscurely, to circumstances connected with that hiding place. His conduct to Saul's insidious messengers is alluded to in the words, "Their judges were dismissed by the sides of the rock." And the tenor of the Psalm indicates an absence from the sanctuary, when he makes this entreaty, that his "prayer may be set forth as the incense, and that the lifting up of his hands may be as the evening sacrifice." And the image of the following verse seems taken from the place of his concealment: when his followers were keeping watch at the opening of the cave: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; and keep the door of my lips." And again in this passage: "Our bones are scattered before the pit."

With the strain of this Psalm, that of the 140th, and 142nd, and 143rd is altogether in accordance; and special reference seems to be made to his perilous condition in this passage of the 142nd: "I had no place to flee unto: and no man cared for my soul."

§ 10. TITLES INDICATING THE SENTIMENT.

These are few in number: but so plain, and self-evident, as to require hardly any remark but this, that their occurrence is an *a priori* presumption against the mystical interpretation of the titles. For of these, two, prefixed to the 38th and 70th Psalms, are as follows: "To bring to remembrance," in evident allusion to those divine mercies which he entreats

^a 1 Sam. xxii. xxiv.

his God to remember. The 45th Psalm is entitled "A Song of Loves;" in a very inadequate sense, the marriage song of Solomon; but in its full and perfect meaning, the celebration of the love which Christ has for the Church. The title of the 92nd, "For the Sabbath Day," is by no means inconsistent with its tenor, and from its internal structure appears to be from the hand of David. The 145th is the opening of that noble hymn of praise, of which the remaining Psalms are also the component parts, disposed in an orderly sequence: and therefore are emphatically styled David's Psalm of Praise: the title extending either to the whole or to a part of this collection, of which it is possible that the latter portion was added in later times. This notion is favoured by the Septuagint, which attributes the three Psalms following the 145th to Haggai and Zechariah. But no great dependence is to be placed on these variations of the Septuagint, which did not accord with the ancient copies of the Hebrew Bible extant in the time of Origen.

It remains to examine but one title more; that of the 102nd Psalm, which runs thus:—

"A Prayer of the afflicted, when he was overwhelmed, and before the Lord poured out his supplication."

It is the opinion of an eminent poet of our day^a, who upon points like these deserves to be listened to with the greatest deference, that these words do not form the title, but the text of the Psalm: and so accordingly he has arranged them, in his metrical version. It is evident, that it will form two regular lines, according to the rules of Hebrew poetry; and will thus form a beautiful though singular feature in the Psalm. Its singularity, however, must make me hesitate in acceding to this opinion; as no other introduction of

^a Mr. Keble.

the same kind is found throughout the entire Psalter. On the other hand, as a title, it is equally singular; all the others of any length being historical, not sentimental. There is thus a choice of difficulties, to be solved, not by any researches of scholarship, but rather by the exertion of discriminative taste and feeling. Upon this point the present writer is equally unwilling and unable to give any decided opinion.

NOTES ON DISSERTATION II.

Note *a.* Page 158.

THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OF THE JEWS.

The 150th Psalm is known to contain an enumeration of the instruments used in the choral service of the Israelites. These are, the trumpet, the psaltery, the harp, the tabret, the pipe, the *minnim*, (or stringed instruments :) the *huggab*, or organ : and lastly, cymbals of two kinds, or of different degrees of loudness.

The trumpet is mentioned first, as the sacerdotal instrument. There are two designations of the trumpet in Holy Scripture ; namely, the *shophar*, and the *hatsotserah* ; both of which we learn from the 98th Psalm, v. 6. (the only passage in the Psalms in which the latter word occurs), were used in the service of the Temple.

The *shophar* for the most part signifies the war-trumpet, or one used for proclamations, and for signals ; sometimes blown by the military^a, sometimes by the priests. Its use, however, is often liturgical, as appears from the 81st, 98th, and 150th Psalms, and 1 Chron. xv. 28.

Connected with the *shophar*, we find the *jubilee* mentioned, often incorrectly translated “ram’s horns.” The jubilee trumpet was blown before the walls of Jericho by the priests. (Josh. vi. 4.) and mention is made of it in Leviticus, xxv. 9, 10. : its use being there connected with proclamation. The LXX. in Josh. vi. render it by τὸ ἰωὸν ἰωὸν. May not this designation be derived from *Jabal*, the inventor of musical instruments ? It would seem to signify a louder kind of trumpet than the *hatsotserah*.

That the use of the *hatsotserah*, or cornet, was occasionally not very different from that of the trumpet, we learn from Numb. x., where it is directed to be employed on the same occasion as the *shophar* in Psalm lxxxi : the feast of trumpets. It is used for calling of

^a By Ehud, Judges iii. 27. ; by Gideon, vi. 34. ; by Joab, 2 Sam. ii. 28. ; 2 Sam. xviii. 16. ; 2 Sam. xx. 22. ; by Saul, 1 Sam. xiii. 3. As a war trumpet, Jer. iv. 19, 21. ; vi. 17. ; xlii. 14. ; li. 27. ; Ezekiel xxxiii. 3, 4, 5, 6. ; Zeph. i. 16. ; Joel ii. 1. ; Amos ii. 2. ; iii. 6. ; Job xxxix. 21, 25. For proclamations or signals, Isaiah lviii. 1. ; Hosea viii. 1. ; 2 Kings ix. 13. ; 2 Chron. xv. 14. ; Neh. iv. 18. The trumpet at Mount Sinai, Exod. xix. 16. &c. is so called. And the mystical trumpet of God, in Isaiah lviii. 3. ; xxvii. 13. ; Ps. xlvii. 5.

assemblies (Numb. x. 2.), for proclamations, and going to war^a, but in most instances is connected with the temple service^b, and is always sacerdotal. It was probably a smaller trumpet than the shophar: which I collect from Hosea, v. 8: "Blow the trumpet in Gilead (*i. e.* beyond Jordan), and the *ceruet* in Ramah (*i. e.* in Judah). From 2 Chron. xxix. 26—28, it is evident that the cornet was employed during the Psalmody, either as an accompaniment, or a symphony.

After the trumpet follow the two principal species of harp, already observed upon, the nabal and kinnor. Then the special instruments of rejoicing, the tabret and pipe. Then stringed and wind instruments in general, under the generic names of *minnim*, (or many strings, from מנה to distribute) and *huggab*, or organ; this being one of Jubal's inventions. But this is the only passage in the Psalms in which the words occur.

The *tsiltseim*, (or *metsilthaim*) or cymbals, were of brass; and, as we learn from 1 Chron. xv. 19., were specially appropriated to the leaders of the three choirs. Perhaps this was in order that they might give the time to the numerous bands under their direction. They appear to have been of two kinds, one more sonorous than the other.

It remains to notice but one more instrument, mentioned but once, in 2 Sam. vi. 5., among David's instruments, the *menahankim*, [מנענעים], translated cymbals in the LXX, and cornets in our Bible. The etymology of the word, meaning to vibrate, indicates that these were *sistrums*, or instruments of metal which gave a jingling sound when shaken, like the bells formerly used in our military bands.

Note *b.* Page 171.

THE GENEALOGIES OF THE LEVITICAL CHOIRS.

These are given in 1 Chron. vi. Each of the three lines, viz. of Gershomites, Kohathites, and Merarites, is recorded twice; first in a descending, and secondly in an ascending order. Considerable discrepancies are found between the parallel lists; but these may be to a great degree reconciled by a careful comparison; as it will be the object of this note to show.

First, as to the Gershomite genealogy. The first and direct list occurs in v. 20.

^a Numb. xxxi. 6.; 2 Kings xi. 14.; 2 Chron. xiii. 12—14.

^b 2 Kings xii. 13.; 1 Chron. xiii. 8.; xv. 24, 28.; xvi. 6., 2 Chron. v. 12.; xv. 14.; xx. 28.; xxiii. 13.; Ezra iii. 10.; Neh. xii. 35.

“Of Gershom: Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his, son, Joah his son, Iddo his son, Jeaterai his son.”

The reversed and more complete list occurs in v. 39.

“Asaph, the son of Berachiah, the son of Shimea, the son of Michael, the son of Baasiah, the son of Malchia, the son of Ethni, the son of Zerah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Ethan, the son of Zimmah, the son of Shimei, the son of Jahath, the son of Gershom, the son of Levi.”

Now in the first list, Shimei would seem to be omitted, since he occurs in the second, as the son of Jahath, and father of Zimmah. And in the second, Libni, the son of Gershom, is omitted: whereas we are expressly told, in v. 17., that the sons of Gershom were Libni and Shimei: and in 1 Chron. xxiii. 7., where Shimei and *Laddan* (evidently the same as Libni) are mentioned as sons of Gershom. The margin of our Bible, and many commentators, consider Ethan to be another name for Joah; Adaiah for Iddo, and Jeaterai for Ethni. These words resemble one another more closely in Hebrew than in English, and might easily be mistaken by transcribers: *e. g.* ערו is like עריה, and יאתרי like אתני; while איתן might be corrupted into יואח, by a transposition of letters, and the mistake of י for a similar letter, the final י.

The following is an attempt at rectifying the genealogy of the line of Gershom, or Asaph.

1. Gershom.	6. Ethan, or Joah.	11. Baasiah.
2. Libni.	7. Iddo, or Adaiah.	12. Michael.
3. Jahath.	8. Zerah.	13. Shimea.
4. Shimei.	9. Jeaterai.	14. Berachiah.
5. Zimmah.	10. Malchia.	15. Asaph.

The direct genealogy of the Kohathites, or Korhites, (the choir of Heman,) occurs at v. 22.

“The sons of Kohath: Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, Elkanah his son, and Abiasaph his son, and Assir his son, Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uzziab his son, and Shaul his son: and the sons of Elkanah, Amasai and Ahimoth; *Elkanah his son, Elkanah*; Zophai his son, and Nahath his son, Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, Elkanah his son. And the sons of Samuel, the first born *Vashni*, (or rather, *and the second*) and Abiah.”

The reversed genealogy begins at v. 33.

“Heman a singer, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel, the son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Toah, the son of Zuph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai, the son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah, the son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son

of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel."

The corruptions appear to be these: in the direct list, we have *Korah his son, Assir his son, Elkanah his son, and Abiasaph his son*; which would imply, according to the ordinary construction, that Assir was the son of Korah, Elkanah the son of Assir, and Abiasaph the son of Elkanah. Whereas it appears from Exodus vi. 24. that Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph were the three sons of Korah. In the reversed list, accordingly, the first Assir and Elkanah are not mentioned; only Abiasaph, the father of the second Assir.

In the first list Elkanah is not recorded as the son of Shaul: but there is an evident hiatus, since Amasai and Ahimoth are called the sons of Elkanah. This hiatus is filled up in the second list, where Joel is his father (Joel and Shaul being evidently the same person). Again, in the first list, Amasai and Ahimoth are represented as brothers; whereas in the second, *Mahath* (the same person as *Ahimoth*), the son of Amasai, is father to Elkanah. The third Elkanah is not recorded in the first list as the son of Ahimoth, but he is in the LXX, and this passage is not obelized; and in the second list, he is the son of Mahath. Our translation reads incorrectly, with some MSS., "(as for) Elkanah, *the sons of Elkanah*," i. e. בני *sons*, instead of בני *his son*, the received text, and the reading of the LXX. The fourth occurrence of Elkanah (preceding Zophai) evidently redundant, is wanting in three of Kennicott's MSS. and in the LXX.

In the first list is read *Vashni*, Abiah. Some have considered *Vashni* to be synonymous with Joel. The LXX reads, ὁ πρωτότοκος Σαυὶ, καὶ Ἀβιά. Now we know from the parallel genealogy, and from 1 Sam. viii. 2., that Joel was the name of Samuel's eldest son. A word has clearly dropped out of the text, which should be read, יהיה ראשון [ויהא], *the first born Joel, and the second Abiah*: (the Hebrew word translated *Vashni* meaning "and the second.") The ו, according to this reading, must be omitted before Abiah. This error, as Dr. Kennicott remarks, with its solution, has been pointed out by Joseph Mede, as also by Calmet. Dr. Hales (*Anal. of Chron.* iii. p. 46. 8vo. edit.) rejects from the list of Kohath several names marked * in the subjoined list, alleging the repetition of names, and the probability of interpolation, from the disproportionate length of Kohath's line, when compared with those of his two brethren. But his objection seems to be made without sufficient reason. The two parallel genealogies give a nearly equal length of generations. The recurrence of similar names is a frequent characteristic of Hebrew pedigrees: and as to the greater length of Kohath's line, similar instances are frequently

to be found in family records. They might have married earlier in several successive generations in this line than in the others. At all events it is impossible to get over the strong coincidence afforded by the two parallel genealogies, without taking unwarrantable liberties with the text of Holy Scripture. The names, even when differing, have a strong resemblance. For instance, Uziah is known to be synonymous with Azariah, and Ahimoth differs but little from Mahath, Zophai from Zuph, Eliab from Eliel.

The following is an attempted rectification of Kohath's line.

1. Kohath.	8. Uziah, or Azariah.	15. Nahath or Toah.
2. Izhar, or Amminadab.	9. Shaul, or Joel.*	16. Eliab or Eliel.
3. Korah.	10. Elkanah.*	17. Jeroham.
4. Abiasaph, Assir, and Elkanah.	11. Amasai.*	18. Elkanah.
5. Assir.	12. Ahimoth, or Mahath.*	19. Samuel.
6. Tahath.*	13. Elkanah.	20. Joel and Abiah.
7. Zephaniah or Uriel.*	14. Zophai or Zuph.	21. Heman.

As for the third genealogy, that of Merari (the choir of Ethan), it would appear that the first list given in v. 29. is the line of the eldest brother Mahli, that in v. 44. that of the second brother Musli; which view is confirmed by 1 Chron. xxiii. 21.

I make no apology for the insertion of this note. Though the occasion of it is only incidental to the main subject of the dissertation, this investigation may not be without its use; as it is impossible to say how far the attempt to explain an apparently unimportant difficulty of Scripture, may contribute towards solving difficulties confessedly important. This genealogy (except in the instance of one name) has been unaccountably passed over by Dr. Kennicott, who has so ably disentangled the difficulties to be found in similar passages of the Old Testament.

Note c. Page 171.

ON THE TWENTY-FOUR COURSES OF THE LEVITES.

The order of these courses is given in 1 Chron. xxv., from which the following table is compiled. The number refers to the courses, which were appointed by lot.

1. Joseph, of the choir of Asaph.	8. Jeshaiiah of the choir of Ethan.
2. Gedaliah „ „ Ethan.	9. Mattaniah „ „ Heman
3. Zaecur „ „ Asaph.	10. Shimei „ „ Ethan.
4. Zevi, or Izri „ „ Ethan.	11. Uzziel, or Azareel „ „ Heman.
5. Nethaniah „ „ Asaph.	12. Hashabiah „ „ Ethan.
6. Bukkiah „ „ Heman.	13. Shebuel or Shubael „ „ Heman.
7. Asarelah, or Jesharelah „ „ Asaph.	14. Mattithiah „ „ Ethan.

The remainder were all of the choir of Heman, or Korhites.

15. Jerimoth.	20. Eliabab.
16. Hananiah.	21. Hothir.
17. Joshbekashah.	22. Giddalti.
18. Hanani.	23. Mahazioth.
19. Mallothi.	24. Romamti Ezer.

Each of these courses waited in turn, somewhat like the chaplains and choir of our Sovereign's chapel. Each choir was formed of twelve. But this does not seem to have included both instrumental and vocal music. According to some Jewish authorities, the Levitical performers were all vocal, excepting the sacerdotal trumpeters, and players on the cymbals. And the expression in 1 Chron. xxv., of prophesying to a harp, may mean that these men sang to the musical accompaniment of others. See Lightfoot's Temple Service, ch. vii. sect. 2. This is a question of considerable difficulty. I am inclined, however, to the opinion expressed in this Jewish tradition; and think that neither instrumental performers nor boys are included in the stated courses; a supposition which seems borne out by a passage in 1 Chron. xv. 20. 21., where the harpers appear to have been a stationary body, not serving by courses. Each band during its waiting thus formed a double choir, *i. e.* two of each adult quality of voice on each side, the force of which our cathedral choirs used generally to consist in ancient times. And thus the Temple music may be vindicated from the imputation of that extreme harshness and noisiness which Dr. Burney and other musical writers have so carelessly imputed to it. On certain great occasions (as observed in the text of the Dissertation) the different bands joined, as at great festivals in many Christian churches.

THE
BOOK OF PSALMS.



DISSERTATION III.

DISSERTATION III.

ON THE ORDER AND CONNECTION OF THE PSALMS.

§ 1. GENERAL REMARKS.

SINCE all God's works, whether visible or providential, manifest, in their original production, an exquisite design, and, in their progression and sequence, exclude all notion of chance, and bear evidence of a consistent arrangement, every devout mind must be willing to believe, antecedent to any investigation, that a like arrangement exists in each portion of that written revelation which the Holy Spirit has communicated to the Church.

The Book of Psalms, especially, demands this belief from us, since it has been to the faithful in all ages, their principal guide to devotion, to providential history, to prophecy, and to the highest mysteries of religion. If apparent irregularities are occasionally observable in the sequence of those divine songs, the same reflections may be applied to the consideration of such difficulties as have place in the study of history. For in the ordinary course of worldly events, a careless or irreligious observer will look upon many of these as irregular or fortuitous in their sequence, or at least as unconnected with any orderly system of Providence; while the instructed Christian will believe (what real philosophy can prove) that each event is a link in one great chain, holding its ap-

pointed place, and contributing to the completeness of God's universal scheme.

That the collectors and arrangers of the Psalms were directed in their labours by the Holy Spirit, no true maintainer of the inspiration of the Scriptures can question. And therefore it is but a pious duty to acquiesce in the notion, that the violations of chronological order, or other seeming anomalies, may have their solution in causes which were of divine appointment. And a closer examination will, it is hoped, vindicate their real regularity in this respect. In some instances, indeed, as must happen in the investigation of any part of the divine dispensations, the causes may be obscure, and possibly unfathomable. Still the general structure of the book, like the general system, both moral and physical, of the universe, affords sufficient evidence of providential design.

Thus, to take a very cursory view of its contents, it appears sufficiently obvious, that the first Psalm is introductory to the whole collection. It is equally evident, that the second is also introductory to the Psalms in immediate sequence, and to a considerable part of the whole, which speak of conflicts with the enemies of God, the alternate repulses and victories, the complaints and thanksgivings, the hopes and fears, of his servants. These struggles and vicissitudes form the main subject matter of the two earlier divisions, or books of the Psalms, relieved occasionally by intervals of repose, as in the 8th and 19th, and by gleams of bright and inspiring prophecy. As we proceed, we find the fortunes of the Church more distinctly spoken of, in the Psalms of Asaph and Korah especially; her conquests and final triumph more confidently predicted, the reign of her Redeemer brought more distinctly into view, the history of God's past and future Provi-

dence more systematically taught; the deliverance from captivity, and the bestowal of his grace through divinely instituted channels, in his sacraments, more specially celebrated. Towards the end, in the 119th Psalm, we have the calm meditations of experienced, but watchful piety, matured into settled habits: and from this Psalm onward, meditation ripens into thanksgiving, now uttered in a more confirmed and confident strain, till those which form the conclusion of the entire book are expressive of unmixed happiness and joy, the anticipation of the songs of heaven. All conflicts are now over: the salvation of the righteous, and destruction of the ungodly, announced in the first Psalm, are brought to pass: the triumph of Christ and of his servants, foretold in the second, is complete: the kings of the earth, who had stood up against the Lord and against his Anointed, are now bound in chains, and with links of iron: and the final and crowning sentiment of the whole is this: "O praise God in his holiness; praise him in the firmament of his power. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord."^a

In this general aspect of the Psalms, we may read a threefold history: first, the fortunes of the Church; secondly, those of its antitype, the Church of Christ, and thirdly, the progress of each individual soul from the conflicts with sin, to her final triumph and restoration to the Presence of God her Creator. But just as it is ordained in the fortunes of the Church Militant and of her individual members, this general

^a St. Gregory Nyssen, in his first treatise on the inscriptions of the Psalms (c. 5, 6, 7.) enters largely into this regular progression, and shows that praise forms the termination, as the painful pursuit of virtue forms the beginning. His treatise is well worth attentive reading, though dealing too much in that forced and mystical interpretation, so prevalent in the writings of the Fathers. Genebrard (in Psalm xl. 15.) shows also the specific character of each division: but his criticisms are not exact.

progress towards perfection is chequered by many incidents, in all appearance anomalous and discouraging. Thus the interposition of the 140th and three following Psalms, appears to retard the advance towards final victory, recurring to persecutions and perplexities which had seemingly passed away. In like manner checks will occur in the midst of the most prosperous current of a spiritual condition, permitted or ordained in order that vigilance may be kept alive, and a perpetual dependence upon God alone for strength and protection.

How far the devotions of the more faithful in communion with the Church of England may have been influenced by this moral sequence of the Psalms it would be impossible to say. Those very persons most likely to be benefited by this circumstance, would probably be unconscious of its operation; since the most fixed and healthy habits of thought and of devotion are commonly promoted by unmarked associations. But that its effect has been salutary and providential I should be sorry to doubt. For this at least we have reason to be thankful, that our Church, in her daily recitation of the Psalter, has used no arbitrary or partial method of selection, but has strictly followed the order laid down in Holy Writ, so as to allow to her children the full benefit that may arise from their varied sequence and exquisite connection. We ought also to be thankful, that she has not taxed our powers of comprehension or memory, by enjoining too large a portion for each day's use, but in her office of the steward of God's mysteries, has been mindful of the spirit of that petition taught us by himself, "the bread that is sufficient for us, give us day by day."

Such, it is conceived, is the providential design, completed when the Book of Psalms was digested

into its present form. But, in examining with more accuracy its several parts, we shall, if I mistake not, find many particulars which will throw light upon their original design and appropriation, illustrate their connection, and explain some of their apparent anomalies. This examination, adhering to the proofs afforded by internal evidence, and to the facts of Scripture history, is in harmony with the general design of these pages, which is, to call attention to the literal meaning of Holy Scripture, as the only sure basis for the more spiritual application of its saving truths.

The main point to be observed at present, which will be expounded in the following sections, is this: that, besides the general plan of the Psalter, the book is found to divide itself into five great portions or masses, which has each to a considerable degree a distinctive character.^a Thus, the first portion consists altogether of Psalms expressly ascribed to David, or such as can be clearly proved to be his. The second portion is for the most part Davidical; but at its commencement are found seven Psalms of the sons of Korah, and one of Asaph: while of the Davidical Psalms, several, in regular sequence, are entitled *Maschil* and *Michtam*. The third portion consists almost entirely of the Psalms of Korah and Asaph. Then succeeds a division consisting, with but three exceptions, of Psalms styled by the ancients *ἀνεπίγραφοι*, or untitled, and, as will be shown in the fifth section of this Dissertation, of a peculiar character, and, for the most part, in close connection. The last, or fifth di-

^a Notwithstanding these obvious characteristics, we find among the fragments of the Talmud one, which asserts that David wrote the book of Psalms by the hand of ten persons: Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, Heman, Jeduthun, Asaph, and three sons of Korah; utterly excluding the church of after times from any participation in the work.

vision, is obviously miscellaneous, made up of several classes of Psalms, some of David, many referring to the captivity and the events which followed; some are altogether *sui generis*, as the 119th Psalm, that peculiar class called Songs of Degrees, and in conclusion, that continuous strain of thanksgiving, beginning with "David's Psalm of Praise" (the 145th), and completing the entire collection.

It is unnecessary at present to enter upon the consideration of the exceptions to the specific character of each of these divisions which obviously occur. Suffice it to observe, that there are strong indications of five general groups, each having a peculiar character. Now this observable fact bears out the propriety of the Jewish division of the Psalter into five books^a or portions: each of these comprising one of the divisions now assumed, from internal evidence, to exist.

This division has been disallowed by some of the Fathers^b, on the ground that it is contradictory to

^a St. Epiphanius (*de mensuris et ponderibus*) says that the Hebrews so divided it. So also Eusebius in his *ὑπόθεσις*, prefixed to the Codex Alexandr. and given by Grabe in his *Prolegomena* to the LXX.

^b St. Hilary, *Proleg. in Psalmos*, who speaks of the tradition being held only "secundum quosdam Hebræos;" and St. Jerome, *Prefat. in Libr. Psalmorum*. But in his preface to the First Book of Samuel, he says, "quem *quinque incisionibus*, et uno Psalmorum volumine comprehendunt." Dr. Hammond makes the like objection; observing, however, that it forms five books in the Syriac translation. But St. Gregory Nyssen, in his first treatise on the Psalms (cap. v.), admits the quintuple division. And St. Ambrose, *Enarr. in Ps. xl.* (Bened. ed. ii. 764. F.) "*pulehrè autem quinque libri et unum Psalterium.*" This division is defended by Bishop Hare, in his *Prolegomena* to his arrangement of the Psalms, affirming that they were certainly collated at different times, and collected together after the return from Babylon. (pp. lxiy. et seq.) Although the metrical theory of the Bishop be untenable, there is much in his learned *Prolegomena* deserving of attention. Genebrard, as remarked before in a note to page 221., remarks upon the division into five parts; and with him De Muis (in Psalm xl.) agrees. But authorities on both sides of this question might be needlessly multiplied.

the express words of Holy Scripture; since in the 20th verse of the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, the Psalter is designated "the book of Psalms." The utmost that can be fairly conceded to such an objection is this, that the five portions ought not to be styled "books," or that such formal division ought not to be announced as part of the authentic text of Holy Scripture: but it leaves untouched the validity of the tradition, which at least recognises five collections, probably made at five several times, and formed into one book by Ezra, or rather Nehemiah.^a The word *book* may be used in a more or less extended sense, as a larger or smaller portion of the same work. We call the Bible a book, and yet speak of the books of the Old and New Testament. The Jews seem rightly to have preserved the memory of a fact, though in their deductions from it they may have, as usual, made it liable to suspicion, by their own guesses or unfounded traditions. Such is that, of the Psalms having been divided into five books, in imitation of the Law of Moses^b: an assertion which plainly proceeded from conjecture, and which obscures the probable facts of the case, which we shall now proceed to state.

Observations have been already made^c on the probable compilation of the first three portions of the Psalms. In addition to what was there said, it is

^a Ezra is accounted the compiler by the author of the Synopsis attributed to St. Athanasius. (St. Athanas. Opera, iii. 21. Bened. Ed.) Theodoret, Pref. in Psalmos; Hilary, Proleg. in Psalmos, &c. Carpzov has the same opinion. Huetius thinks that Ezra arranged the Psalms in the order in which they were to be sung in the temple; but this opinion Bishop Hare well refutes (Proleg. p. lxxviii.). The bishop considers the collection to be referred to Nehemiah, and supports his view by reference to 2 Maccabees ii. 13. "The same things also were reported in the writings and commentaries of Neemias, and how he, founding a library, gathered together the acts of the Kings, and the Prophets, and of David, and the Epistles of the Kings concerning the holy gifts."

^b Kimchi records this tradition.

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now to be remarked, that there were five individuals, four of them kings, under whose auspices the Temple worship was regulated or restored, and part of the Holy Scripture rescued from disuse or oblivion; namely, David, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, and Ezra: the latter being generally considered as the reviser of such books of the sacred Canon as existed up to his time.^a There would be little difficulty or inconsistency in assigning to each of these eminent servants of God the collection of one portion of the Psalms. Thus, the first book, being unmingledly David's, may without question be considered as a collection formed during his reign. The second book is not exclusively his: the third is mainly the composition of others. As we have already observed^b certain Psalms in each of these collections appear to have been composed during the reign of Jehoshaphat, and to have been adapted to the Temple service by Hezekiah.^c Neither the songs of Korah nor of Asaph can be restricted to either reign, according to their present sequence. The history of the second and third books, however, appears to be this. At one period of his reign King Hezekiah reproduced certain Psalms of Jehoshaphat, adding to them others composed during his own reign. Then he discovered or made public certain Psalms of *David*, (as we know he did certain Chapters of Proverbs,) which had never been formally collected, or had been forgotten during the disastrous times of Ahaz: and all these he put together in a separate volume, which now forms the second portion. At a later period, he made another collection or adaptation of Jehoshaphat's Psalms, and of those of his own time, and thus formed

^a If not Ezra, at least Nehemiah.

^b Dissert. ii. § 5, 6.

^c This opinion is noticed as probable by Calmet, Bishop Hare in his Prolegomena, and by Coppen (Prolegomenum in Psalmos).

the third volume or portion; inserting one of David's and one of Ethan's, which latter was probably completed by Isaiah.^a

The fourth book may possibly have been a restoration made by King Josiah, in whose reign the book of the Law was discovered. But this conjecture, though not contradicted by internal evidence, has nothing to substantiate it. It is enough to observe, however, that the distinct character of this book is sufficiently obvious. With the exception of the 101st and 102nd, the Psalms which it contains are not personal: they are simple in their construction, and of a character peculiarly popular. If I mistake not, this book was the earliest collection, made for the public service, and the instruction of the Jewish people, compiled, in part from Mosaical sources, by David himself, at the beginning of his reign, before his own Psalms had yet been adopted in the ordinary service of the sanctuary. The analysis of this book, bearing out this theory, is reserved for the 5th section of the present Dissertation.

As to the last or fifth book, the examination of its several parts will, it is hoped, make its compilation by Ezra or Nehemiah more than probable. It bears many marks of having been in part composed during the Captivity, in part after; and, as to the rest, of being a supplementary collection of older Psalms, hitherto unpublished or forgotten, or adapted to the circumstances of the Jewish people after their restoration to their own land.

Such is the general outline of the enquiry to be pursued in the following sections. At present a few words must be said on the Doxologies which form the conclusion of all the divisions except the last. These obviously indicate design, and sufficiently mark the

^a See p. 200 of this vol.

boundaries of each book. Their terms are very similar, each beginning with "Blessed be the Lord," and concluding with "Amen." These doxologies seem to have been suggested by the conclusion of that eucharistic Psalm of David, recorded in the 16th chapter of the First Book of Chronicles; and as the latter portion of that Psalm is identical with the conclusion of the 106th, which closes the fourth division of the Psalms, the final reviser of the Psalter, (that is, Ezra,) not improbably gave a similar termination to each preceding division: if, indeed, the last Psalm of David, the 72nd, which closes the second division, had not originally this termination. The doxologies are not essential towards the completeness of the Psalms in which they occur: and the traditions of the church, and the general opinions of scholars, assign them to the compilers or arrangers of the Psalter.

§ 2. THE FIRST PART OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

The first part, or division of the Psalter, consisting of forty-one Psalms, is expressly assigned to David, except in four instances^a, namely, the 1st, 2nd, 10th, and 33rd. As to the authorship of the first Psalm, critics are divided.^b The second is unquestionably David's: as we are assured by the united testimony of the Apostles, in the twenty-fifth verse of the fourth chapter of the Acts. The 10th Psalm is connected with, or more properly forms a part of the 9th, which is David's: and the 33rd, though possibly composed before his time, is obviously connected with the 32nd.

By some critics, the first Psalm is attributed to

^a This is remarked by Bishop Patrick, who thinks that they were for this reason collected into one volume.

^b David is most commonly considered as the author by the Fathers; some say Ezra, some Josiah. In fact, this is a matter which can be decided by no external testimony.

Ezra, who is supposed to have prefixed it to the whole collection, as an introduction. For this notion, however, we have no positive authority; and there is nothing in the structure of the Psalm which militates against assigning it to David, except, perhaps, the absence of any thing personal. But the same absence is perceptible in the second, which is proved to be his: and it may be accounted for by the prefatory nature of the composition. There are also some expressions which resemble David's style: thus, "in the seat of the scornful he hath not sat," finds a parallel in Psalm xxvi., "with the ungodly I have not sat:" and the similitude of the chaff scattered by the wind is like the expression in Psalm xxxv.

Let them be as the chaff before the wind,
And let the angel of the Lord persecute them.

The image of the tree may be compared with that of the olive tree in Psalm lii., where also the dispersion of the wicked is contrasted with the planting of the righteous.

Still, this Psalm is so purely didactic and oracular, that nothing certain can be said of its authorship. But without any doubt its position marks design, as a statement of the whole moral object of the Psalms, which so fully shew the destruction of God's enemies, and the salvation of his servants.

The 2nd Psalm is declared by holy Scripture^a to be prophetic of Christ: its primary and literal meaning might be applicable, in part, to David; but in its fulness, and in its most characteristic expressions, the Church has never attributed it to any one but the Son of God. That awful passage,

Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,

refers to Him alone; as does the following clause,

^a Acts iv. 25, 26.

Desire of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance,

And for thy possession the uttermost parts of the earth.

And again,

Kiss the Son, lest he be angry,

And so ye perish from the right way.

As this Psalm is the general introduction to the prophetic parts of the book, so it is more immediately to those which follow. It announces a conflict between the powers of the earth, and those of heaven; between the Most High and his enemies, and at the same time predicts their overthrow. We are thus prepared, as it were, for some great drama, the progress of which is recorded in the sequel.

Accordingly, in the third Psalm, the servant of God begins his prayer, distinctly stating the approaching aggression of his enemies, their power, and their blasphemous malignity. He then lies down to sleep, and rises refreshed by the divine aid, and prepared for the warfare of the day. The same subject is expanded, as has been already shewn^a, in the 4th Psalm: when another day is terminated. Another day opens in the 5th Psalm, which contains his morning prayer, repeating the same topics; the aggressions of enemies; trust in God's mercy, the worship of the sanctuary, and a confident prediction of destruction to the wicked, and joy to the faithful. But each particular is more fully dwelt upon. And while this Psalm will be found to be exactly parallel with the preceding, its concluding sentiments are of a higher nature, and contain more expanded views of the happiness and blessedness of the righteous. Again, in the 6th Psalm, the meditations of the night return: but here is an accession of grief and pain, greater than has been hitherto recorded. We have for the

^a Pages 56—59.

first time an intimation that his troubles have been in part caused by his own sin, or that at least his transgression deserved this chastisement; for he prays God not to rebuke him in his anger, nor chasten him in his hot displeasure. Still, the prayer of faith and repentance is heard, and his spirit is reassured: for the Lord hath heard the voice of his weeping: and he is enabled to say,

Away from me, all ye that work vanity.
 They shall be ashamed, and vexed sore, all mine enemies;
 They shall be turned back, and be ashamed suddenly.

We may without improbability assign the 6th and preceding Psalms to the time when he was banished from his kingdom, while suffering from filial ingratitude and treachery. The 3rd Psalm is expressly attributed, by its title, to that period of David's life. And there is no apparent reason why we should date the sixth later. During the persecutions of Saul, his conscience was clear, and after the temporal punishment for his great sin had been undergone, there was no great offence, as the Scriptures^a themselves assure us, for which he could so bitterly reproach himself. Its connection with the 7th Psalm justifies this opinion: the title of the latter is decisive. There is but one plausible objection; namely, that the Psalmist uses the words of conscious rectitude; whereas, the very sufferings which now assailed him were in consequence of sin. But David here alludes to the slanderous imputations of Shimci. He had been forgiven his great sin; and with it the reproaches of his enemies were unconnected.

The alternation of night and morning still proceeds; and in the 7th Psalm, the attacks and devices of the enemy are more distinctly pictured, and the aid of the Most High is more earnestly in-

^a 1 Kings xv. 5.

voked; the prayer concluding with the accustomed strain of prophetic hope. The nightly meditations which follow in the 8th Psalm form a happy contrast to those of the 6th. They give a picture of perfect repose, and peaceful meditation, unalloyed with care. The whole character of this Psalm is in exact accordance with the circumstances of David's earlier days, when he kept his father's sheep. To this period of his life it is with every appearance of probability to be assigned: and perhaps this was one of those songs which he sang to the harp to soothe the discomposed spirit of Saul. No mention, indeed, is made in Holy Scripture of David's songs, when he played on the harp before him^a; but in the early ages, the harp is supposed to have been uniformly used as an accompaniment to the voice. To the same period the 23rd Psalm may justly be assigned; but their present location was of course an arrangement of later times.

The mention of the marvellous works of God, to which the following Psalm, the 9th, refers, is connected with the preceding meditations. This Psalm is a noble *ἐπιτυχίον*, or song of triumph, connected, as we have already shewn^b, with the 10th. The 11th and those to the 14th inclusive still continue the same subject; their topic being the deceitfulness and cruelty of the wicked, and the vengeance of the Almighty; contrasted with the meekness and faith of the poor, of those especially whom our Lord designates "the poor in spirit;" and the protecting mercy of their God. The concluding expressions of the 14th Psalm,

When the Lord turneth the captivity of his people,
has induced some critics to assign this Psalm to the times of the Babylonish captivity. But we must

^a 1 Sam. xvi. 22. and xviii. 10.

^b Page 66. of this vol.

remember that David and many of the nation were in temporary exile during the oppressions of Absalom, to which I have no doubt the present Psalm refers.

But at the 15th Psalm a higher strain is interposed: and amidst the warfare of this lower world, the prophet is blessed with a vision of the life to come, and of Him who is to open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. A calm having succeeded, and David being restored to the enjoyment of that public worship in the sanctuary which was his highest delight, prepares to approach the holy hill where the ark of God rested. But before he goes up, he reflects on the purity of mind and conduct required from a sincere worshipper. The 15th Psalm is introductory to the two which follow. Mention is here made of God's tabernacle, and the hill of his holiness: doubtless typical of that everlasting Temple which is in heaven; since the blessing of him who shall be thought worthy to dwell in that holy resting-place is declared to be eternal: "he that doeth these things shall not be moved for ever." Which reflections prepare us for the deeply mystical Psalm in immediate sequence: which, we are assured by the Apostle St. Peter^a, is applicable to Christ, and to Him alone: for David died and saw corruption; but he, "seeing this before," namely, that Christ should be of his seed, according to the flesh, "spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."

But, though in its literal sense, and in the fulness of its meaning, and in many of its expressions, this Psalm is applicable to our blessed Lord alone, still we may believe that to a certain extent it expresses the present hope and confidence of David himself. It does certainly now express the hopes of all the faith-

^a Acts ii. 25—31.

ful, who through Christ shall be raised to everlasting life. Though worms shall destroy their bodies, yet everlasting corruption shall not be their portion.

Towards the conclusion, heaven itself, the antitype of the holy hill and tabernacle of the 15th Psalm, is opened; and the joys of that blessed place are expressed in words ten thousand times more cogent than any description: words, which to the faithful are more than sufficient for their utmost hopes.

Thou shalt shew me the path of life:
Fulness of joys is in thy Presence:
Pleasures are at thy right hand for evermore.

The prophecy is continued in the 17th Psalm; the life and immortality purchased for us by Christ our Lord being still the theme of the prophet. Most of the topics are here expanded. At its commencement the prayer of faith, and the salutary discipline of the Almighty's hand, and the communings with that fatherly Instructor in the watches of the night. The expressions in the 16th Psalm,

I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel:
Yea in the night my reins chasten me:

are thus responded to in that before us:

Thou hast proved mine heart,
Thou hast visited me in the night:
Thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing.

The protection of the Lord whom he had set before him continually, who was on his right hand, so that he should not be moved, has its reflection in these exquisite words:

Shew the marvels of thy mercies,
O thou that savest them that take refuge in thee
From those that rise up against thy right hand.
Keep me as the apple of the eye:
Under the shadow of thy wings hide me.

And the terminating assurance of the joys of heaven speaks yet more emphatically of God's Presence, of that likeness to which man shall be then restored, and of that righteousness with which the faithful shall then be clothed; that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. So certain is that assurance of St. Peter^a, that the great object of God's promises is our participation of the divine nature; and that of our blessed Lord, that the pure in heart shall see God^b: this being the very essence of heavenly joy.

The 18th Psalm, one altogether peculiar in its magnificent but most accurate imagery, brings us again to earth, and contains a summary of the conflicts heretofore undergone, and now for ever quelled. The occasion of this Psalm is distinctly recorded in the title, and in sacred history; as being composed at the end of David's life, when his wars were successfully terminated. And as it here occurs, it forms the conclusion of that great action announced in the 2nd Psalm.

The 19th Psalm, though not directly connected with the former, makes the same break in the action which has been observed with respect to the 8th. As the 8th may be called a night scene, so may the present be called a day scene: it gives a glorious image of the aspect of the firmament illuminated by the sun; and, by an unequalled transition, makes this contemplation of the visible universe subservient to meditation on the illuminating and purifying influence of God's law. Here is the same settled habit of contemplative devotion which marked that earlier Psalm, undisturbed by any conflicting emotions. It has perhaps a character of more matured wisdom, and of more experience in the deceitfulness of the

^a 2 St. Peter i. 4.

^b St. Matthew v. 8

human heart. It was probably composed during David's declining years.

The same may be said of the 20th and 21st. The connection of these two Psalms has been already observed. They are also connected with the last prayer of David for Solomon, Psalm lxxii., and, like it, reach far beyond Solomon; for whereas his reign was peaceful, here are foretold the victories of the Anointed of the Lord, the Son of David.

The prophetic strain, thus resumed, is continued in the 22nd, and reaches to the 24th, speaking of the Death, Burial, and Ascension of Christ. The application of the 22nd in all its details, to our Lord, is well known to every Christian. It does not, however, speak exclusively of our Saviour's sufferings; for its second part changes to a song of triumph:

I will tell of thy Name to my brethren;
In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

And the universality of the Church of Christ, and of his spiritual family, is fully prophesied in the conclusion.

The 23rd Psalm, in its primary sense, a pastoral song of David's, after he had been anointed by Samuel during Saul's reign, assumes, by its position here, a character eminently prophetic. The valley of the shadow of death announces the descent of Christ into hell: and the rest in the house of the Lord to the end of days, his future glorification: an interpretation, however, which by no means excludes its application to the faithful of all times.

The 24th Psalm, again, directly referring to the worship of the Tabernacle (a topic suggested by the concluding line of the preceding), is shewn, by its position here, to be prophetic of Christ's Ascension. The former part, however, is applicable to all those servants of God, who have been by his grace enabled to follow him in heart and mind thitherward.

This Psalm may be considered as the germ of the six which follow, the topics of which are, the preparation and discipline of the heart, alluded to in the former part of the 24th, and the dwelling-place of God, which forms the subject of its latter division. The 25th Psalm is thus a prayer for divine guidance and discipline, uttered in that spirit of hopeful and calm devotion which is peculiarly characteristic of those which form its sequel.

As this is the first alphabetical Psalm, it is in place to oppose a notion very generally entertained, that compositions of this kind were merely collections of unconnected thoughts, which occurred at different times, and were afterwards reduced to order under this arrangement. Such a notion would surely degrade large portions of inspired philosophy to the character of a common-place book or anthology; whereas a nicely balanced and finely adapted connection, resulting from the regularity of inspired thought, is the very essence of divine poetry. In all the alphabetical Psalms this connection is clearly to be traced: but in that before us it may be evident to the most cursory reader, who will but look at the arrangement of the stanzas given in the first Volume of this work. The first of these is the general expression of faith: the second is a prayer for guidance into God's ways and paths: the third, for the bestowal of his mercy and forgiveness: the next is a celebration of God's goodness in teaching men his ways, according to the spirit of the former prayer: then, a couplet again praying for forgiveness: next, are the blessings both temporal and spiritual conferred on the man who fears God: and the concluding portion, consisting of fifteen lines, is an expansion of the first stanza, a more earnest expression of faith, and a consequent prayer for deliverance.

The 26th Psalm continues the two main topics: first, a prayer for God's searching and justifying

discipline, and an assertion of the integrity of the prophet's heart; and secondly, the approach to the altar of God, to the beloved habitation of his house, and to the place of the dwelling of his glory. The next Psalm reflects the latter of these topics with increased brilliancy. It opens with describing God as his light and salvation, the bestower of illuminating grace and of strength; and having acknowledged him as the source of religious confidence, the desire is expressed to rest for ever in the house of the Lord, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, to visit his temple, to sacrifice in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy. It is evident that the earthly tabernacle is here intended to be the type of the heavenly, from the following words:

For he shall cover me in his pavilion in the day of evil;
He shall hide me in the hiding-place of his tabernacle:
On a rock shall he lift me up.

The latter part is an expansion of the prayer which formed the beginning of the 26th Psalm; and, in terms of the most earnest and heartfelt devotion, he intreats that the light of his countenance and his protection and guidance may still be with him, and looks forward to the land of the living, as the goal of his hopes: concluding with a firm assertion of religious courage and hope.

Of a character exactly similar is the 27th, which continues to commemorate the sanctuary, "the oracle of his holiness," and repeats the assurance of divine protection, under the images of a rock, and a shield; declaring God to be his strength, the source of his joy, the salvation of his Anointed, and the Saviour of his people.

The two Psalms which immediately follow are of unmixed thanksgiving, and seem to be the fulfilment of the eucharistical services announced in the pre-

ceding. In the 29th, the oblation is offered at the temple: and then succeeds that magnificent celebration of the Voice of the Lord. But glorious as is that voice when heard in the convulsions of nature, there is a yet more glorious manifestation in the temple, wherein "every thing doth speak of his glory." And still more glorious is his heavenly habitation, where "upon the flood he doth sit," where "he doth sit a king for ever," and whence he dispenses to his people the gifts of strength and peace. Of the 30th Psalm it may be observed in general that this is the spiritual sacrifice of the heart, and, as such, an advance upon the preceding. In its character it bears the strongest marks of the hand of David.

The 31st Psalm is of a less eucharistical character than the former. The prophet returns to his complaints and fears. But still all the most characteristic images and expressions of the Psalms immediately preceding are retained, so as to prove their close connection. The expression of the Rock, which occurred in the 28th, is expanded into the cognate images of "a rock of strength, a house of defence, a stony rock and a defence." God is again celebrated as the source of strength; again the servants of God are summoned to be of good courage; and again the heavenly pavilion is mentioned in terms closely resembling those employed in the 27th Psalm:

Thou shalt hide them in the hidden place of thy presence
from the provoking of man;
Thou shalt lay them up in a pavilion from the strife of
tongues.

With the following Psalm, however, a new strain begins. The 32nd and the following are in close connection: the former speaking of the progress of true repentance, as has been already observed^a, the

^a Page 84. of this vol.

latter recording the thanksgiving of those who have been redeemed. The connection is obviously marked by the concluding words of the former Psalm, which are repeated in nearly the same terms in the next :

Rejoice, ye righteous, in the Lord :
For to the upright pleasant is praise.

The 32nd Psalm is unquestionably David's. But there are many expressions in the 33rd (an untitled Psalm) which dispose me to assign it to the time of Moses. The style in general is more like his than David's : and the topics are such as remind us of the author of Genesis, and of the leader of the people through the Red Sea and the wilderness. How Mosaical, for instance, is that passage, — "For he spake, and it was; he commanded, and it stood." And the expressions which immediately precede: "He gathereth, as a heap, the waters of the sea; he layeth up in treasure-houses the depths:" which resembles not only the account of "the gathering together of the waters unto one place," and "the fountains of the great deep," in Genesis^a, but the passage in his song of triumph, —

The floods stood upright as an heap,
And the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.^b

To both events, the creation, namely, and the parting of the Red Sea, this passage may possibly allude. In the second part the destruction of Pharaoh and protection of the Israelites are not indistinctly celebrated.

The Lord scattereth the counsel of the heathen ;
He breaketh the devices of the princes :
Happy is the people to whom the Lord is their God.
From heaven the Lord looked down :
He beheld all the sons of men.

^a Gen. i. 9. ; vii. 11. ; viii. 2.

^b Exod. xv. 8.

Which latter words recall to mind the sublime narrative of Moses: “And it came to pass, that in the morning watch, the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians;”^a and then the destruction of Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen, follows in these words:

No king is saved by the multitude of an host :
 A mighty man is not delivered by greatness of strength ;
 A vain thing is a horse to save :
 And in the greatness of his strength he shall not rescue.

In the latter part of the Psalm, the divine protection of the people in the wilderness is clearly commemorated: that “eye of the Lord, which delivered their soul from death, and kept them alive in dearth.”

Thus, the 32nd Psalm celebrates the wonders of divine Grace, the 33rd those of divine Providence. It must, however, be admitted, that though the topics of the latter Psalm refer to the age of Moses, it does not necessarily follow that he was the author; for David would naturally have selected the most prominent wonders of old time, when about to celebrate this great sphere of God’s universal power. But the 34th Psalm is expressly assigned to David; and the connection between this and the preceding is sufficiently evident. The divine protection is still spoken of:

The *eyes* of the Lord are towards the righteous ;
 The *Angel* of the Lord encampeth round about them that
 fear him, and delivereth them :

manifestly continuing the allusion to the history of the wilderness, when “the angel of his Presence saved them.”^b In this Psalm, the moral reasons of God’s protection are unfolded: and therefore its strain is of

^a Exod. xiv. 24.

^b Isaiah lxiii. 9. ; Acts vii. 38.

a higher kind than of that which preceded, celebrating as it does the blessings both of Providence and Grace, and recording the faith and hope of true believers. This alphabetical Psalm is regular and connected throughout, and affords a second proof that compositions of this kind are not mere collections of disjointed thoughts.

The connection of the 35th Psalm with the preceding is not very obvious at first sight; but we find the recurrence of the expression, "the angel of the Lord," which is twice repeated. It is for the most part a song of complaint, but, as usual, is intermixed with and ends with expressions of praise and confidence. In its general character it resembles the 31st, and very strongly, in some parts, the 22nd, especially in this passage:—

Turn aside my soul from their destructions,
 From the lions mine only one.
 I will give thanks to thee in the great congregation:
 Among much people I will praise thee.

The resemblance to the 31st is continued in the following Psalm, (the 36th,) which renews the image of the heavenly place of refuge.

The children of men under the shadow of thy wings shall
 have refuge:
 They shall be refreshed with the plenteousness of thy house;
 And of the river of thy pleasures thou shalt make them
 drink:
 For with thee is the well of life,
 And in thy light shall we see light.

The 37th, a didactic poem, is designed to dispel those fears which were expressed in many of the preceding Psalms. It is the language of long religious experience; and was composed in David's old age, as we are expressly told:—

"Young I have been: now am I old."

It is in fact an expansion of the first Psalm, and is one of the most complete expositions of God's particular Providence that the Holy Spirit has afforded to the Church. The gradual climax of the four commencing stanzas is remarkable. "Fret not thyself; . . . Trust in the Lord, — Commit unto the Lord thy way, — Hold thou still in the Lord," &c.

The three following Psalms open a prospect altogether new: the progress, namely, of the soul from great affliction, and from the depths of a state almost resembling despair, to the comforts of religious consolation, and finally to unshaken security. The beginning of the 38th Psalm is an expansion of the 6th; but describes a state of much greater misery, the dreadful chastisements for sin, both in mind and body. This, and the following Psalm, recording the prayer which gave ease to his burthened heart, have already been analysed.^a The 40th Psalm is the sequel. The sufferer is now delivered from his troubles, "from the pit of noise, out of the mire and clay," and his "feet are set upon the stony rock:" and into his mouth, which heretofore was dumb, has been put a new song, even praise to his God.

We know from Holy Scripture that a part of this Psalm is prophetic of our Lord, — "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; a body hast thou prepared me: burnt-offering and sin-offering thou didst not require; then I said: Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God."^b And many parts of the two preceding Psalms, such as the revilings and persecutions of unprovoked enemies, and the silence of their victim, have doubtless their antitype in the sufferings of our

^a Pages 43—49. of this volume.

^b Heb. x. 5—7. See the note on this passage in the first volume in loc. The quotation of St. Paul thus unquestionably shows that the received Hebrew reading is corrupt.

blessed Lord. Still the type and antitype are not to their whole extent parallel: since we are expressly reminded throughout, that David's sufferings were on account of his own sins; and between these, and the ineffable agonies of our Redeemer, who underwent them that he might take away the sins of the world, there is an immeasurable difference both in their cause and in their nature.

Between the concluding Psalm of this book and the preceding there is no very marked connection, except the general topic of the aggression of enemies. There is, however, considerable resemblance in the expressions between the concluding stanza of the 40th, and that which opens the 41st.

With this Psalm I would consider the collection actually completed in David's time to end. The other parts, especially the second, contain many of his compositions; but these were not formally collected together till a later age.

§ 3. THE SECOND PART OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

The nine commencing Psalms of this division having been already severally analysed^a, but a few general observations remain to be made. These Psalms have reference to the times of Hezekiah, and those immediately preceding. The 42nd, 43rd, and 44th speak of the desolations under Ahaz: but with the 45th, a more happy prospect is unfolded; and we have now the sanctuary, the city, and the people of God, and the glories of his Church, brought more distinctly into view than heretofore; the 45th speaking of the Church's union with Christ; the 46th, of the divine protection of the holy city; the 47th, of the future enlargement of

^a Pages 13—15.; 172—175.; 188—195.

his dominion; the 48th, where the scene is still laid in the holy city, of the supernatural defence of his people. An interruption to this connected order occurs in the 49th Psalm, probably suggested, as we have before remarked^a, by the circumstances of Hezekiah's sickness and miraculous recovery. The connection, however, may be not altogether obscure. The 48th Psalm concludes with declaring that God shall be our guide unto death. The central part of the 49th declares that he shall protect us beyond the region of death, and shall redeem us at the resurrection. The 50th and 51st are to be referred to the celebration of the great festival by Hezekiah^b; which accounts for the insertion in this part of the Psalter of these two compositions of David's age.

The remaining Psalms of this division, with the exception of four, (the 66th, 67th, 71st, and 72nd,) are expressly assigned to David; and the twelve former, from the 52nd to the 63rd inclusive, bear marks, both in their titles and in their internal structure, of having been composed during the time of Saul, and the early parts of his own reign; those from the 64th onward, were the works of a later period; from the time he was fully established in his kingdom, till his death.

In the former of these two classes, occur those groups of Psalms, which are called *Maschil* and *Michtam*.^c There is nothing in their structure to warrant the appropriation of either of these words to any particular style or form of composition. It seems probable, that these designations were affixed by the collectors of the Psalms in question during Hezekiah's reign, probably at two different times; and that they

^a Page 194.

^b See page 175.

^c These are explained in pages 137—142.

made use of terms already employed, in two instances^a, in the former collection.

The connection observable between so many Psalms in the first book is not to be so accurately traced in that now under examination, since its component members have for the most part reference to insulated events, resembling one another in their general character, and not to be very accurately discriminated by any internal marks.

It is to be observed, that the historical notices in the titles are more full in this book than in the preceding. Of these, six, namely, those of the 52nd, 54th, 56th, 57th, 59th, and 63rd, refer to David's wanderings and persecutions under Saul; and one, namely, that of the 60th, to a circumstance in an early part of his reign, recorded in the 8th chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, when he conquered the Syrians. The mention of Sion would assign the 53rd to a time posterior to Saul; that of his treacherous friend Achitophel marks the 55th to belong to a later period still; and the terms of the 61st would refer us to the time of the divine promise to Solomon. The 65th to the 68th Psalms inclusive belong to the time when the solemn worship before the Ark was established at Jerusalem, and that of the Temple was in prospect. The remaining Psalms belong to the last days of David's life.

The topics of the 52nd to the 59th inclusive are the same: the wickedness of his enemies, and his trust in God. The 52nd takes up the concluding part of the 50th, of which it is an expansion, in all its parts: the lies and wickedness of the ungodly; the vengeance of the Almighty; the salvation of those who order their way aright, and trust in God's mercy.

The 53rd Psalm is nearly identical with the 14th, and, like it, has the same connection with that which

^a Titles to the 16th and 32nd Psalms.

immediately preceded. It is to be remarked, that in four places the word "LORD," occurring in the 14th Psalm is rendered "God" in the 53rd. It is difficult to account for this: unless we suppose that when David revised this Psalm for the public service of the sanctuary, he changed that word which expresses less definitely the divine Nature for his more peculiar name of JEHOVAH, which was revealed to the chosen people only. The 54th Psalm continues the subject, and ends in deliverance.

The intensity of the action proceeds in the five following Psalms, the first of which, the 55th, has been already analysed.^a The 56th and 57th each begin with the same expression, "Be merciful unto me, O God;" and the stanzas of each are parallel as to their general sense, the sentiments of the 57th, however, forming a great advance on those of the Psalm preceding. Deliverance is more confidently predicted, and the concluding ascription of praise is more full. The 58th continues the subject of the vengeance on the wicked. The 59th strongly resembles, in its main features, the 54th; the first part of each being a general prayer for rescue; the other parts containing the action and catastrophe. The city of the wicked is the scene of each.

The 60th Psalm requires no additional observations.^b But the 61st is in a higher strain than any of the preceding. It speaks of that topic so frequently recurred to in the first part, the tabernacle of God, the covering of his wings, his everlasting Presence. We are thus prepared for the more exalted aspirations of the two following Psalms.

The *burthen*, or recurring word, in both of these is *my soul*. The conclusion of the 62nd alludes to some oracular communication from God: probably to that obscurely intimated in the preceding: "For Thou, O

^a Pages 73—76.

^b See pages 22—24.

God, hast heard my vows. Days to the days of the king thou shalt add."

The 63rd Psalm, written, as its title shows, and internal evidence confirms, in the wilderness of Judea, has an exquisite connection with the former. His *soul* here "thirsteth for God," as it before waited for him. Observe, however, the elevation of this sentiment above the preceding. He now looks for him in holiness, that he may behold his power and glory. He speaks of the life-giving influence of his Grace, of the spiritual sacrifice of the heart, hereafter to be offered in that everlasting sanctuary of which the earthly sanctuary, here alluded to, is the type; and of the heavenly nourishment that is given to his soul. The construction of the Psalm is most regular: in each of the three stanzas, as in the two former of the 62nd, *the soul* forms the cardinal topic, and each advances in sentiment above the other: first, the desire for God's presence; secondly, the rendering of a spiritual worship, and the experience of present grace; thirdly, the dwelling in God's Presence, under the shadow of his wings, and under the protection of his right hand.

In each Psalm, the discomfiture of his enemies, and his own triumph, form the concluding topics.

The connection with the 61st Psalm is no less evident. The same commencing prayer; the same mention of the covering of God's wings, and of his sanctuary; and of the blessings conferred on the King, in the concluding verses.

The 64th connects itself in a general way with the two preceding. But the parallelism between the concluding sentiment of the 63rd and 64th is exact.

The King shall rejoice in God,

And every one who sweareth by him shall give praise.

The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and trust in him:

And they shall praise him, all the upright in heart.

The moral reason of the divine blessing and approbation, expressed in the former Psalm, is given in the latter. The King shall rejoice, because he is righteous: they that swear by him shall be commended, because they are true of heart. And the commendation of God is the source of gladness. This moral gradation resembles that observed already between the 3rd and 4th Psalms.^a

The general connection between the preceding Psalms must, it is hoped, be sufficiently evident. We are now brought to witness a more glorious scene, and return to the service of the sanctuary. The four following Psalms are in close connection, fully expressive of that joy for which the last verse of the 64th gave the note of preparation. In the first of these, the 65th, after prefacing his song with the expression of the delight afforded by the sanctuary, he proceeds to detail God's temporal blessings of abundant fertility bestowed upon the land, in a description unequalled by any in the whole inspired volume, and accurately true to nature throughout. The 66th Psalm, however (already analysed)^b, proceeds to higher things than these, alternately commemorating God's wonders, of Providence and Grace. There can be no doubt that this, and the following, proceed from the hand of David. In the 67th the same topics are continued. And these prepare us for the magnificent prophecy contained in the 68th^c, which gives at one view the whole dispensation of God, from the miraculous departure from Egypt, till that fulness of time, yet unborn, when all nations shall worship the true God. This Psalm enlarges on all the great themes that have hitherto been celebrated; the past Providence of God, his present mercy, the happiness and salvation of his

^a See pages 56—59.^b Pages 86—88.^c See pages 88—92.

people, the glories of his sanctuary, and, prophetically, the future universality of his dominion: all subjects which fully accord with the retrospective and prospective piety of the royal prophet's declining years.

It is, I conceive, more than probable, that this Psalm was, in its earlier divisions (the two former diapsalmas), the adaptation of an ancient ode composed during the time of Moses, or of his successors. Its commencing words are known to be Mosaical: and the style of the second Diapsalma is like that of Deborah. The latter speak of the times of David, and of those glorious after times which we know that he, as a prophet, foresaw. The Temple of Jerusalem, to the completion of which he so fondly looked forward; the service of the sanctuary, which he so completely regulated; the glories of that chosen people whom he so dearly loved; the future reign and dominion of that Messiah who was to proceed from his lineage,—these are all the subjects of his inspired thanksgiving, at that declining period of his life, when the future glories of the Church were more intensely apprehended, and the spirit of prophecy was bestowed in fuller measure.

Perhaps the prophetic nature of this Psalm may account for its connection with the 69th, one of those which speak most markedly of our blessed Lord's sufferings and final triumph. The salvation of Sion, and the building of the cities of Judah, and the inhabitation of his servants, are the concluding topics, harmonizing with the most prominent of the 68th.

The 69th Psalm is chosen by the Church as one of those to be used on Good Friday. It has a remarkable resemblance to another Psalm also appropriated to that day, the 22nd, both in length, in subject matter, and in arrangement. In each, the chief part of the poem consists in deep complaints, and in prayer for deliverance. The latter part in each contains a sudden

transition from complaint to thanksgiving, and of a prophetic declaration of blessings on the future generations of the chosen people. Thus in the 22nd Psalm :

I will declare thy Name unto my brethren :
In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

In the 69th,

I will praise the name of God with a song,
And magnify it with thanksgiving.

And the conclusion of the 22nd,

My seed shall serve him :
They shall be counted unto the Lord for a generation :
They shall come, and the heavens shall declare his righteousness ;
Unto a people that shall be born, whom the Lord hath made :—

finds its parallel in the last verses of the 69th :

For God will save Sion, and build the cities of Judah,
That men may dwell therein, and have it in possession.
The posterity also of his servants shall inherit it :
And they that love his Name shall dwell therein.

There is a very remarkable parallelism between the first and second divisions of this Psalm, the second beginning thus: "But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord." There is the same prayer, the same imagery of the deep waters, the same mention of the persecutions of enemies, but expanded, as usual, in the second division.^a

The following Psalm, the 70th, is connected in sentiment with both those which precede and follow. It is nearly identical with the latter portion of the 40th. If the 71st and 72nd were in immediate se-

^a For this observation the author is indebted to a friend and relative, the Rev. Joseph McCormick, vicar of Holywood, who, some years since, pointed out to him this parallelism.

quence after the 40th, the connection of all would be sufficiently evident, as the compositions of the last days of David. It is likely that the insertion of these Psalms into the collection already made by their composer was prevented by death, and hence it was that the 70th, and the following Psalm, were placed at the end of the second book, when recovered in a later age. The connection of this with the 71st is shown in the words,

O God, be not far from me.
 O God, to my help hasten;
 Let them be ashamed, let them perish, that are against my
 soul;
 Let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that
 seek my hurt: —

an exact repetition of the beginning of the preceding Psalm, of which the 71st is an expansion. This and the following Psalm have been already examined, and shown to be the last words of David.^a

In the total absence of external evidence on the subject, it would be indulging in fanciful, and therefore dangerous speculations, to conjecture why several of the Davidical Psalms are postponed to this second collection. Suffice it to remark, that many specific differences between the two collections are observable: namely, the groups of *Maschils* and *Michtams*, the historical titles, more largely given in the second book than in the first, where they but rarely occur, and where in but one instance (Psalm 34th) reference is made to occurrences of an early date in David's life; and lastly, many particulars of their sentiment and connection. On these and other indicia some inferences might be founded; but as those which have occurred to the writer of these pages are at best but very vague, he will not offer a real injury to the minds of his readers by enlarging on them. It is,

^a Pages 165—168.

however, sufficiently evident, that the Davidical portion of the first two books forms a division of the Psalter altogether distinct in its features from the sequel.

§ 4. THE THIRD PART OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

This book consists, with but one exception, of the Psalms of Asaph and Korah; which having been already examined^a, little remains to be added in the present section. These Psalms having been collected or adapted for the public service as the occasion demanded, and having reference to the historical circumstances of Jehoshaphat's and Hezekiah's reigns, we are not to look for any chain of connection between them, beyond what is afforded by the course of sacred history. A few marks of more particular connection, however, we will proceed to notice.

The 73rd Psalm ends with mention of the "gates of the daughter of Sion:" and in the third verse of the following, Mount Sion is again mentioned. Both speak of the aggressions of the enemies of God against the Holy City. The latter Psalm has already been referred to the reign of Ahaz: but it may have a prospective and prophetic allusion to the desolations of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar, which we know to have been revealed to Hezekiah by Isaiah.^b

In the 74th, the Name of God is emphatically mentioned several times. This appears to be the immediate link of connection with the 75th, where it occurs in the second verse. But we are to observe in the 74th, that phrase of "sheep of thy pasture," which occurs so frequently in this book; in the 77th, 78th, 79th, and 80th Psalms.

The destruction of the wicked, foretold in the 75th, is accomplished in the 76th, which, by a

^a Dissertation II. § 5. and 6.

^b 2 Kings xx. 16—18.

very general consent of commentators, speaks of the destruction of Sennacherib's army.

The 77th is an alternation of complaint. It is plainly introductory to the historical Psalm which follows; the connection beginning at the latter part, where the Psalmist celebrates the wonders of God in the wilderness, and the leading of his people like sheep, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.^a

The succeeding historical Psalm (the 78th) and the 79th are in connection. The sentiment common to both is the image of sheep and a shepherd, which concludes both Psalms. The moral connection of these with the 77th is very beautiful. The 78th is placed where it stands, in order to recall the people, so signally delivered by the "God that doeth wonders," to a recollection of his providential mercy and justice. The 79th shows the punishment of their ingratitude, in the desolations of that "tribe of Judah, and the hill of Sion which he loved;" and concludes with an expression of repentance from that people who had gone astray like sheep that were lost. The 80th Psalm is an enlargement of the preceding, the pastoral image being still sustained, and the magnificent parable of the vine being introduced. The 81st is still in connection. It again recurs, like the 77th and 78th, to the wonders of their national history, to the deliverances effected by their God; while it forms a cheering contrast with the penitential Psalms immediately preceding. The 82nd Psalm recurs to the topics of the 75th: the 83rd to those of the 73rd and 74th. The 84th was written during one of the former desola-

^a See p. 180. In the note to this section I am happy to lay before my readers an extract from the unpublished sermon of a friend, the Venerable Archdeacon Forster, upon the subject of this Psalm, being too long for insertion in the text. I am very thankful for the permission given me by its author, as this sermon made an early impression on my mind, and was one of the stimulating causes which suggested the present work.

tions, under Ahaz. It is the first Psalm of Korah in this book: and, like most of the same class in the preceding book, is full of reference to the sanctuary and the divine worship at Jerusalem. As this speaks of exile, so the prophetic and evangelical Psalm, the 85th, speaks of restoration to the promised land.

There appears no marked connection with this and the following Psalm, the 86th, the Prayer of David, which seems to have been interposed by the collectors of this book, as it interrupts the connection which evidently subsists between the 85th and 87th. The Psalm is eminently David's in all respects, being personal, and full of the passionate alternations for which his compositions are so remarkable. The 87th is, like the 85th, prophetic; and celebrates the glories of the redeemed people, and restored city of God. The 88th, like the 86th, again breaks the connection, being an alternation of an elegiac strain. The moral use, however, of such checks to the flow of triumph and thanksgiving must be felt by every thoughtful heart, especially when such great and undeserved blessings form the theme of the prophecies which precede and follow. The 88th Psalm, however, is prophetic of our Lord's sufferings and death, as the Church teaches us by her selection of it as part of the service for Good Friday. In this point of view it may be considered as connected with the preceding, which speaks of his birth, and with the following magnificent prophecy, celebrating the reign of the Messiah.

Of this ancient prophecy (the 89th Psalm), the latter part seems to have been added by Isaiah. It concludes the present book, which was closed, in all probability, at that time of Hezekiah's life when the prospect of the nearly approaching desolation of Jerusalem was revealed to both king and prophet.

§ 5. THE FOURTH PART OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

The fourth division of the Psalter is very remarkably discriminated from the rest. Out of the seventeen Psalms of which it consists, ten are without titles; and the general character of the collection is less personal than that of the Psalms ascribed to David, and less national than that of Asaph and of Korah. They are, for the most part, simple in their construction, and adapted to general use, speaking of the common frailties of human nature, the glory of God, and the wonders of his universal Providence. It may be partly for this reason that *Selah* does not once occur in this collection, as Bishop Hare observes.^a It forms a magnificent chain of closely connected hymns of thanksgiving, broken only by the interposition of the 94th, 101st, and 102nd.

The first three Psalms are introductory; thence from the 93rd to the 100th, inclusive, follows one continued strain, celebrating the majesty of God: while at the 103rd begins another series, continued to the end of this division, commemorating his Providence, both general and particular.

It is the opinion of Aben Ezra, that the 90th Psalm to the 101st inclusive, are all the composition of Moses; but, as Dr. Hammond observes, the mention of Samuel in the 99th Psalm militates against this assertion, to which may be added the internal evidence supplied by the 92nd Psalm. Still, if I mistake not, each Psalm, in the series which closes with the 100th, bears marks of archaic composition. I think it probable that these were sacred songs of ancient use in the Church of Israel, partly composed in the time of Moses, and added to and collected into one volume by David, for the special use of the

^a Prolegomena, p. lxvi.

public service soon after his accession to the throne, on which occasion he interposed the 101st Psalm, and possibly the 94th. Whether this collection was afterwards restored to use by King Josiah, or by the revisers of the Scriptures after the captivity, is doubtful; the latter notion will appear most probable to those who refer the 102nd Psalm to the age and authorship of Jeremiah.

The 90th and 91st Psalms have been already^a referred to Moses. The 92nd Psalm is entitled “a Psalm for the sabbath day.” And if we consider this book to be eminently liturgical in its first intention, the title will appear far from inappropriate. Probably many of those which follow were used on the same occasion.

It is a Rabbinical tradition, as Kimchi relates, that the 92nd Psalm was composed by Adam, immediately after his creation. The absurdity of this tradition is sufficiently evident from the texture of the Psalm itself. It is evidently of a later date than that of Moses. The “cedar in Lebanon” must have been mentioned either by prophetic anticipation, or traditional recollection, if this Psalm was composed by Moses. But the whole imagery and allusions of the Psalm are perfectly unsuited to the wilderness, while they are precisely those which David elsewhere uses. The “house of the Lord, and the courts of the house of our God,” allude to the settled establishment of the sanctuary contemplated by him: the allusion to musical instruments is also his; while the anointing with fresh oil marks the early period of his reign, or rather of his designation by the Almighty as the future king^b; and the prophecy of the destruction of his enemies is a further presumptive proof.

With the 93rd Psalm the eucharistic series already

^a Pages 201—205.

^b 1 Sam. xvi. 13.

alluded to begins. It is ably remarked by Bishop Horsley, whose words I shall give at length, that a connection is evident between the series of Psalms beginning with the 95th. But, as will be shown presently, this connection begins earlier.

“ These six Psalms form, if I mistake not, an entire prophetic poem, cited by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews, under the title of the Introduction of the First Born into the World. Each Psalm has its proper subject, which is some particular branch of the general argument, the establishment of the Messiah’s kingdom. The 95th Psalm asserts Jehovah’s Godhead, and his power over all nature, and exhorts his people to serve him. In Psalm 96th, all nations are exhorted to join in his service, because he cometh to judge all mankind, Jew and Gentile. In the 97th Psalm, Jehovah reigns over all the world, the idols are deserted, the Just One is glorified. In the 98th Psalm, Jehovah hath done wonders, and wrought deliverance for himself: he hath remembered his mercy toward the house of Israel: he comes to judge the whole world. This, I think, clearly alludes to a restoration of the Jewish nation. In the 99th, Jehovah, seated between the cherubim in Zion, (the visible Church,) reigns over all the world, to be praised for the justice of his government. This Psalm alludes, I think, to a reign of Jehovah in Zion; subsequent to the restoration of the Jewish nation, when Moses, Aaron, and Samuel are to bear a part in the general worship. In the 100th Psalm, all the world is called upon to praise Jehovah the Creator, whose mercy and truth are everlasting.”

That, however, the series begins with the 93rd Psalm is evident from the commencement of that Psalm, according with those of the 97th and 99th, “The Lord is King.” The creation of the world forms, as in the 95th and the 96th, one of its main

topics ; and the rising of the floods find their parallel, or rather their moral amplification, in the rejoicing of the sea, and of the floods, in the 96th and 98th ; these two last-named Psalms being obviously connected. The 93rd Psalm is possibly Mosaical ; this may be presumed from the allusion to the creation in the third verse, and to the raging of the sea, miraculously stilled by the Almighty at the departure from Egypt.

Between this Psalm and the following is no obvious connection, unless it may be traced in a similar kind of repetition. Thus in the 93rd :—

The floods have lifted up, O LORD,
The floods have lifted up their voice ;
The floods lift up their waves.

In the 95th :—

How long shall the ungodly, O LORD,
How long shall the ungodly triumph !

It is possible that the raging of the sea in the former Psalm may be emblematical of the madness of the people enlarged upon in this.

The 95th Psalm has many Mosaical allusions, as “Rock of our salvation,” the creative power of God ; and the wilderness ; but is evidently of a later date, since it alludes to the forty years as passed. The 96th is connected in style, sentiment, and arrangement with the former, of which it is an expansion. It begins with an invitation to sing unto the Lord, in more amplified terms, and like the former, celebrates his salvation ; again magnifies the greatness of God, calls upon his people to worship him, not merely with the general adoration of natural religion, but with sacrifices and gifts, in his sanctuary. Then it recurs to the works of his hands, and, calling upon the whole creation to join in the worship of the

Creator, ends with an announcement of the future judgment. There is mention of the heathen and their idolatries in this Psalm, which marks the advance of the Israelites from the wilderness to the habitations of the Gentiles.

All the sentiments of the preceding Psalm are repeated in the 97th; God's wonderful works, the confusion of the heathen, and his exaltation above all gods. There is an exhortation to righteousness, corresponding to that at the end of Psalm 95, but in a higher strain, with a more special commemoration of God's grace and mercy, and of religious joy. The mention of Sion and the daughter of Judah mark more distinctly the establishment of the children of Israel in a settled polity; so that this Psalm is again an historical advance upon the two former. The first part is a remarkable antistrophe to the whole of the 93rd.

Between the 96th and the 98th there is a close resemblance: the latter indeed is to a considerable degree a repetition of the former. Both begin with the same words,

“O sing unto the LORD a song that is new;”

But the 98th contains a more spiritual announcement; speaking of the salvation, righteousness, mercy and truth, manifested towards the house of Israel, while, as before, his universal empire is prophetically commemorated. The four topics of the two Psalms are identical: 1. a jubilant recognition of the divine power: 2. an invitation to all the intelligent creation to praise him: 3. to the inanimate creation: 4. a declaration of his coming to judgment. God's power is the main topic of the 96th: his mercy and grace of the 98th.

“The Lord is King” again forms the commencement of the 99th, which is antiphonal to the 97th

and 95th, in the same remarkable manner that the 98th is to the 96th; and rising above the preceding Psalm in sentiment. It is divisible into three parts, each concluding with the epistrophe, "holy is He," or "holy is the Lord our God." Mention is made of Moses and Aaron, as his priests, and Samuel among his prophets, or those who called upon his name, thus referring the Psalm to a time posterior at least to Moses: while the mention of Sion refers us to the age of David. In the 97th Psalm the judgments of God are more prominently mentioned; in the 99th, his mercies; but in both, the wonders and mercies exhibited to the Israelites during their sojourn in the wilderness are apparently most prominent in the inspired author's recollection.

The 100th Psalm resembles, in its expressions as well as in its imagery, the 95th; of which it is an epitome. The topics are similar. 1. The rejoicing before the Lord: 2. the recognition of the Lord as our Maker and our God: 3. the comparison of his people to sheep. While the concluding part, making a noble termination of the series, repeating the exhortation to praise, and the recognition of God's mercy and everlasting truth, forms an epitome of the former part of the 96th Psalm.

It is to be observed that the pastoral comparisons occurring in these Psalms, which might be appropriately made either by David or Moses, are peculiarly applicable to a nation of shepherds. It is one frequently made by the Prophets, especially Isaiah.

The alternation of the obviously connected Psalms is very remarkable, and will now be exhibited, by giving their commencing titles, omitting the 94th:—

- 93. The LORD is King: with majesty he is apparelled.
- 95. O come, let us sing unto the LORD.
- 96. O sing unto the LORD a song that is new.
- 97. The LORD is King: let the earth rejoice.

98. O sing unto the LORD a song that is new.
 99. The LORD is King: let the nations tremble.
 100. Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth.

The 101st Psalm fully justifies its title, as one of David's. It is generally considered, with apparent justice, to contain his sentiments, with regard to the forming of his court, towards the beginning of his reign. Dr. Hammond considers it to have been composed after the Ark had been established in Mount Sion. He renders the words "O when wilt thou come unto me" thus, "when it, that is, the Ark of God, shall come unto me," a meaning which the Hebrew^a will bear. But if the usual translation is followed, it means, "when thy Presence shall be more fully manifested in the temple," that great object to which he so fondly looked forward. The whole Psalm is a fitting lesson to all Christian monarchs: who are often too forgetful of the indissoluble connection that ought to subsist between private and public integrity, between political wisdom and personal piety and virtue: the dissociation of which, in some members of his own court, David felt to be the cause of great calamities.

If the opinion here expressed as to the occasion of the Psalm before us be correct, we may discover a key to the compilation of the fourth part of the Psalter. It was probably made by David on his establishment at Jerusalem, as king over all Israel and Judah, when he had arranged the details both of the civil government, and of the religious service of the ark and tabernacle.

The 102d Psalm has been generally attributed, and with every appearance of probability, to the times of the captivity; and the style is like that of Jeremiah. But it is not inconsistent to attribute it to David.

^a מתי תבוא אלי

The verses commonly considered applicable to the captivity do not necessarily exclude another interpretation: —

Thou thyself shalt arise, thou shalt have mercy upon Sion:
 For it is time that thou have pity upon her; for it is come,
 the set time.
 For thy servants take pleasure in her stones;
 And in her dust they have pity.

Here may be reference to the present aggressions of enemies not yet quelled, and to the future building of the walls of Jerusalem. Still the usual acceptation is by far the most obvious and natural. The concluding part, however, which mentions the works of God, and his imperishable nature, is the preparation for the magnificent series of sacred Odes which follows.

The first of these, ascribed to David, is deeply characteristic of that royal prophet. I must here avail myself of the just and forcible language of another, to express the true Davidical character of this Psalm. “We have before us, in the 103rd Psalm, the spirit and scheme (if the devout aspirations of a thankful heart may be treated of without injury in formal language) according to which the Psalmist of old was used to conduct his eucharistic meditations. His voice of praise and thanksgiving, we observe, is first heard, where rightly and duly it had been at the first enkindled, in the quiet secret chambers of the heart. From this spring, the stream of gratitude, winding its salutary course through the various channels of personal and private mercies, presently swells into a feeling sense and participation of the divine benefits imparted to the Church and community at large, whereof he was an individual member. As the stream enlarges, so naturally will enlarge the bed in which it flows. The course of the Psalmist’s thoughts and thanksgivings still widens

and expands, until it includes, not the universal Church only, and the whole community of mankind, but angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven. Amidst this vast unbounded expanse, still, however, is strictly and visibly preserved the sense of individual gratitude; the individual sense of gratitude it is which thus fills the worlds. And as the heart of David was the source whence, at the first, it took its rise, so the heart of David is the ocean into which, at the last, it returns, — Bless thou the Lord, O my soul.”^a

We have in this Psalm, the celebration of the power, the mercy, the grace, the universal dominion, both natural and spiritual, of God. The topics are those which had formed the theme of the former chain of Psalms. At the conclusion he ascends from the thanksgivings of mankind, and from this lower sphere of his dominions, to heaven, where God has fixed his throne, to the songs of the angels, and their heavenly ministry, and to the universal praise ascribed to their Maker by the whole creation: the heartfelt thanksgiving of the Prophet being again expressed in the Epanodos, “ Bless, O my soul, the LORD.”

This expression forms the commencement of the 104th, which is thus obviously connected with the preceding. The great scene of his Providence having been opened in the 103rd, we have now its operation more particularly specified. It is perhaps the most magnificent picture revealed in Holy Scripture: heaven and earth, the whole range of creation, both visible and invisible, being brought within its range, God’s spiritual influence and dominion forming a sublime climax.

First, the concluding theme of the 103rd Psalm is

^a The Rev. Charles Forster’s Discourses on Subjects of Scripture History. Disc. v. p. 125. See also Disc. iv. on Psalm 23.

renewed; the place where the Almighty dwells; the honour, majesty, and brightness with which he is clothed, the heavens that are his architecture, and form his habitation; his dominion over the elements; his angels, both cherubic and seraphic, that are his ministers.^a

Then the Psalmist descends to earth, and follows the author of Genesis in accurately describing the creation of this world: her firm foundation at the beginning; the chaos, when darkness was upon the face of the deep, and before the separation of the waters: the Voice of God which reduced it to order, and which, at the subsidence of the deluge, ordained that a flood should never again destroy the earth. With the very words of this description the later discoveries of geologists accurately harmonise. By the words “the hills ascend, the valleys go down,” are represented the upheaving and oscillation of the earth, which caused the fountains of the great deep to be broken up, and formed many of the mountainous features of the postdiluvian globe^b; while the latter words,

A bound thou hast set; they shall not pass it;
They shall not return to cover the earth;

^a Bishop Horsley observes, that “it is a singular circumstance in the composition of this Psalm, that each of the parts of the first semichorus, after the first, begins with a participle. And these participles are accusatives, agreeing with הנה, the object of the verb ברכי, at the beginning of the whole Psalm. Bless the Jehovah, putting on, extending, laying, constituting, travelling, making, setting, sending, watering, making, making. Thus, the transitive verb, in the opening of the Psalm, extending its government through the successive parts of the same semichorus, except the last, unites them all in one long period.”

^b It is gratifying to find this application of the words in the Psalm confirmed by the observations of the Rev. Charles Burton, LL.D., in his very interesting and valuable “Lectures on the Deluge, and the World after the Flood;” p. 45. This volume forms the sequel to another work by the same author, “Lectures on the World before the Flood.”

can allude to no other event than the promise of the Almighty after the flood of Noah.^a

Then the happy condition of the renovated creation, after that great convulsion, is described in all its parts, beginning with the valleys and their inhabitants; thence ascending to the hills, and the productions appointed for the nourishment of man; the magnificent forests, and the high hills and the stony rocks, all appointed for their several beneficial uses, for the habitation of the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth.

Then he celebrates the alternation of night and day; night, the season when the wild beasts seek their meat from God; day, the season of man's appointed work. And the repose of night brings with it that reflection fitted to such a season of meditation:

How manifold are thy works, O LORD!
All of them in wisdom thou hast made:
The earth is full of thy riches!

And now he recounts the wonders of the great deep, from the creeping things to the leviathan, whom God hath made to take his pastime therein; that sea, which is to the human race the great channel of commerce, the pathway of civilisation.

The whole of this unequalled panorama is summed up by shewing the dependence of the whole creation upon God, the author of life and death; no obscure intimation being given of the new heaven and the new earth, shadowed forth by the postdiluvian restoration.

Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created:
And thou renewest the face of the earth.

That a spiritual meaning is here intended, we are fully

^a Gen. ix. 11—17.

warranted in believing, since this is one of the Psalms appointed for special use on Whitsunday.

The epode celebrates the everlasting nature and power of God, his love for his own creation, his moral dispensations in the punishment of the wicked, and in affording gladness to the heart of the righteous whom he will redeem: the expression, "Bless, O my soul, the LORD," being again the epanodos.

This Psalm, as well as the two following, concludes with "Hallelujah," or "praise the Lord;" another mark of connection, which however is fully manifested in the subject-matter of the sequel. Thus the 105th enters into that department of God's more particular Providence, which men call history^a: the history of the chosen people. It begins with a reiteration of that praise with which the former Psalm concluded, and then proceeds to recall the children of Israel, not to a mere general recollection of his universal providence, common to the whole world, but to the miraculous preservation of their forefathers, in the land of Egypt. The strain is so evidently the same as that of the two preceding, that we could have no hesitation in assigning the Psalm before us to David, even were we not assured of its authorship, or at least adaptation, by the record of David's Psalm in the 16th chapter of the first book of Chronicles, which also gives a portion of the 106th.

The 105th, it is to be remarked, speaks of the

^a "The history of Providence containeth that excellent correspondence which is between God's revealed will and his secret will: which, though it be so obscure, as for the most part it is not legible to the natural man; no, nor many times to those that behold it from the tabernacle; yet at times it pleaseth God, for our better establishment and the confuting of those which are as without God in the world, to write it in such text and capital letters, that, as the Prophet saith, "he that runneth may read it;" that is, mere sensual persons, which hasten by God's judgments, and never bend or fix their cogitations upon them, are nevertheless in their passage and race urged to discern it. Such are the notable events and examples of God's judgments, chastisements, deliverances, and blessings." — LORD BACON: *Advancement of Learning*, book ii.

mercy and power of God, making no mention of the sin of his people; whereas the latter Psalm, reverting to part of the same period as that celebrated in the preceding, speaks of the transgression of Israel, and the judicial punishment of God, who nevertheless in his wrath remembered mercy. And such an admonition to this people, ever prone to idolatry, was most appropriate at the solemn dedication of the Ark of God at its establishment in Jerusalem, the event to which the above-named passage in Chronicles refers us. The observation of this fact will further confirm the theory already proposed, of the compilation of this fourth part of the book of Psalms.

With this Psalm the 107th is obviously connected; but as the 107th forms the commencement of the fifth book, observations upon it must be reserved for the next section.

§ 6. THE FIFTH PART OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

Many circumstances combine to refer the fifth collection to the time immediately following the restoration of the Jews, after the Babylonish captivity. These will be observed upon in their order. And first, the 107th Psalm is exactly that which we might expect to find placed in the front of such a collection, so marked are its allusions to the divine deliverance which they had recently experienced.

Still, I am far from concluding that this Psalm was then first composed. It seems more likely to have been the composition of an earlier age, that of David, and to have a direct reference to the many deliverances of the Israelites from Egypt, and from their several captivities under the Judges, and a prospective and prophetic allusion to the restoration, still future, of the chosen people to their own land. It is closely

connected with the 106th, and is an expansion of the last clause of that Psalm.

Save us, O LORD our God,
And gather us from among the heathen,
That we may give thanks unto the name of thy holiness,
That we may triumph in thy praise.

It is clear from this prayer having been used by David (1 Chron. xvi. 35.), that the allusion to captivity is not a decisive mark of late composition. But indeed it forms a magnificent climax to all the providential Psalms, which preceded; and in concluding this high argument, exhibits an ode unequalled in the regularity and beauty of its arrangement, and in the heartfelt piety of its eucharistic tone.

The 108th Psalm is David's, a compilation from two Psalms, the 57th and 60th. Its connection with those around it is not obvious, and we may believe that this, and the following, which is a penitential Psalm, awfully prophetic of the curses which fell upon the Jewish nation for the rejection of their Saviour, were inserted on the final revision of the Psalter by Ezra and Nehemiah.

The 110th is one of those deeply prophetic Psalms which is applicable to the Messiah, and to him alone, as our blessed Lord declares.^a It speaks of the conquests, the innumerable spiritual progeny of Christ; his eternal priesthood, his humiliation, and his exaltation; his humiliation being signified in these words, "Of the brook in the way he shall drink," like a weary pilgrim on his journey^b; "therefore shall he lift up the head:" therefore hath God highly exalted him. This Psalm seems also to be supplemental.

But from the 111th to the 118th inclusive, we find

^a St. Matt. xxii. 43, 44.

^b This is the interpretation of Dr. Hammond and Bishop Patrick.

very interesting marks of a ceremonial which tradition asserts was observed by the Jews at the eating of the Passover, namely the singing of the Great Hallel; that hymn, in all likelihood, which our blessed Lord sang with his disciples after the last supper.^a

Dr. Lightfoot^b informs us, that there is considerable discrepancy of opinion among the Jews as to what Psalm constituted the Greater Hallel: the various opinions extending or contracting its range from the 113th to the 137th Psalm. As usual, these traditions are uncertain and ill-defined, and have more respect to the arbitrary dicta of the Rabbins, than to the internal evidence of Holy Scripture.

Let us now examine this evidence. In the first place we are to remark, that all the Psalms, (except the 114th and 118th,) which precede the 119th, have *Hallelujah*, (that is, Praise ye the Lord,) either prefixed or subjoined, or both: while those which are without this burthen are in evident connection; the 119th as evidently beginning a new series. In the absence, then, of any consistent testimony, it seems fair to assume that this group of Psalms formed the greater Hallel, the sentiment they contain being singularly applicable to the festival,—to the great deliverance from Egypt, which it celebrated, and to the second delivery from Babylon, which so strongly resembled it.

According to Dr. Lightfoot, the 113th and 114th Psalms were sung at one period of the feast, at the

^a St. Matt. xxvi. 30.

^b Temple Service, chapter xiii. According to him, Rabbi Judah said it extended from Psalm 118 to 137.—Rabbi Joehanan from the first song of degrees to Ps. 137.—Rabbi Abraham Jacob from Ps. 135. to the same Psalm. In the 3rd chapter of the *Tosaphta Taanith* c. iii. in the Gemara of Jerusalem, the greater Hallel is said to be “Give thanks unto the God of Gods, O thank the Lord of Lords.” Again in the *Treatise on Fasts*, in the same Gemara, c. iii. See *Ugolini’s Thesaurus*, vol. xviii. pp. 665. 742. 758.

second cup; and after the fourth cup, the other Psalms, namely, the 115th to the 118th inclusive; and here the feast ordinarily ended. They thus held the place of grace before or after meat; and this division is very consistent, the later Psalms being more evidently eucharistical.

Now, if we prefix the two former Hallelujah Psalms, the 111th and 112th, the whole order of this continuous song will be most beautiful and regular. For first we have these two alphabetical Psalms, the former of which celebrates the mercy and righteousness of God: the second, the blessings conferred upon his faithful servants; both of them forming a fit introduction to the next, which calls upon his servants to praise him, and records the exaltation of his humiliated people, to set them with the princes, even with the princes of the people. The 114th speaks more distinctly of the divine mercy in the redemption of the people from Egypt: in all likelihood, a very ancient hymn, placed in its present position, in order to serve as a celebration of deliverance from Babylonian bondage. The 115th Psalm is an address to this redeemed nation, the house of Israel and of Aaron, to eschew the worship of idols, and to worship the true God. The 116th is a heartfelt thanksgiving for deliverance from deep troubles and sorrows, and distinctly makes mention of the ordinances of religious worship: "the cup of salvation" of which the faithful at the festival at the passover were partaking; the vows and sacrifices of thanksgiving which they were to render in the house of the Lord: so that this Psalm may be aptly termed sacramental. The 117th Psalm, the shortest in the whole collection, reiterates the praises of the 115th; and the 118th, repeating the sentiments of the preceding, especially of the 115th, is eucharistical in the highest degree, at once a song of triumph, of faith, of prophecy. In the allusion to the newly edified

temple, Christ, that stone which the builders rejected, and is become the head-stone in the corner, is foretold^a; and the whole concludes with repeated allusions to sacrifices, both material and spiritual, and ends with the epanodos,

O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good;
For everlasting is his mercy!

There is something very peculiar in the style of these Psalms. The repetition, for instance, of the same words and clauses :

The sea saw that, and fled,
Jordan was driven back, &c.
What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest :
Jordan, that thou wast driven back, &c.

And, “O Israel, trust in the Lord—O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord.—The Lord will bless the house of Israel, He will bless the house of Aaron.” And more particularly in every clause of the 118th Psalm. This feature is, as will presently be shown, very characteristic of the Songs of degrees, and, as well as other artificial contrivances, seems to mark distinctively the Psalms of the age which followed the Babylonish captivity.

The 119th Psalm requires a separate section by itself, so peculiar is its construction, both as to length and as to arrangement.

§ 7. THE CXIXTH PSALM.

With the 119th may be considered to begin that collection of Psalms which were composed during the captivity. There are many reasons which combine to make this opinion probable. In the first place we must remark that peculiar artifice of construction, by

^a St. Matt. xxi. 42

which the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew Alphabet have each a stanza of eight distichs allotted to them, commencing the first word of each distich. Alphabetical Psalms of an earlier date occur, indeed, in the Psalter, but none of so great length, or constructed with such remarkable regularity. Now this artifice resembles very much that observed in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, of which each chapter, except the last, is alphabetical: in the first and second chapters, the characteristic letter beginning the first word of each stanza of three lines, in the fourth, of two lines; while in the third, each stanza of three lines has it at the beginning of every line; this last method more resembling the 119th Psalm. There are other artifices of construction observable in the psalms and hymns composed in these later ages of the Church. For example, that repetition of the same words and clauses, and the frequent recurrence of a characteristic word, so frequent in the Greater Hallel^a and in the Songs of Degrees: and in a continually recurring burthen, in each distich, as in the Song of the three Children, and the 136th Psalm, which latter is unique in the Psalter. It has been the tendency of the poetry of most countries^b, in the progress of time, to make its characteristic features depend less upon the exactness of sentimental arrangement, and more upon some external artifice, whether this be prosodial metre, alliteration, rhyme, assonance, or the recurrence of a burthen. Now, though the poetry of the Scriptures, because it was inspired, never declined from the perfection of its sentimental construction, still these artificial contrivances, practised indeed in earlier times, seem to have been more prevalent at the time of the captivity,

^a Vide p. 270.

^b See Diss. IV. in this Volume.

and the time immediately following, than heretofore. It was probably so ordained, for the purpose of assisting the memories of the Jews, who at Babylon were excluded from the open exercise of their religion and from public teaching, and therefore required more private helps, which could be more easily communicated orally from parents to children, or from masters to disciples.

But a stronger reason appears for assigning this Psalm to one of the prophets of the captivity, either Jeremiah or Daniel, whose circumstances were in many respects similar: I should think, with greater probability, to the latter. There seem in the Psalm many allusions to his history. For example, his constant and persevering practice of religious exercises, his nightly meditations, his rendering of praise at stated periods, seven times a day, and this openly; "I will speak of thy testimonies even before kings:" while the persecutions of the iniquitous nobles of Babylon are plainly alluded to in these words: "Princes did sit, against me they spake:" that is, "they brought a formal judicial accusation against me:" "Princes have persecuted me without a cause: . . . the proud have forged a lie against me; . . . the proud have derided me exceedingly; . . . the proud have digged pits for me:" the latter expression possibly referring to the den of lions. The meditative and faithful character of the whole Psalm is exactly accordant with that "greatly beloved" prophet, who was in such constant communion with God; emphatically a man of prayer; and one to whom in the night visions were revealed the deep mysteries of God's Providence, those future events in which the Law and the Prophets were fulfilled.

It has been too commonly assumed, that the 119th Psalm is a collection of unconnected thoughts. To this opinion even that most profound religious philo-

sopher, Dr. Barrow^a, inclines; and his eloquent words must, in this instance, be received with no small caution. "This Psalm," he says, "no less excellent in virtue, than large in bulk, containeth manifold reflections on the nature, the properties, the adjuncts, and effects of God's law; many sprightly ejaculations about it, conceived in different forms of speech; some in way of petition, some of thanksgiving, some of resolution, some of assertion or aphorism; many useful directions, many zealous exhortations to the observance of it; the which are not ranged in any strict order, but, like a variety of wholesome herbs in a fair field, do with a grateful confusion lie dispersed, as they freely did spring in the heart, or were suggested by the devout spirit of him who indited this Psalm, where no coherence of sentences being designed, we may consider any one of them absolutely, or singly by itself."

The fine imagination of this eminent writer justly recognises the beautiful variety, the variegation of thought, the *πολυποίκιλος σοφία* exhibited in this Psalm; but too much seems to be conceded to the prevalent opinion of a want of connection. I willingly allow, that the sentiments are not limited and enthralled by any exact or Procrustean rule; that there are no measures of intellectual geometry adhered to, reducing this divine poem to a rigid didactic system: that the mind of the prophet is free, and flowing, and discursive. Still this very flow of thought implies connection and association, and forbids the frigid idea that the Psalm is a mere canto of reflections, like Lord Bacon's collection of aphorisms, or the maxims of Isocrates. I do not intend to maintain, what could not be proved, that a consecutive order can be traced throughout; but instances can undoubtedly be shewn

^a Sermon xlviii. on Psalm cxix. 60.

of passages which maintain a beautiful sequence and connection between their several members.

To enter into any thing like an analysis of this Psalm, which has been justly considered in all ages of the Church as a storehouse of religious wisdom, and, as interpreted by the light of the Gospel, of Christian philosophy, would require a volume; and it is well known, that upon no portion of Holy Scripture have so many practical commentaries been written. It must suffice to give a few more obvious instances of design and connection.

The beginning of the Psalm makes mention of the *way* of the Lord, as that which it is a happiness to find. The seeking of this way forms the subject of the first two divisions.

Happy are the perfect in the way,
 Who walk in the law of the Lord:
 Happy are the observers of his testimonies:
 With the whole heart they seek him:
 Verily they who do no iniquity,
 In his ways they walk.
 O that my ways were made so direct,
 To keep thy statutes.
 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his path? . . .
 Let me not go astray from thy commandments.
 In the way of thy testimonies have I rejoiced.
 In thy precepts will I meditate,
 And behold thy paths.

Now the last division refers to this theme: the way of God has been found; and he concludes his meditations, as he had begun, with an allusion to his former wanderings, and a prayer to be kept in the right way.

I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost:
 O seek thy servant: for thy commandments I have not
 forgotten.

As the Psalm proceeds, the intensity of devotion and of praise becomes stronger; in its later petitions, from the 19th division inclusive, prayer for deliverance is more fervent. In the 4th division, observe the repetition of the same sentiment.

My soul cleaveth to the dust :
Quicken me, according to thy word :

which is presently repeated with greater earnestness.

My soul melteth away from heaviness ;
Stablish me according to thy saying.

And then follows the contrast between the way of falsehood and the way of truth, which latter is declared to be the way of God's commandments. In like manner observe the connection of the whole fifth stanza; of which the way of God is the commencing theme, the latter part being a prayer for deliverance from vanity, and from the reproach which he fears. The 6th division is a prayer for fortitude and wisdom, that he may openly and publicly persevere in the service of God. There is a connection between the 7th and 8th: both speak of the aggression of enemies, and of his own nightly meditations and thanksgivings; the former being continued through many subsequent divisions. The 11th division, in the first three distichs and towards the end, represents him *fainting* for God's salvation and his word. The 12th declares the unchangeable and imperishable nature of God's word.

For ever, O Lord, is thy word :
It endureth in heaven,
Unto generations of generations is thy truth :
Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.
According to thy judgments they abide this day.
For all are thy servants. . . .
Of all perfection I have seen an end :
Thy commandment is large exceedingly.

The wisdom imparted by the divine teaching is detailed in the 13th division: he is wiser than his enemies, has more prudence than his teachers, more understanding than the aged; and he assigns the reason for this superiority; and declares in conclusion his love for the words of God, his hatred of every path of falsehood.

In the 19th division occurs a beautiful instance of alternate parallelism, which shews the constancy of his devotions both by night and day.

I cried with my whole heart :
 Hear me, O LORD ; thy statutes I will observe :
 I cried unto thee, O save me :
 And I shall keep thy testimonies.
 I was before the dawn, and I cried aloud :
 In thy word I hoped.
 Mine eyes were before the night watches :
 That I might meditate in thy saying.

The 20th is a connected prayer for deliverance from persecutors; and, to bring forward no more instances, which doubtless could be multiplied, in the 22nd there is a similar alternation of connected thought.

Let my complaint come near thee, O LORD :
 According to thy word make me to understand.
 Let my supplication come before thy face ;
 According to thy saying deliver me.
 My lips shall utter praise,
 When thou hast taught me thy statutes :
 My tongue shall sing of thy saying,
 For all thy commandments are righteous.

The next peculiarity to be observed is the regular recurrence of nine characteristic words, at least one or other of which is found in each distich, with one solitary exception, the second distich of the 12th

division.^a These words are, LAW, TESTIMONIES, PRECEPTS, STATUTES, COMMANDMENTS, JUDGMENTS, WORD, SAYING; and a word which only twice occurs as a characteristic, — WAY.^b

These are, doubtless, all designations of the divine law; but it were doing a deep injury to the cause of revealed truth, to affirm, that they are mere synonyms; in other words, that the sentiments of this compendium of heavenly wisdom are little better than a string of tautologies. The fact is, as some critics, both Jewish and Christian^c, have observed, that each of these terms designates the same law of God, but each under a different aspect, signifying the different modes of its promulgation, and of its reception. Each of these words will now be examined in order, and an attempt will be made to discriminate them.

1. LAW.^d This word is formed from a verb which means to direct, to guide, to aim, to shoot forwards. Its etymological meaning, then, would be a rule of conduct, a *κακῶν σαφής*. It means God's law in

^a The word here is *אמונתך*, thy truth. It is possible this might have been written for a very similar word, *אמרך*; but no MS. justifies this conjecture, nor does the LXX.

^b In the first division and fifth *דרך*. May not this have been written for *דבר*? If so, the corruption took place before the LXX. version was made, as they read *way*. If this word *דרך* is excluded from the set of characteristic terms, we then have exactly eight terms, as we have eight distichs in each stanza. In six of these divisions (the 4th, 6th, 8th, 10th, 13th, and 17th), all the eight characteristic words occur.

^c De Muis and Calmet give each an explanation of these terms, very much founded on Kimchi's interpretation. The following is an abstract of it. *תורה* (the law), the doctrine delivered by God, especially to Moses and the prophets, in all its parts: *דרך* (the path) the example of God, the method of life: *עדות* (testimonies), the ordinances, the sacramental and ceremonial law. *פקודים* (precepts), the precepts that speak to the intellect and are deposited in the heart of man . . . *דבר* (word) and *אמר* (saying), the promises of God; but generally, all precepts. *מצות* (commandments), which God teaches, in order to his worship and love: *מישפטים* (judgments), reciprocal duties: as forensic laws; divine punishments. *חקים* (statutes), those of whose reason we are ignorant, such as were some precepts of the ceremonial law. To which they add *צדק* (righteousness), that justice which is in all God's precepts; and *אמונה* (truth), the whole law.

^d *תורה*.

general^a, whether it be that universal rule called the law of nature, or that which was revealed to his church by Moses, and perfected by Christ. In strictness the Law means a plain rule of conduct, rather placed clearly in man's sight, than enforced by any command; that is to say, this word does not necessarily include its sanctions.

It is a thing known, not sought for. The Psalmist does not ask to be taught the law, as he does the statutes of God. "I shall keep thy law . . . I have kept thy law . . . thy law I have not forgotten."^b It is known to mankind in general: "men keep not thy law . . . the ungodly are forsaking it." It is a plain guide . . . "to those that love it, it is no stumbling-block." Men walk in it or forsake it, as a known and beaten path. Thus it is connected with God's way. "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." It is, in fact, the way itself. Now, in the whole of the 5th division, a rule of conduct, *a way* is spoken of. But the law being itself a path or way, he does not say, I shall observe the *way* of thy law, but, *thy law*. In the 7th division, "From thy law I have not declined," the same metaphor is implied; and that visible conduct is intended, appears from the context, "the proud have derided me exceedingly;" his keeping of the law is a palpable act, which exposes him to public scorn. It is a rule of outward rectitude. In the 6th division, he says, "I shall keep thy law continually, for ever and ever." The context mentions his speaking publicly of God's testimonies. "As for lies, I hate and abhor them." It therefore prescribes the observance of truth. It is

^a I must be understood here, as being far from intending to make this the definition of the word *law*, as commonly received by us: it is merely the interpretation of a Hebrew word, employed in this particular aspect.

^b The natural law, mentioned by St. Paul. Romans, ii. 14, 15.

the contrary of oppression and lies. In the 16th division the "destroyers of God's law" are plainly the violators of known commandments.

It has been openly promulgated by God; as it is called, in the 8th division, "the law of his mouth." It is no technical or arbitrary rule; but is the promulgation of the fundamental principles of truth: "Thy law is truth" (18 div.). And from the context of the 12th division we collect, that it is everlasting and unchangeable, like the visible architecture of the universe.

But though openly promulgated, so that its great features are visible to mankind, still it is not so clear as to supersede the exercise of a careful discrimination. Faith must be kept alive, in order to its due comprehension and preservation. As in natural qualities, which are most opposite, such as light and darkness, the confines so nearly assimilate as to require the nicest discrimination, lest these should be transgressed. "Make me to understand," that is give me discernment, (for such is the force of *understanding*^a), "that I may keep thy law." Again, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold the wonders of thy law." He does not say, that I may behold thy law: that he had always before him; but he refers to its close contemplation, its more accurate anatomy; the perception of its more hidden principles, its wonderful ends, those views of Providence and Grace, which require a spiritual discernment. The stars of heaven are obvious to all; not so the principles of astronomy, or those wonderful scenes which the telescope discovers.

This law is not a mere dry rule: but, being founded in truth, and an emanation of God's nature, is undefiled, and exercises a purifying influence on the heart.

^a בִּינָה, from בָּן, to discriminate.

From the following expressions it is clear, that it means more than the ceremonial law. "I shall keep it with my whole heart . . . in thy law is my delight . . . O how I love thy law . . . thy law do I love . . . in thy law I delight." He loves it, not from mere impulse, but from a recognition of its intrinsic excellence: "The law of thy mouth is dearer unto me, than thousands of gold and silver." It is the channel of peace: "Great is the peace of those who love thy law."

2. TESTIMONIES^a are derived from a word which signifies to bear witness, to testify. The ark of the Tabernacle^b is so called, as are the two tables of stone^c, and the tabernacle^d: the earnest or witnesses of God's inhabitation among his people. Testimonies are more particularly God's revealed law: the witnesses and confirmation of his promises made to his people, and earnest of his future salvation.

Like his law, they are promulgated; being called the testimonies of his mouth (8th div.), and like them they are known: "in the way of thy testimonies have I rejoiced . . . I turned my feet unto thy testimonies:" and observed as a known rule; "I shall keep thy testimonies: . . . my soul hath kept thy testimonies." But the term implies more distinctly a positive injunction: they are not only, like the law, exhibited, but commanded: "the testimonies that thou hast commanded." They were not known to the heathen: for "I will speak of thy testimonies even before kings."

Though matters of special revelation to his chosen people, they are not temporary in their nature or object. "The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting . . . of old I have known thy testimonies, that thou hast grounded them for ever."

^a עדות.

^c Exod. xxxi. 17. &c.

^b Exod. xvi. 34. et alibi passim.

^d Levit. xxiv. 3. &c.

Like the law, they are based on truth: but righteousness is added as their characteristic: "Thou hast commanded the righteousness of thy testimonies: . . . the righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting."

Though promulgated, yet, like the law, they require the discriminative exercise of the illuminated understanding: "The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: make me to understand, and I shall live. Make me to understand, and I shall know thy testimonies."

They are, like the law, also wonderful: yet the wonders are evidently of a spiritual and comforting nature; the wonders of redemption: for "therefore doth my soul keep them."

They are the peculiar heritage of God's people; and therefore have a substantive virtue. "Thy testimonies have I claimed as mine heritage for ever:" a permanent possession.

They are of a more internal character than the law, as being more intimately connected with the heart. "Happy are they who are observing his testimonies: with their whole heart they seek him. . . . For thy testimonies I have observed:" where the word observed, means more properly, *to cherish*. They are inward monitors: "my counsellors," literally, *men of my counsel*. To them the heart is inclined as to a heavenly treasure: "Incline my heart to thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. In the way of thy testimonies have I rejoiced as in all riches." They are a support to the fainting heart: "I have cleaved to thy testimonies;" (see the whole context of this 4th division). They are a matter of delight: "Thy testimonies are my delight . . . joy to my heart are they . . . I love thy testimonies . . . My soul hath kept thy testimonies, and loved them exceedingly." They are matters of meditation: "Thy testimonies I will consider . . . thy testimonies are my meditation.

3. PRECEPTS ^a, from a word which means *to place in trust*, mean something intrusted to man, "that which is committed to thee:" appointments of God, which consequently have to do with the conscience, for which man is responsible, as an intelligent being.

The precepts are not so obviously apprehended as the law and the testimonies. They must be sought out. "Behold my desire is for thy precepts . . . thy precepts I seek . . . thy precepts I have sought."

Still they are commanded: the command requires diligence in their observance, and consequent earnestness in their pursuit. "Thou, even thou, hast commanded us thy precepts to seek with diligence." They are attainable; those who seek shall find; the Psalmist has found them, and keeps them: "I will keep thy precepts . . . thy precepts I have not forgotten . . . I have kept thy precepts and testimonies."

They are a law of liberty: "and I will walk at liberty; for thy precepts I seek." They have a life-giving influence: "With them thou hast quickened me. . . Behold how I love thy precepts: according to thy mercy quicken me. . . Behold my desire is for thy precepts: in thy righteousness quicken me." They are connected with salvation. "I am thine; O save me: for thy precepts I have sought."

They are the ^oenlighteners of ^othe understanding: the instructed conscience clears the intellectual faculties, which are often clouded when its suggestions are abandoned. "From thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every way of falsehood." "Therefore thy precepts concerning all things I hold straight: every way of falsehood I abhor. . . The ungodly laid a snare for me: yet from thy precepts I swerved not." The specious lures of false morality and worldly wisdom are avoided.

The same term "observe," or cherish, is applied to

precepts as to testimonies. “This was even so to me, because thy precepts I observed. With my whole heart I will observe thy precepts.”

They are chosen: the heart and the will, disciplined by God, recognise them. They are no unintelligible law imposed, or adopted from mere fear. “Thy precepts I have chosen. Behold how I love thy precepts.”

But with a godly fear they are connected. “I am a companion of them that fear thee, and keep thy precepts.”

They are matters of meditation. “In thy precepts I will meditate, and have respect, (or look) unto thy ways. . . I will meditate on thy precepts.”

4. STATUTES.^a The verb from which this word is formed, means to engrave or inscribe. The word means a definite, prescribed, written law. The term is applied to Joseph’s law^b about the portion of the priests in Egypt, to the law about the passover^c, &c. But in this Psalm, it has a more internal meaning; that moral law of God, which is engraven on the fleshly tables of the heart^d: the inmost and spiritual apprehension of his will: not so obvious as the law and the testimonies, and a matter of more direct spiritual communication than his precepts: the latter being more elaborated by the efforts of the mind itself, divinely guided indeed, but perhaps more instrumentally, and less passively, employed.

They are continually spoken of as things yet to be learned, either wholly or in part, not objectively apprehended already, like God’s law. “O that my ways were made so direct to keep thy statutes.” In the first division, the distich, “Thy statutes will I keep, O forsake me not utterly,” is connected with being taught the judgments of his righteousness.

^a חֻקִּים.

^b Gen. xvii. 26.

^c Exod. iv. 14. &c.

^d 2 Cor. iii. 3. Jer. xxxi. 33.

“Blessed art thou, O Lord: O learn me thy statutes. Of thy mercy O Lord the earth is full; O learn me thy statutes:” an expression which frequently occurs. “My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast learned me thy statutes.” The ungodly are spoken of as not *seeking* God’s statutes (20th div.); therefore they are not so obvious: the way of salvation is far from them. The ascription of praise to God, and the connection of mercy and goodness with his teaching, which accompany this word, shew us, that the statutes so sought are of a merciful, kind, and saving nature.

They are learned, not suddenly, but by experience, and through the means of trials mercifully ordained by God; lessons therefore which are deeply engraven on the heart. “Good is it for me that I have been in trouble, that I might learn thy statutes. . . . I have more understanding than my teachers, because thy statutes I have observed.” He that profits by such instructions, gains an experience far superior to all worldly wisdom.

But though of comparatively rare attainment, it is the duty of all men to seek them. God will visit those who do not apply their hearts to this knowledge, and seek to make increase of the talent committed to them. “Thou hast trodden down all that go astray from thy statutes.”

They are attainable. The prophet has attained in part at least. “Thy statutes I do not forget. . . . I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes alway. . . . Hear me, O LORD; thy statutes I will observe.”

Like God’s law, testimonies, and precepts, his statutes are matters of meditation and of joy. “In thy statutes will I delight myself. . . . Thy servant did meditate in thy statutes. . . . I will meditate in thy statutes. . . . Thy statutes have been songs to me

in the house of my pilgrimage. . . . And I shall delight in thy statutes continually.”

5. COMMANDMENTS^a: derived from a verb signifying to command, or ordain. Such was God’s command to Adam about the tree^b; to Noah, about constructing the ark.^c

The commandments are God’s laws, not only exhibited, and revealed, and recommended, but positively enjoined. The distinction not being the exhibition, as in law, the more peculiar revelation, as in testimonies, the commendation to the conscience, as in precepts, or to the inmost nature, as statutes, but the specific command.

The above definition is not markedly brought out by the use of the word in the Psalm: but with this etymological meaning, its use is uniformly consistent. But if the first division of the Psalm be, as I apprehend, a climax, then the definite injunction of God may be regarded as that sanction, for which a pious mind, already instructed by his outward providence, and inward admonition, and revealed will, would be desirous.

They are a prescribed rule, (in the second division, they are connected with God’s *word*, his declared will.) “With my whole heart have I sought thee: let me not go astray from thy commandments. . . .” “Cursed are they that go astray from thy commandments. . . . The way of thy commandments I will run. . . . Make me to walk in the path of thy commandments. . . . I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.”

They are attainable. “I have respect unto all thy commandments. As for me, I forsook not thy commandments. . . . I will observe (or cherish) the commandments of my God. . . . Thy commandments I have done. . . . Thy commandments I have not forgotten.”

^a מצוות.^b Gen. iii. 11.^c Gen. vi. 22.

But, though prescribed and attainable, they require, like the law and testimonies, a spiritual discernment. "O hide not from me thy commandments" (3rd div.), where they are connected with the wonders of God's law. In the 10th division, he already recognises God's outward works: he prays now to recognise what is right, and what is wrong. "Make me to understand, and I shall learn thy commandments."

The preparation of the heart is necessary towards following them. It is not from a sense of God's displeasure, but from this preparation, that they are willingly obeyed. "The way of thy commandment will I run, when thou hast enlarged my heart." "Fat as brawn is their heart; as for me, in thy commandments I have had delight."

Pride is an obstacle in the way of their attainment. "Cursed are they that go astray from thy commandments," which follows "thou hast rebuked the proud." (3rd div.)

They are of eternal obligation: are founded in truth and righteousness, and so far from contracting the sphere of legitimate liberty, are of an expansive nature. "All thy commandments are faithfulness. . . . Of all perfection I have seen an end; thy commandment is large exceedingly. . . . All thy commandments are truth. . . . For all thy commandments are righteousness."

They are the precursors, or source of wisdom and knowledge. "Good judgment and knowledge learn me; for in thy commandments have I believed. . . . Thou hast made me wiser than mine enemies, through thy commandments."

They are a source of joy. "Therein is my delight. . . I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved: . . . and I will lift up my hands to

thy commandments which I have loved: therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold. I opened my mouth: I panted; for thy commandments I desired. . . Thy commandments are my delight."

6. JUDGMENTS^a, derived from a word signifying to govern, to judge, or determine, mean judicial ordinances, and decisions: legal sanctions.

In the 21st chapter of Exodus, after the Commandments, which are called the words of the law, follow the judgments: those statutes for the governing of the people in spirituals and temporals, which involve the details of forensic cognizance, the pronouncing and performing judicial sentences and acts.^b

Judgments mean here, as regards God, the righteous retribution of good and evil, by the judge of the world, according to the laws of divine justice, or righteousness; consequently, they include his providential dealings. As regards man, they mean, the conformity to God's law, the acceptance of his sanctions, the submission to his sentence.

They are promulgated, and are called, "the judgments of thy mouth:" but require, like the law, to be taught; "when I learn the judgments of thy righteousness. . . Thy judgments learn me."

They are founded in righteousness, or justice. "The judgments of thy righteousness. . . Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgments." And in

^a מִשְׁפָּטִים.

^b In the Hebrew, and the ancient oriental dialects of that language, the word מִשְׁפָּט includes those two functions, which, according to modern parlance, are termed judicial and executive, one of the three which intrinsically belong to the monarch, the legislative being the third. The judges among the Jews, and the suffetes, (שֹׁפְטִים) of the Carthaginians were the supreme magistrates, both forensic and executive. It is too commonly forgotten, that our sovereign is the supreme legislator, as well as magistrate of the nation, though acting in this respect by the advice of her great council, the parliament.

truth: "The way of truth have I chosen: thy judgments learn me." They are good, that is, merciful: "Thy judgments are good." They are founded on eternal principles: "From everlasting are the judgments of thy righteousness."

They are providential; showing God's mercy to the good, his righteous retributions to the wicked; his fatherly discipline, as a means of good to those he loves. "Make to pass away the reproach which I fear, for thy judgments are good. . . . I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are righteous, and that in faithfulness thou hast caused me to be afflicted. . . . When wilt thou do judgment to them that persecute me? . . . From thy judgments I have not shrunk: because thou teachest me. . . . Of thy judgments I am afraid. . . . Be merciful to me, according to the judgment on those who love thy Name."

They are a source of comfort, joy, and praise; since all good men rejoice in God's governance. "I will praise thee with an unfeigned heart, when I have learned the judgments of thy righteousness. . . . My soul breaketh out for the desire it hath unto thy judgments at all times. . . . In thy judgments I have hoped. . . . I have remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord, and I have received comfort. . . . In the midst of the night I will rise to give thanks to thee, because of the judgments of thy righteousness. . . . Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of the judgments of thy righteousness. . . . With my lips have I been telling of all the judgments of thy mouth."

They have a quickening and strengthening influence. "O Lord, according to thy judgments quicken me. . . . Thy judgments shall help me." God's judgments, as regards men, are to be heeded and kept. "The way of truth I have chosen: thy judg-

ments I have laid before me. . . . I have sworn to keep the judgments of thy righteousness. . . . From thy judgments I have not shrunk, because thou teachest me. . . . I have done judgment and righteousness. . . . From thy judgments I will not decline.”

7. WORD.^a There are two terms, quite distinct in the Hebrew, but both rendered *word*, in each of our authorized versions. The latter of these is rendered *saying*, in the former volume of this work. They are closely connected; since out of twenty-two passages in which *word* occurs, in fourteen it is parallel to, or in connection with *saying*. From this very circumstance it is evident, they are not synonymous.

The term here rendered *word* means the *Λόγος*, or Word of God, in its most divine sense; the announcement of God's revealed will; his command; his oracle; at times the special communication to his prophets. The ten commandments are called by this term in Exodus: and *דְבַר* is the oracle in the Temple.

In this Psalm it may be considered as, (1.) God's revealed commandments in general. No mention is made of learning God's word: since the word itself teaches.

(2.) As a revealed promise of certain blessings to the righteous: “Quicken me, O Lord, according to thy word. . . . For I have trusted in thy word. . . . Remember thy word to thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. . . . Good hast thou done unto thy servant, according to thy word. . . . Because in thy word I have hoped. . . . In thy word do I hope. . . . According to thy word, give me understanding.”

(3.) As a thing committed to him, as the minister of God. “Take not from my mouth the word of truth, utterly,” which refers to the preceding and following context. (6 div.)

(4.) As a rule of conduct: a channel of illumi-

^a דְבַר.

nation. "Even by keeping himself according to thy word. . . . A lamp unto my feet is thy word. . . . The going forth of thy words enlighteneth, giving understanding unto the simple."

It is a thing that has been taught. "I will not forget thy word. . . . I shall learn and shall keep thy word. . . . I will keep thy word. . . . Mine enemies have forgotten thy word. . . . I have said, that I will keep thy word."

It is to be feared. "Thy word my heart feareth."

God's word is eternal. "For ever, O Lord, is thy word. It endureth in heaven." A truth which finds its highest application in the Eternal Son of God. The Word, which was in the beginning with God, and was God.

8. The cognate term SAYING^a, has a different shade of meaning from the preceding. It more properly means the actual articulation, the personal and immediate address. "The *word* of the Lord came unto him, *saying*," is a frequent expression in Holy Scripture: the *word* being a more concrete and general term.

It means something more personal to the individual than *word*, a special revelation, a peculiar promise, over and above the ordinary revelation of God's law. But it is used in the same senses, and with the same application as *word*, as the following instances will shew.

God's special promise. "Strengthen me according to thy saying. . . . Thy salvation, according to thy saying. . . . Have mercy upon me, according to thy saying. . . . According to thy saying unto thy servant. . . . Stablish me, according to thy saying. . . . Stablish in thy servant thy saying. . . . According to thy saying, quicken me. . . . According to thy word, deliver me."

It is pure and righteous: a rule of conduct, a quickening principle. "Thy saying hath quickened me. . . . Order my steps in thy saying. . . . Thy saying is pure exceedingly. . . . The sayings of thy righteousness."

It is a source of joy; of delightful meditation in secret, and of open praise. "Within my heart I have hid thy saying. . . . Mine eyes fail for thy saying. . . . How sweet are thy sayings unto my throat. . . . Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the sayings of thy righteousness. . . . That I might meditate on thy saying. . . . Rejoiced am I at thy saying. . . . My tongue shall sing of thy saying."

As to the remaining word, *WAY*^a, this occurs but twice, as a characteristic word, and the places in which it occurs must rather be considered as exceptions to the general rule: so that I am not disposed to consider it as intended to be a cognate expression with the above. At all events, its meaning is so direct and simple as to require no explanation: a plain rule of conduct; in its higher sense, the assisting grace of God, through Christ our Lord, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

The above analysis, it is presumed, will shew that certain distinctions, of a moral kind, do exist between these words, which yet represent one and the same great object. And these considerations will not be unprofitable, when we reflect upon the intention of the 119th Psalm, which is, to supply the members of the Church with subjects of religious meditation. It is well, for instance, to learn from this Psalm, to consider God's law as a guide, as a lamp of illumination; as an object of thankfulness, and a source of peace and joy, whether contemplated in the light of an objective truth, of a divine revelation, of an address to the conscience, of a command, of a judicial ordinance,

^a דרך.

or of a communication from God's own mouth. For each instance of its bestowal we ought ever to be thankful, and however taught to us, we ought to receive it. It is well to remember, in these days, when a new interpretation, unknown to philosophy or Christianity, has been given to Conscience, that Conscience is not the blind following of a wayward will, but the implanted knowledge of good and evil, based upon those fixed laws which God hath revealed in his word, and by his Spirit writes upon our hearts. It is well to know, that Meditation, about which such strange things have of late been spoken, is not the indulgence in a diseased or dreaming or headstrong fancy, but the chastened, docile, systematic reflection upon the revealed wonders of the Divine will, in a spirit not the less free, because it yields to the instruction of Him, the knowledge of whose truth can alone make us free; not the less ethereal, because it submits to be led by His sure guidance through the boundless regions of thought and imagination, where, if left to herself, the soul would irretrievably go astray.

§ 8. THE SONGS OF DEGREES.

With the 120th begins a series of Psalms of a character altogether peculiar, the fifteen Songs of Degrees. Their general diversity of style from the other Psalms, and their general features of resemblance to one another must strike the most careless reader, and would suggest a good *à priori* presumption in favour of a specific designation.

Upon no one title have greater diversities of opinion existed. Since the word^a translated *degrees* means *ascensions* or *elevations*, it obviously admits a great lati-

tude of conjecture, and might, if taken abstractedly, be plausibly applied either to the sentiments of the Psalms themselves, or to the manner and circumstances of their performance. Accordingly, the conjectures of the fanciful have not been wanting in giving interpretations wholly unwarranted by the context, or by the facts of history. Thus, some give an easy solution of the word, by imagining it to signify a musical tone, or some elevation of the voice^a, while others consider it to mean a peculiar excellence or elevation of sentiment.^b On these notions it is unnecessary to dwell, and still less upon that Jewish fable mentioned by Rabbi David, that these Psalms were sung on ascending the fifteen steps, which were imagined to lead from one of the outer courts of the Temple to that of the Levites. No trace in history or authentic tradition can be found of these steps, which owe their construction solely to the accommodating fancy of the Rabbins, who, as usual, imagined facts, in order to support their preconceived theories.

It is, however, the opinion of one, whose judgment deserves not only far more attention, but the greatest intrinsic deference, Dr. Hammond, that these Psalms were sung at the desks, or on the elevated platform mentioned in Nehemiah, ix. 4. by the Levites, on their return from the Captivity. The etymology of the word^c, translated in that passage, *stairs*, in our English Bible, will justify this interpretation. But it does not appear from the context, that the Songs of Degrees were sung on that occasion; indeed Nehemiah gives the words of a very different composition, a prayer rather than a Psalm. And we are surely not to suppose that these fifteen were the only Psalms

^a Aben Ezra: Kimchi: &c.

^b Junius, Tremellius, &c. For these and other authorities, see Calmet's admirable preface to these Psalms.

^c The word in the original is מַעְלֵה. So also Lyranus, Mollerus, &c.

sung by the Levites, in their appointed station in the Temple after the Restoration.

But there is an opinion, very generally entertained by the fathers^a, and by many modern critics, that the word translated *degrees*, means the going up of the Jews to Jerusalem, on their return from the Babylonish Captivity, and that the Psalms, though not all composed at that time, were then all appropriated to that special occasion. Bishop Lowth^b considers them to have been used when the people went up to Jerusalem, either at the yearly feasts, or after the Captivity; and he well remarks, that the Hebrew word^c is applied in Holy Scripture to both these occasions; to the latter especially, by Ezra himself.^d

The opinion which will be supported in the sequel of this section, is that which appropriates the Songs of Degrees to the time of the return from the Captivity, and considers the word translated *degrees*, to signify the going up to Jerusalem on that occasion. At the same time, I conceive, with Dr. Hammond and Bishop Patrick, that some at least of these Psalms, indeed most of them, were composed on former occasions. This may be collected from the following circumstances.

^a The ancient Syriac version, as Bishop Lowth remarks; Theodoret, St. Athanasius, St. Chrysostom, Euthymius, the venerable Bede, &c. Among the moderns, Genebrard, Vatablus; and, in particular, Bishop Andrews, in his sermon on Psalm 126. "Divide the whole book into four parts, one fourth part is for this return: either directly of set purpose, (as here are fifteen together,) or recorded in Psalms, though made upon other purposes: still, as the greatest delivery that ever they had."

^b Note to Præl. xxv. It is worth while to compare the clearness and common sense of this eminent scholar with the obscure and perplexed note of one of his commentators, Rosenmüller, who quotes Eichhorn and Bellerman's opinion, that the term is a musical note, and signifies the raising of a tone, referring us to other conjectures. Truly this is profitable criticism, to perplex a subject already made clear, by a mere display of cumbrous and ill-digested learning, and to decide nothing after all!

^c עלות.

^d Ezra, vii. 9.

In the 13th chapter of the First Book of Chronicles, it is related, that David brought up the Ark from Kirjath-jearim to the house of Obed-edom. The word used in the 7th verse, for “bringing up” the Ark^a, is of the same etymology with, and cognate to that which is translated *degrees*. And upon this occasion this great event was celebrated by the accompaniment of sacred music. “And David and all Israel played before God, with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels and cymbals, and with trumpets.”

Again, in the 15th chapter of the same book, in the 14th verse, the same term is employed for bringing up the Ark to Jerusalem; and the choral services of the Levites are mentioned in immediate connection. And in the 5th chapter of the second book of Chronicles (5th verse), we are told that Solomon assembled the people at the dedication of the Temple, to bring up the Ark from Sion to the Temple of the Lord.

I would therefore refer the Songs of Degrees to all these occasions. The 120th bears marks of having been composed on the first removal of the Ark. And nothing is more natural than to believe, that upon each subsequent occasion connected with the establishment or restoration of the worship of God, the inspired leaders of the people should have commemorated these events in a similar manner, and in songs of a like character to that of which David had given the type.

If this view of the case appear sound, then the sequence and connection of these Psalms will be clear and consistent, in harmony with the facts of history, and with the circumstances of their several authors. Those which are peculiarly applicable to David and Solomon especially, will be noticed in the analysis of each Psalm, which follows.

^a עלמה.

The construction of the songs is such as to reduce them evidently to a class. They are all short compositions, sententious, eminently fitted for lyrical use, in the highest degree poetical, and, as Calmet justly remarks, epigrammatic; using this term in its highest sense as concinnate, terse, and abounding in turns expressed with the most exquisite brevity. Two remarkable characteristics they possess, which, though found occasionally in other Psalms, seem to enter into the very texture of these. I mean the frequent recurrence of a characteristic word, and that figure which the rhetoricians call *Epanaphora*, or the repetition of the same idea or expression. As to the characteristic words: In the 121st Psalm, this is the word *keep* [שׁמַר], in the 122nd the word *Salem*, and others of a like sound. (The remarkable play upon words in this Psalm is shown in the note appended to it in the first volume of this work.) In the 123rd the word *eyes* [עֵינַי]. In the 126th the words *turn* and *captivity*, which in Hebrew are almost the same [שׁוּב and שִׁיבָה]. In the 127th *vain* [שׁוֹא]. In the 133rd the word *descend* [יִרְד], and *bless* [בִּרְךְ] in the 134th.

In the 120th are the following repetitions: "From the tongue of deceit: . . . O tongue of deceit." "Long hath my soul had her dwelling with him that hateth peace: . . . I am for peace." In the 121st, "From whence cometh my help: my help is from the Lord. He will not sleep that keepeth thee; behold, he will not sleep nor slumber, who keepeth Israel." In the 122nd, "Our feet are standing in thy gates, O Jerusalem: Jerusalem is built. . . . Peace be within thy walls: . . . I will now say peace be within thee." In the 123rd, "Until he have mercy upon us: Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us," &c. So the whole construction of the 124th and of the 129th, both formed in the like model. In the 125th, "Jerusa-

lem. . . The hills are round about her; and the LORD is round about his people." And so in all the others, to a greater or less degree.

The 120th Psalm forms the appropriate opening of the series. This represents the people and the Ark of God still in an unsettled state, without a fixed habitation, and surrounded by faithless enemies: the state in which David found the affairs of his people. They dwelt in Mesech, and in the tents of Kedar; that is, their state was like that of the wandering Arabs and Scythians^a, who had their changeable habitations in tents; a circumstance peculiarly applicable to the Ark of God, which formed that sacred centre, round which the people of Israel, in the time of their glory, were wont to rally. It is but consistent to conceive that this Psalm was composed by David, when the Ark was about to be removed from Kinjath-jezarim to its settled resting-place at Jerusalem.

In the 121st Psalm the holy city is in sight. The royal prophet who led the procession to Jerusalem, lifts up his eyes unto the hills from whence cometh his help; and takes occasion from the observation of the night watches of them who kept the Ark, to speak of the constant watchfulness of Him who keepeth Israel, and who neither slumbers nor sleeps.

The 122nd brings us actually to Jerusalem, and celebrates the establishment of the Ark on the mount

^a The word Mesech is very obscure. Meshech was a son of Japhet (Gen. x. 2.); and the name is generally supposed to be applied to the Scythians, being found in connection with Gog, Magog, and Tubal, in the prophecies of Ezekiel. (xxvii. 13. xxxii. 26. and xxxviii. 2, 3.) Bochart is of opinion that the word means the "tent-dweller," Arabes Scenite: מִסֵּךְ signifying a skin in Chaldee. The Chaldee paraphrase translates it Asiatics. That it means a nation appears plain from its apposition with Kedar, evidently a proper name; and therefore I cannot acquiesce in the interpretation of Bishop Patrick and Dr. Hammond, who follow Aquila, Symmachus, and Kimchi, in rendering it adverbially, *for a long time*, a meaning which the word will bear, but is destructive of the poetical structure of the passage.

of Zion. The house of the Lord was the tent which he then pitched for it, the tabernacle being still at Gibeon. The occurrence of an apparent Chaldaism^a in this Psalm has induced some critics to assign it to a later period, that of the Restoration. Little dependence, however, is to be placed upon apparent marks of this kind. These indications are very slight in the Psalms, and may easily be accounted for by the alteration in the transcript of the older Scriptures, probably without design, by the later Jews. In the instance before us, however, it appears very evident that the supposed Chaldaism is an ancient, though rarely used Hebrew idiom.^b The extraordinary play upon words, however, already noticed, might argue a later period of composition. Still I cannot but think that the Title, assigning the Psalm to David, is borne out by internal evidence of a stronger kind. The fond mention of Jerusalem, David's beloved city; the thrones of the house of David; and the recurrence of Peace, which was so emphatically promised to David, as the blessing about to be conferred on his son Solomon, are all circumstances which, taken in connection, stamp this song with a character eminently belonging to the reign of the royal Psalmist.

The 123rd Psalm opens with the same sentiment of confidence as the 121st; and reiterates an assurance of the divine guardianship, encompassed as the people of Israel still were by their enemies. The 124th Psalm is retrospective, and speaks of past deliverances: not only of those experienced at the

^a ע instead of אֶשֶׁר. See the note on this Psalm in the former Volume.

^b It occurs not only in the book of Judges, v. 7. vi. 17. vii. 12. viii. 26., but in Job, xv. 30. xix. 29. Eccles. i. 9. ii. 18. 19. 24. iii. 14. iv. 10. Cant. i. 7. ii. 17. It is not a mere poetical license, but an ancient and established idiom, as the above passages ought to prove: unquestionably one of the age of Solomon.

Captivity, but of all the instances of divine protection afforded to the people during their frequent wars, captivities, and struggles with the surrounding heathen, in which David had so largely participated. The imagery of all the preceding Psalm is repeated in the 125th. The hill of Sion; that hill to which they had flown, as a bird escaped from the snare of the fowler: the beloved localities of Jerusalem: the tender protection of the Almighty; and the concluding strain, Peace upon Israel, again repeated, so frequently reiterated in the Psalms which follow.

The 126th Psalm is clearly to be referred to the Captivity, according to Theodoret, and the general testimony of commentators. The imagery is evidently rural and pastoral: the allusion to the inundations of Egypt, the mercy of God, which like a full river has refreshed the thirsty land, is both exquisite in itself, and in harmonious keeping with the image of the harvest which follows.

The 127th Psalm, composed, as the Title tells us, for or by Solomon, has an immediate reference to those blessings which God had promised to the house of David.^a Its application to the Jews, while rebuilding the Temple and City of Jerusalem, is here eminently in place. The passage, "for so he giveth his beloved sleep," and the preceding words, are thus to be interpreted. All human toil and anxiety are unavailing, without God's assistance: and more successful are they even in their worldly concerns, who, trusting to the divine blessing, do their appointed work in faith, and take the gifts of natural repose which he allows to them, than those who, in their over-carefulness, take so much thought for the morrow, and deny themselves necessary rest. To this Psalm the

^a I Chron. xvii. 11. Dr. Hammond's notes on this Psalm are eminently deserving of attention.

128th is an obvious sequel, and describes, with a recurrence to rural imagery, the happiness of those who have so put their trust in God. "Peace upon Israel" is again repeated. This repetition is to be referred, as before remarked, to the age of Solomon's youth. The promise of the Almighty was uppermost in the mind of David. "Behold a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon" (that is, peaceable), "and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. *He shall build an house for my name.* . . . Now, my son, the LORD be with thee; and prosper thou, and *build the house of the LORD thy God, as he hath said of thee.*"^a This whole context is exactly in accordance with the sentiment of these two Psalms.

The 129th, in style like the 124th, in its commencement, resembles it also in its subject, a recurrence to past persecution: and in its rural imagery of the mowers and reapers, is like the 127th. Sion is the theme of this as well as of most of the preceding Psalms. The 130th is deeply penitential in its commencement, but at the latter end recurs to the image of the watchman, as in the 121st; and its concluding sentiment, "Let Israel trust in the Lord," connects it accurately with the other Psalm of meditation which immediately follows. This Psalm, the 131st, which records the meek and humble spirit of those who are the true worshippers of the Temple, doubtless belongs, as its title announces, to the time of David. It is exactly in the spirit of that humble thanksgiving made by him, after the divine revelation by Nathan of the future blessings of his posterity^b; and forms a most appropriate introduction to the following Psalm, the

^a 1 Chron. xxii. 9—11.

^b 2 Sam. vii. 18—29. and 1 Chron. xvi. 16—27.

132nd, the theme of which is evidently the dedication of the Temple.

The whole tenor of this Psalm is an exact epitome of the Dedication Prayer of Solomon.^a The topics are the same: the building the house of the Lord; the promise to David: the inhabitation of the Almighty: and the concluding clause of the Dedication are identical with these expressions of the Psalm:

Arise, O LORD, into thy resting-place,
Thou, and the Ark of thy strength.
Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness,
And let thy saints sing for joy:
For the sake of David, thy servant,
Turn not away the face of thine Anointed.

There can therefore be little question that this Psalm was composed by Solomon. It forms a noble climax to those which preceded, and completes the grand subject with which the Songs of Degrees began. The Ark and the people of God are delivered from the tabernacles of Mesech and Kedar, and brought to glorious and peaceful habitation. The 133rd Psalm, one of David's, with the 134th, are an appendage to this Psalm. They represent the harmony and peace which subsists in the family of Israel, especially among those who are appointed to keep watch and do service in the house of the Lord. The imagery still alludes to the beloved hills on which Jerusalem was built, and in the same exquisite strain as heretofore, compares the blessing of God to the dew which fertilized alike the most distant hills in the holy land, those of Hermon and Sion; that blessing which, from Dan to Beersheba, rested upon Judah and Israel in the happy days of David and Solomon. The whole series concludes with a thanksgiving from the people, and with a benediction from God.

^a 2 Chron. vi.

Behold, bless ye the LORD,
 All ye servants of the LORD:
 Ye that stand in the house of the LORD by night,
 Lift up your hands in the sanctuary,
 And bless ye the LORD.
 The Lord bless thee out of Sion,
 Even he who hath made heaven and earth.

§ 9. THE FIFTEEN CONCLUDING PSALMS.

The Psalms of the Captivity, and of the Restoration, do not terminate with the Songs of Degrees. Three immediately follow, which are manifestly to be referred to those times.

The 135th is so intimately connected, in its commencement, with the Psalm which precedes, that it seems to claim a place among the Songs of Degrees, a claim which is strengthened by the sequel, since all its topics are those which are found in other Psalms. Thus, the distich,

Every thing that the LORD pleased, he did in heaven, and
 in earth,
 In the sea, and in all depths,

corresponds to a similar expression at the beginning of the 115th. And the concluding part, speaking of the idols of the heathens, and calling upon the house of Israel and Levi to praise the Lord, is parallel in its sentiments, and nearly in its terms, with a considerable portion of the same Psalm, the 115th. The passage relating the wonders of his Providence, the destruction of the Egyptians, and the kings of the Amorites, of Bashan and of Canaan, and the giving their lands as an heritage to Israel, is either the germ or the abridgment of the 136th Psalm. So that it is made up of extracts from Psalms which were composed (as there is strong reason to believe) after the

return from the Captivity. Its connection with the adjoining songs is evident: and as it stands here, it would form a complete and noble termination to the Songs of Degrees. If the opinion of St. Jerome^a is to be adopted, that the untitled Psalms are to be ascribed to the author of the last titled Psalm, or to the same occasion, this rule would establish the claim of the 135th. But it is one on which no dependence can be placed, as we see many instances in which it obviously cannot hold, for example, in the case of the 137th.

The 136th Psalm is altogether peculiar in its construction, as it has the recurrence of the same words, "For everlasting is his mercy," at the end of every distich. It thus resembles the Song of the three Children; and, as has been already observed, in the commencing remarks on the 119th Psalm, this elaborate artifice of construction seems characteristic of that later period which comprised the Captivity and Restoration. There is a passage, indeed, in the account of the dedication of Solomon's Temple^b, which might seem to justify the reference of this Psalm to his time: when we are told that the whole choir of Israel united in praising God, "for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever." But this expression, it is well known, forms the commencement of three other Psalms, the 106th, 107th, and 118th; the first of which has been already assigned to the age of David; and it forms part of the Psalm recorded in 1 Chron. xvi. The sentiments, and the location of the 136th, rather favour the opinion of a late date.

But of the 137th no doubt of course can be entertained. It is a Psalm of the Captivity, and probably composed by Jeremiah, whose style it resembles. Its

^a Epist. ad Cyprianum. So Origen, guided by the tradition of a Jewish writer Huillus.

^b 2 Chron. v. 13.

exquisite beauty and pathetic character are obvious to all; nor does a more perfect elegy exist. The Songs of Sion to which it alludes I think are probably those triumphant ones in the second and third parts of the Psalter, the songs of Asaph and Korah, and the earlier ones in the fourth.

After this follows a supplemental collection of Davidical Psalms, probably inserted on the completion of the Canon, by Ezra or Nehemiah. These are seven in number: and all bear out the integrity of their titles, by internal evidence, which stamps them unequivocally as David's.

No plausible connection can be traced with the preceding, nor indeed have we reason to suppose that such was intended. The reference in the 138th to the Temple of God may possibly suggest a link with the Songs of Degrees; but this is so very faint a mark, as not to be depended on. The occurrence, however, of the Psalm, in this place, is a feature of great beauty. It affords a most soothing contrast to the Psalm which precedes: and there is a feeling of delight, in being brought back to the peculiar sentiments and aspirations and hopes of David, to those meditations of his which are so markedly personal. I would appeal to any one of common taste and feeling, whether the characteristics of David's composition are not at once perceptible on making this transition.

The 139th bears the same characteristic impress. How any critic can assign this Psalm to other than David I cannot understand. Every line, every thought, every turn of expression and transition, is his, and his only. As for the arguments drawn from the two Chaldaisms which occur^a, this is really nugatory. These Chaldaisms consist merely in the substitution of one letter for another, very like it in shape,

^a צריך for עריך, and רבצי for רבעי.

and easily to be mistaken by a transcriber, particularly by one who had been used to the Chaldee idiom: but the moral arguments for David's authorship are so strong as to overwhelm any such verbal, or rather *literal* criticism, were even the objections more formidable than they actually are.

In its general plan and moral arrangement it much resembles the 19th. It begins, as there, with meditations on the wonders of God's handy work, and from thence passes on to the contemplation of his spiritual law, and ends with a prayer for the chastening of his own spirit, and the guidance of his ways. But it is plainly an advance upon the former Psalm, and contains many topics there unnoticed; God's omnipresence, and the influence of his Spirit, and the prophet's hatred of God's enemies. There is no Psalm in the whole collection which affords a more perfect model for the meditation of the faithful.

The four Psalms which follow are all connected. They speak of the troubles of David's early days, then suffering from the persecution of Saul: and the title of the 142nd, "Maschil of David; when he was in the cave," affords a key to their adjustment. The 140th Psalm has been analysed^a; the 141st (as observed in the note to the translation in the former volume), relates to the event in David's life, recorded in 1 Sam. xxiv. 2, 3. The passage "their judges were dismissed," is best explained in the words of Bishop Horne. "David, reflecting on Saul's cruelty in driving him out of his country, to wander amongst aliens and idolaters, very naturally calls to mind, and mentions, his own different behaviour towards that implacable enemy, whose life he had spared at two several times, when he had it in his power to destroy him as he pleased. Their judges, or princes, leaders,

^a pp. 94—95.

generals, &c., according to the frequent usage of the word in Scripture, נִשְׁמַט, “have been dismissed,” (the common signification of the verb שָׁמַט), ‘in the sides of the rock,’ when I had them at an advantage there; 1 Sam. xxiv. 3. ‘and have heard my words, that they were sweet:’ they only heard me expostulate with them in a manner so mild and humble, that even Saul himself was overcome, and ‘lift up his voice and wept, saying, My son David, thou art more righteous than I,—the Lord reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day.’ 1 Sam. xxiv. 16.”

The 142nd is closely connected: as is the 143rd, which has been examined in a former dissertation^a, and apparently was composed at the same time. It is remarkable that the greater part of those Psalms which are represented in the titles, and appear, from their sentiments, to have been composed during the persecutions by Saul, are placed in supplementary collections. Perhaps the Psalmist was less disposed to make public these compositions of a more peculiarly personal character, alluding to painful events of his early life, and reflecting on Saul, whom, notwithstanding all his grievous sins, he yet regretted with such generous tenderness.

The 144th Psalm^b, however, begins a new strain, which is sustained to the end of the book. Its opening imagery is almost identical with that of the 18th, and the reflection, “O LORD, what is man,” has its parallel in the 8th. It is a song of thanksgiving rendered by the King of Israel, his enemies being overcome, and the blessing of God being manifested to his people, in all the gifts of prosperity and peace: for all which he is thankful, and prays for their continuance, recognising, however, as a far higher bless-

^a pp. 35—37.

^b See pp. 164—165.

ing than all earthly increase, that righteousness which exalteth a people, that national piety which acknowledges the LORD to be their God. A reflection peculiarly needful to the people of England at the present hour, who are well nigh poisoned and perverted by the spirit of greedy speculation; and who seem to consider the chief arts of statemanship not to be the promotion of godliness, and true religion, but of those measures only which are subservient to the preservation of animal life.

The 145th is entitled “David’s Psalm of praise^a:” and truly it deserves a peculiar epithet of distinction. It is constructed in six regular stanzas; the first four having three, and the two remaining four, distichs each. The stanzas are alternate in the sentiment. The first is introductory, celebrating God’s praise in a general manner. The second to the fifth celebrate alternately his greatness and his goodness. The sixth, his special grace to those who call upon him. This Psalm is alphabetical: each distich having the characteristic letter at the commencement. We have thus another proof that the alphabetical Psalms are not mere centos of unconnected thoughts.

The “Psalm of praise” proceeds through the five which complete the Psalter: and there seems every reason to assign them all to David, so as to form compound parts of one magnificent ode. The Septuagint, indeed, assigns the 138th, 139th, 146th, 147th, and 148th, to Haggai and Zechariah, after the return from the Captivity: but these titles are evidently spurious. They are partly marked by Origen as not existing in any Hebrew manuscript in his time, and are partly stamped with that critical mark which shews them to be the interpolation of later times.

^a The title of this Psalm was omitted, from an oversight, in the first volume.

Besides, the 139th is assigned both to David and Zechariah, which is inconsistent.

All these five are Hallelujah Psalms: and it is remarkable that these follow an alphabetical Psalm, as we find in the case of most of those connected with the 111th and 112th. The first of them, the 146th, takes up the concluding topic of the 145th, and celebrates God's mercy, as manifested to mankind in general. In its last clause Sion is mentioned, thus preparing us for the praise of his particular mercy to his chosen people, commemorated in the 147th. The construction of this, again, is very regular. It is divided into three stanzas: each beginning with a couplet exhorting to God's praise: then, the commemoration, first, of his providential power and goodness in his works of creation; secondly, of his mercy to his servants. The second stanza recounting these in a general way, the first, and (in a more expanded form) the third stanzas specially mention his mercy to Israel, in the bestowal of all earthly good, and in the imparting of his statutes and judgments.

The three concluding Psalms are an expansion of these topics. The 148th, a most regularly constructed hymn^a, celebrates the work of creation, and invites, first, all the heavenly host, all the earthly creation, to praise God; and the reason of his praise is given at the end of each of the two divisions of the Psalm. The 149th is the praise of his saints whom he hath redeemed, of those on whom the fulness of his mercy hath been shewn. The conquest announced in the second Psalm is achieved; the saints of God, who had cried under the altar, How long, O Lord, holy and true^b, have overcome, through him who has bruised his enemies with a rod of iron, and broken them to pieces like a potter's vessel. We are led from the

^a See pp. 117—118.

^b Rev. vi. 10.

Church Militant to the Church Triumphant, to anticipate the actual songs of heaven, that worship which shall be rendered to God, day and night unceasingly, and for ever. The 150th, which enumerates all the instruments used in the Sacred Songs of the Tabernacle, prepares us for the harps of heaven, and the hallelujahs of the Angels; and with its concluding sentence, "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord: praise ye the Lord," calls upon the whole creation to give thanks to him perpetually, for all his gifts of Providence and Grace, and dismisses the faithful worshipper with that sentiment, which is the consummation of all religion, and which shall last, when death and sin shall be destroyed, when prayer shall be no longer needful, and the image of God shall be inalienably restored to his redeemed children.

NOTE ON DISSERTATION III.

THE following is the extract from the Sermon referred to in § iv. p. 254.

“ This Psalm (the 77th) was evidently composed in a frame of deep suffering. Yet, in the very opening, we perceive the groundwork of that trust, which, after the Psalmist had been fully exercised in the school of affliction, led to the fervent and triumphant conclusion of this magnificent hymn. In the depth of his depression, before he had brought his mind to such a state as to be able to reflect upon the nature of his present condition, before he had given himself time to remember that the divine arm could reach him even then, before he had reckoned up those instances of God’s mercy vouchsafed of old to his faithful servants, when hope had almost gone — before he had learned that out of trouble and sorrow, the grace of God brings peace and joy; even while his soul refused comfort, we have the effusion of his trembling heart: ‘ I will cry unto God with my voice;’ while the secret whispering of that heart, though well nigh overwhelmed with the weight of woe, tells him that he shall not cry in vain: ‘ Even unto God will I cry with my voice, and he shall hearken unto me.’

“ In these words the holy Psalmist pours forth the vehement torrent of thoughts and feelings, that had been brooding over the wretched and seemingly hopeless state of himself and the people of God (for this Psalm appears, like some others, to have been composed during the captivity of the chosen people): till, finding that all within him was confusion, and darkness, and despondency, that his heart was sick, that he could see no way to escape, that his soul was faint, he gives up the effort to struggle any longer against the flood which is bearing him down, and cries aloud with his *voice*, though his *spirit* could hardly join in the supplication. He thus describes the manner in which he threw himself upon God’s mercy. It appeared to be entirely an outward act; the inner man seemed not to concur in the fervent exclamation; yet this very outward act had its rise in deep inward feeling, a depth of which the Psalmist, in the agony of his mind, was not conscious. ‘ In the time of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran;’ or, as it is rendered in another version, ‘ My hand was stretched out in the night season, and ceased not; my soul refused comfort.’ Such was his desponding state.

“ But the blessed effect of his earnest cry appears in the following verse ; when, after he had experienced the Divine goodness, in calming the tempest that raged within his breast, and teaching him not only to see the hand of God, but even the mercy of God, in all his visitations, and to look forward to brighter days, after he has been made fully sensible of his own want of faith, and distrust of God’s overruling Providence, he resolves at once how, upon any future occasion of suffering or dejection of mind, he will prepare to meet the trial. ‘ When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God.’ He now feels that the only refuge for the troubled spirit is the thought of God ; that the only alleviation of that bitter sorrow of heart, which can find no rest nor relief, is to pour out all his sorrows in the voice of prayer and supplication to the Throne of Grace. ‘ When my heart is vexed, I will complain.’

“ Let us mark now the way in which the Psalmist is led by Divine Grace to see the ungrounded nature of his complaints, and to rise from such utter despondency to holy hope and joy. God speaks to his heart in the silence of the night ; in that solemn season such impressions are made, such mysterious feeling of the Divine Presence, such awful thoughts of the Divine Majesty crowd in upon his soul, that the very world and all its cares and sorrows seem to have passed away, and his own spirit is so broken down that he ceases to complain. ‘ Thou holdest mine eyes waking : I am so feeble that I cannot speak.’ Then comes the calm reflection upon the former dealings of a gracious Providence. The present season of anxiety, and trouble, and dismay, like the slumbering world around him, is for a moment forgotten. And by his meditation upon time past, he is enabled to contemplate, with a blessed hope, the time to come. He rises above the present scene, to look back upon years past and gone into the great deep of Eternity ; and from that height he looks forward, with the eye of faith, into the future. ‘ I have considered the days of old, and the years that are past. I call to remembrance my song ; and in the night I commune with mine own heart, and search out my spirits.’ He remembers his own songs of thanksgiving and rejoicing, under the fresh impression of blessings heretofore conferred ; he enters into a conference with his own heart, while the quiet night gives him leisure for the inquiry, and closely questions his present state of mind, when he compares it with the serene and heavenly meditations he then had felt, and enjoyed, and communicated to all around.

“ His first inquiry is ; Will the gracious Being, whose goodness I then proclaimed, cease to extend his Almighty care over his people ? Shall their prayers and supplications cease to be regarded by Him who has done so much for them already ? ‘ Will the

Lord absent himself for ever ; and will he be no more entreated ?' Is the favour that he shewed unto our fathers, whose provocations, like our own, were great, no more to be shewn unto their children, even when they return unto him with all their heart, and with all their soul ? Is the covenant that he made with Abraham, and the oath that he sware unto Isaac, are the sure mercies of David to be had no more in his remembrance ?' ' Is his mercy clean gone for ever ; and is his promise come utterly to an end for evermore ?' Can the unchangeable God no more remember all these things ? Will the remembrance of our transgressions so prevail against us, that he will now, for the first time, turn away his face from our humble supplications, from the prayer of the poor and destitute ? ' Hath God, indeed, forgotten to be gracious ; and will he shut up his loving-kindness in displeasure ?'

“The holy Psalmist could doubt no longer. His fears and apprehensions are done away ; his faith triumphs over the weakness of human nature ; his trust in God puts to flight all suggestions of the evil one ; he acknowledges his own folly in forming such a judgment of the Father of mercies, and he gives his heart and mind to the contemplation of God's wondrous doings among the children of men, and declares that the loving-kindness of God shall henceforth be the subject of his thoughts, the theme of his conversation. ' And I said, it is mine own infirmity ; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most Highest. I will remember the works of the Lord, and call to mind thy wonders of old time. I will think also of all thy works, and my talking shall be of thy doings.'

“The result of this determination is a deep sense of the holiness of God, of the greatness of his Majesty, of the power of the Lord Jehovah, so often exercised for the sake of his people. And he feels that whoever would worthily speak of him, must be influenced by his Spirit, and taught of God. ' Thy way, O God, is holy ; who is so great a God as our God ? Thou art the God that doest wonders, and hast declared thy power among the people. Thou hast mightily delivered thy people, even the sons of Jacob and Joseph.' He then commemorates that signal deliverance, whereby God brought his people out of Egypt ; when the waters saw their God, when the deep retired at his word, and made a way for his ransomed to pass over, while the returning waves were arrayed against their adversaries, and the elements marshalled as a host to stop the way against their persecutors : when the chariots and horsemen of Egypt sank as lead in the mighty waters, when the Invisible Jehovah marched before his people, and brought them into the promised land, by the hands of his chosen servants. ' The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee, and were afraid :

the depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out water : the air also thundered ; and thine arrows went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was heard round about ; the lightnings shone upon the ground ; the earth was moved and shook withal. Thy way is in the sea, and thy paths in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest thy people like sheep ; by the hand of Moses and Aaron.' ”

THE
BOOK OF PSALMS.

DISSERTATION IV.

DISSERTATION IV.

ON THE METRICAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE PSALMS.

§ 1. THE RHYTHM OF HEBREW POETRY.

It is not the design of the following Essay to enter into a detailed account of the structure of Hebrew Poetry, or to offer proofs of a doctrine, which, by the learning and critical acumen of divines of our own Church, has been irrefragably established. Bishop Lowth demonstrated the systematic nature of parallelism, as the essential character of sacred poetry; but left the question of syllabic metre undecided. Bishop Jebb not only discovered some new and most important features of parallelism, and made the further invaluable discovery, that the writings of the New Testament were cast in precisely the same model as those of the old, but also demonstrated that a metre of words and syllables formed no part of the system. There is nothing merely mechanical in sacred verse. In it we do not measure syllables with syllables, or mark the proportion between long and short feet: we trace the agreement of sentiment with sentiment, of one truth with another; we see the regular balancing and adjustment of religious maxims, holy thoughts, divine verities; we recognise a system which is, in the highest sense, intellectual, and which essentially ministers to the moral training, the spiritual education of the soul.

The observations which follow are merely intended to offer some solution for the opinion entertained by many, that, allowing the doctrine of parallelism to exist in its full extent, still there is strong reason to suppose, that there is a metre besides; that is, one of accents and syllables, like the poetry of modern Europe; for any system like that of classical quantity it would be impossible to prove, and idle to imagine.

It is fairly acknowledged by the great body of ancient authorities that the rules of Hebrew metre, considered in the syllabic sense, as connected with the ear, not with the intellect, are altogether lost: and even those authorities^a who acknowledge a metre, rather speak of an harmonious rhythm, than any system regulated by rigid laws. Thus, St. Jerome^b, in his Preface to Job, though he mentions hexameters, consisting of dactyls and spondees, existing in that book, yet allows that, on account of the idiom of the language, other feet are frequently admitted; and speaks of a rhythm bound by no fixed laws. The same seems to have been the opinion of the venerable Bede, (or the ancient author of the treatise attributed to him,) and Joseph Scaliger^c speaks of a rhythmical, not metrical poetry, far superior to all the measures of Pindar. And he says that in the Psalms there is no

^a See for a summary of these opinions Theodori Eberti *Poetica Hebraica*: and Buxtorffii *Prosodia Metrica Hebraica*: in the 31st volume of Ugolini's *Thesaurus*. From the former of these works most of the authorities brought forward in this page are taken.

^b Porro a verbis Job, in quibus ait, *percut dies*, &c., usque ad eum locum, *idecirco ipse me*, &c., hexametri versus sunt, dactylo spondeoque currentes: et propter lingue idioma, crebro recipientes et alios pedes, non earundem syllabarum, sed eorundem temporum. Interdum quoque rhythmus ipse dulcis et timulus fertur numeris lege solutis, quod metrici magis quam simplex lector intelligent.

^c Puram putam pœsin esse rhythmicam, non metricam, et super omnes Pindaricos modos. . . . In Psalterio nullum esse canticum metricis legibus adstrictum, sed mere solitam orationem, charactero poetico animatam. In Eusebianis (cited by Ebertus).

system of metrical laws, but^a a free and flowing style, animated with a poetical character.^b

It may be safely affirmed, that this is the utmost which can be conceded to the advocates of strict metre. And all the attempts made by Gomar, Bishop Hare, and others, may be demonstrated to be failures, for this reason; that any such system of metrical arrangement invariably interferes with the parallelism, in other words, with the intellectual construction of the Psalm: interrupting the continuity of clauses, and destroying the fair proportion and balance of the sentiments. If metre, then, be true, parallelism must be false; the two systems are inconsistent. But the doctrine of parallelism is capable of demonstration; the other is, at the very best, a system of conjecture, requiring for its establishment a number of postulates that cannot be proved, and all of which one ascertained fact would instantly overturn.

For one very obvious reason the two systems must be inconsistent. The latter portion of each parallel couplet, or quatrain, or of whatever length the sentiment may be, is always some amplification or modification of the former. This amplification, indeed, often requires no addition of any epithet, so that the two members may be of exactly the same syllabic length. But in very many cases there is an addition, not of one only, but of several qualifying words, which necessarily destroys the syllabic, or, as it is commonly called, the metrical proportion. Or it may be, that an epithet, or noun, required in the first member is not required, because it is understood, in the second:

^a I do not translate "soluta oratio" here by "prose," its usual rendering. Scaliger doubtless meant a kind of dithyrambic; a rhythmical language, unconfined by metrical laws.

^b See also Kircher's *Musurgia*, (a work strangely over-estimated, as it really is very meagre), cap. v. § v.

so that the latter part, though amplified in sentiment, may be contracted in expression.

To this many other arguments might be added. But one point at present is, to shew that the hypothesis of a mechanical versification actually has its rise from the existence of parallelism.

In the first place, then, an absurd, and now exploded opinion, at one time prevailed, that rhyme was one of the characteristics of Hebrew poetry. Yet this opinion, however untenable, had its rise, like most errors, in the partial observation of a fact. It is perfectly true, that we often find couplets or a greater number of lines ending in Hebrew with one or more similar letters. Yet this arises altogether from the sentiment: for a plural noun will of course be frequently answered by another plural noun; so also as to the termination of verbs in the same person and tense, and the pronouns, which are always affixed to the end of the noun or verb in Hebrew. But the same similarity of termination is observable in English, and would be more so, were the structure of the two languages the same. For example:

My heart is sore pained within *me*,
 And the terrors of death are fallen upon *me*:
 Fearfulness and trembling are come upon *me*,
 And horrors have overwhelmed *me*.

Yet no one could think of adducing this as an instance of designed rhyme, or rather of that imperfect rhyme, called assonance, which, though tolerated in the Romanesque languages, is not considered legitimate in our own. It is quite obvious, that in this, and other instances, the syllabic termination is as accidental as in the Virgilian couplet,

Aspice nutantem convexo pondere mundum,
 Terrasque, tractusque maris, cælumque profundum:^a

^a Eclogue iv. 50.

or, what is more in point, in these flowing lines of Homer:—

*Ἀντὰρ ἐπεὶ ποταμοῖο λ'ἔπειν ῥόον ὠκεανοῖο
 Νηῦς, ἀπὸ δ' ἴκετο κῦμα θαλάσσης εὐροπόροιο,
 Νῆσον ἐς Λαίην, ὅθι τ' Ἥοῦς ἠριγενεῖης
 Οἰκία καὶ χοροὶ εἰσι, καὶ ἀντολαὶ Ἥελίοιο.*^a

This is sufficiently obvious. But another theory has been started, and maintained with some ingenuity, by Dr. Somers Clarke, in his work on “Hebrew Criticism and Poetry:” namely, that the metrical lines of Hebrew poetry are regulated by the number of words in each line, which generally consist of three or four. In applying his theory, it is to be remarked, he continually disturbs the parallelism, and not seldom finds, or rather creates, difficulties which can only be remedied by conjectural alterations of the text. Still, this system is founded in an observation of a fact, which will now be briefly stated.

The style of sacred poetry being of that simple kind which enunciates each proposition singly, without parentheses or involutions, and clearness and regularity of thought being its evident characteristics, it must follow that in many instances there will be but three members in a sentence. To use the language of logic, these will sometimes consist of the subject, the predicate, and the copula; in other words, of the noun which precedes the verb, of the verb itself, and of the noun or adjective which follows the verb. But as either the first or second member of the sentence often requires some epithet or adjunct, some qualifying addition, the sentence will frequently consist of four words. And as each line in Hebrew is a clause in itself, very rarely running into the line which follows, a large proportion of the verses of the

^a Odyss. M. 1.

Psalms consists of three or four words. The reader must bear in mind, that a large proportion of the copulatives, and prepositions, and the possessive pronouns, form, in Hebrew, a part of the word with which they are connected, like the enclitic “que” in Latin, and the terminations and augments both in that language and in Greek. To this general rule there are many exceptions: very numerous even in the Psalms: while in the Lamentations of Jeremiah in particular, the lines are much longer.

Let us examine the opening of the first Lamentation: the boundary of each line being unquestionably fixed for us by the acrostical arrangement: each line in each stanza beginning with the same letter of the alphabet. The number of words in the original is marked, and each word divided from the others by a line.

1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6.
How | doth she sit | solitary, | the city | that was great | with people ;

1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5.
She is become | as a widow, | that was great | among | the nations.

1. | 2. | 3. | 4.
The Princess | among the provinces, | she is become | tributary.

1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6.
With weeping | she weepeth | in the night, | and her tears | are on | her checks :

1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5.
There is none | for her | as a comforter | among all | her lovers ;

1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7.
All | her friends | are treacherous | to her ; | they are become | to her | as enemies.

1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5.
A captive | is Judah, | under affliction, | and in great | servitude.

1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6.
She | is dwelling | among the heathen ; | she doth not | find | rest :

1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5.
All | her persecutors | overtook her | between | the straits.

Who does not see that the style of thought is very different from that of the Psalms; more diffused,

more circumstantial, more strictly elegiac? Hence the different lengths of the lines. And here may be remarked the truth of what has been advanced above, namely, that their length varies according to the paucity or frequency of epithets or adjuncts.

A tolerably attentive examination, in short, of the original text will shew, that this greater length arises from the nature of the sentiment, and that in no instance is there the slightest trace of the thoughts having been either curtailed or extended by any Procrustean process, in order to be commensurate with the metre; a circumstance which must have been clearly observable, had syllabic symmetry been the rule of construction. The sentiments uniformly flow in their natural channel: no elisions or verbal licences are made, except what are equally found in prose, and these are very rare: no transposition of words is made, but what the parallelism and the laws of epinodos require. The theory of the metre of words is simply met by the fact, that regularity and precision of thought produce in the Hebrew poetry a corresponding regularity of diction.

But this regularity of diction will also produce, to a considerable extent, a regularity of rhythm. This obtains, more or less, in every language. Some instances, doubtless undesigned, occur, in which thoughts placed in parallelism, or in exact antithesis, could not be disturbed without disturbing the metre: in other words, the metre of thoughts and of syllables, the accordance that speaks to the intellect and to the ear, are coincident. Take that remarkable instance of the lines attributed to Virgil:

Sic vos non vobis nidificatis, aves:

Sic vos non vobis vellera fertis, oves;

Sic vos non vobis mellificatis, apes:

Sic vos non vobis fertis aratra, boves.

This quatrain is remarkable for being not only constructed in regular Latin metre, but for being in rhyme, and in alternate parallelism, almost perfect; the only defect in this latter respect being the transposition of the two words "fertis aratra," which the prosody required. If the poet had intended to express these thoughts in the mere soluta oratio, he must of necessity have fallen into this metrical arrangement; that is, supposing him to have recognized the laws of parallelism as the rule of construction. Of course of these laws he was unconscious: some epigrammatic arrangement, however, was intended; and it is quite credible that he perceived in this instance the nice coincidence of sentiment with metre. Now the converse of this must frequently happen in Hebrew poetry: as will be presently shewn when we come to explain the occurrence of rhythm by the fact of the extreme regularity of the language.

Meantime to give a few more instances.

Ebertus, in his treatise on Hebrew poetry^a, among other instances of accidental metrical lines in the original of the New Testament, brings forward the following:

*αἰτέετε, καὶ δοθήσεται·
ζητέετε, καὶ εὕρήσετε^b,*

which is a regular dimeter iambic couplet. The metre is accidental, but arises from the strict parallelism of the words. In our own language, instances similar, but not so close, may be found. In that great master of rhythm, Shakspeare, for instance; the following passages owe their melody chiefly to the parallelism of the sentiment:

If ever you have look'd on better days;
If ever been where bells have knoll'd to church;

^a The work already referred to: cap. ii.

^b St. Luke vii. 7.

If ever sate at any good man's feast ;
 If ever from your eye-lids wip'd a tear, &c.^a

And again in the tragedy of Richard II., which contains perhaps more variety of harmonious and lofty diction than any of his compositions :

This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
 This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
 This other Eden, demi-paradise,
 This fortress, built by nature for herself,
 Against infection, and the hand of war ;
 This happy breed of men, this little world,
 This precious stone, set in a silver sea, . . .
 This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
 This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
 Fear'd for their breed, and famous by their birth,
 Renowned for their deeds as far from home,
 For Christian service, and true chivalry,
 As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry,
 Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's son :
 This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land,
 Dear for her reputation through the world, &c.^b

Again :

With mine own tears I wash away my balm ;
 With mine own hands I give away my crown ;
 With mine own tongue deny my sacred state :
 With mine own breath release all duteous oaths :
 All pomp and majesty I do forswear :
 My manors, rents, revenues, I forego :
 My acts, decrees, and statutes, I deny :
 God pardon all oaths, that are broke to me !
 God keep all vows unbroke, are made to thee !^c

Now in most of the above instances the correspondence in rhythm arises from the words that are in antithesis or apposition being of the same construction. Thus *nidiqatis* is a compound verb cast in exactly

^a As You Like It. Act. ii. Scene 7.

^b Act ii. Scene 1.

^c Act iv. Scene 1.

the same mould as *mullificatis*: consequently they would each metrically correspond through all their cases and tenses. *Alpes* and *aves*, also, are nouns of the same construction, as are *ores* and *boves*: the only exception being in words which do not so correspond, *vellera* and *aratra*. In the quotation from St. Luke, $\alpha\iota\tau\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\tau\epsilon$ and $\zeta\eta\tau\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\tau\epsilon$ are similar in their mould, and consequently in their metrical value: $\delta\omicron\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ and $\epsilon\upsilon\rho\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ are both future, and have each a common characteristic of the future tense. In the first quotation from Shakspeare, the nouns that close each line are all monosyllables; all the verbs (also monosyllables) are accented; and the words *knoll'd* and *wip'd* occupy the same part of the sentence: and in the last instance, the verbs in the first couplet are monosyllabic, as are the nouns; in the second and third, dissyllabic, with the accent on the last syllable, as in the two next lines.

If, therefore, in our own language, and in Latin and Greek, there were but one form of declension of verbs and of nouns, and if the roots of these were uniformly monosyllables or dissyllables, if the particles and prepositions were uniformly of the same length, and occupied the same place in construction; then we might expect that any composition arranged in strict antithesis in those languages would have the effect of metre, would at least be to the highest degree rhythmical.

But in the Hebrew language, such regularity does exist to a very considerable extent. Irregularities there are, but these so few as by no means to invalidate the existence of a general rule. Their verbs have but one paradigm, their nouns but one system of affixes and suffixes: the conjunctions and prepositions for the most part consist merely of one letter (or syllabic letter) prefixed to the noun or verb. Hence it must follow, that when one present or future

tense is put in apposition with another, a plural noun with a plural, &c., there must be a considerable agreement in sound.

Nor is this all. The roots of the language consist for the most part of three letters: that is, of three consonants, with an inserted vowel between each, not expressed in writing, but supplied according to certain fixed laws. So that each verb or noun will be generally of the same length as another of a similar case or gender, tense or person.

The prosody of the words, also, is fixed by rules which have but few exceptions. It is true, the accurate pronunciation of Hebrew is to a considerable degree lost; and the positive prosodial value of syllables is perhaps irrecoverable. But we owe to the careful diligence of the Masorites in the sixth century, the creation of the system of pointing^a, which shews us what was the received pronunciation of the sacred language in their day at least. A careful examination of their system will indeed make it appear all but demonstrable, that it had, in its pronunciation, undergone many of the corruptions and debasements to which the languages of all countries are liable: and that in the use of elisions and contractions, precisely the same vulgarisms had crept in, which prevail now, as part of the settled system of pronunciation, in English, French, modern Greek, and in all probability the more popular dialects of the Arabic. Still enough remains to shew that a principle of pronunciation was established, so regular as to require but comparatively seldom the written insertion of the vowels in the middle of words. In fact, it is quite possible to attain to a tolerably correct pronunciation of the Hebrew verbs at least, and of all the inflections of the nouns, without the use of the points, and by a

^a See a note on Masoretic pointing, at the end of this Dissertation.

simple attention to a few rules. Thus the word *Zamar*, to *prune*, is expressed in Hebrew writing by the three radical letters, ZMR; the letters are supplied, as the tense or case demands, which (as in English) the context will clearly shew. Thus the letters supplied for the third person singular of the perfect tense are a longer and a shorter A: as ZÂMAR, *he pruned*; the participle inserts o and e, as ZOMER, *pruning*; and the vowels are changed in those instances where there are letters affixed or suffixed, as NIZ'MAR, *it was pruned*; EZ'MOR, *I will prune*. The same vocalization generally prevails through most verbs: and similar changes take place in the inflection of nouns.

Hence it is, that Hebrew poetry must be very rhythmical; and were its true pronunciation recovered, and rescued from those barbarisms, which the Masorites did not invent, but inherited (at an age when the nation had sunk into great degradation), there can be little doubt, that its verses would have a more than Pindaric flow, and would gratify the ear even more than the most harmonious measures of England, Italy, or Spain; giving all and more than the variety sought by the stanza of Spenser, by Milton in his *Lycidas*, and in his *Hymn on the Nativity*, and by that greatest and most religious^a poet of his day, Southey, in his *Thalaba* and *Kehama*.

It was no doubt the perception of this obvious rhythm which induced Bishop Hare, a scholar of no

^a The author must express his feeling on this subject without qualification: though it is one not commonly entertained. It is with real wonder that he considers how deeply interesting this great poet has contrived to make the two poems now mentioned, founded as they are upon such wild and uncouth fables. However his judgment may be liable to imputation in the choice of his subjects, his poetical strength is only the more forcibly shewn, in the power with which he can command the affections, and inculcate lessons of the deepest moral and religious weight.

ordinary ingenuity and learning, to propose his metrical system. This hypothesis, however, was so baseless as easily to be overturned by Bishop Lowth^a, who clearly shewed that another system diametrically opposite, and equally untenable, could easily be proved upon grounds equally plausible. A metrical system has likewise been proposed by a learned and elegant Dutch writer, E. J. Greve^b; but on grounds as unsubstantial. Before acceding to this theory, the whole question must be granted, upon which all depends, namely, the actual quantity of Hebrew syllables, of which we are totally ignorant. And both writers interfere with the parallelism (Greve indeed to a less degree than Bishop Hare); and when this is once admitted, no bounds can be set to any system of metre, so flexible will language be found, when such liberty is once conceded.

I should not, however, have noticed these obsolete and exploded doctrines, were it not to bring into prominence the fact, that though there is no metre, rhythm does actually, and from the very nature of the case, exist in Hebrew poetry: and thus the obscure expressions of ancient authors may be accounted for. The expression of Josephus, for example, that there were hexameters in Hebrew poetry may be explained by the fact that in very many instances there are distichs consisting each of six words, and each word of two syllables, which would allow a foot for each word. But we must remember that the Jewish language was much corrupted in Josephus's time:

^a The shorter confutation of Bishop Lowth is generally known. His longer confutation, addressed to Dr. Edwards, is an essay full of wit, ability, and sound reasoning.

^b *Traetatus de Metris Hebraicis, præsertim Jobæis.* Of the theological character of this work, and of his *Essay on Job*, I am unable to speak, not having read either through. But I must here repair an omission, by remarking that this writer has observed upon the recurrence of *Selah*, in Psalm xxxii. as terminating each stanza.

the vernacular speech of his nation had a considerable Chaldaic or Syriac infusion; and the pronounciation of the ancient sacred poetry was as much lost to them, as that of Chaucer is to us: and probably the same mistaken theories were suggested as to its real measures, as obtained among us till Mr. Tyrwhitt restored the true theory of reading the nervous lines of that father of the English poetry.

In the following section this subject will be pursued, in shewing the probable influence of the Hebrew poetry upon that of the ancient Greeks and Romans.

§ 2. THE ANALOGY BETWEEN SACRED AND SECULAR METRE.

It is the remark of that just and elegant, though now neglected critic, Addison, that “if any one would judge of the beauties of poetry that are to be met with in the divine writings, and examine how kindly the Hebrew manners of speech mix and incorporate with the English language; after having read the Book of Psalms, let him read a literal translation of Horace or Pindar. He will find in these two last such an absurdity and confusion of style, with such a comparative poverty of imagination, as will make him very sensible of what I have been here advancing.”^a

This sentence is worthy of attention on many grounds. First, as to the English version of the Psalms, as well as of the other poetical books of Scripture. It must be evident to every one gifted with a tolerable ear, how not only the sentiments, but the rhythm itself of the original is transfused into our version. We feel that we are reciting

^a Spectator, vol. vi. No. 405.

measured prose, which is all but metrical. Take for an example: —

Lord, how are they increased that trouble me :
 Many are they that rise against me :
 Many are there be that say of my soul,
 There is no help for him in his God.

Again, the 76th Psalm, which above all, perhaps, is best adapted for chanting: I do not mean that monotonous jerking, which some call chanting, but that deliberate flow, which the Church of England has preserved in her best choirs.

In Jewry is God known :
 His Name is great in Israel :
 At Salem is his tabernacle :
 And his dwelling in Sion :
 Then brake he the arrows of the bow :
 The shield, the sword, and the battle.

And the 148th.

O praise the Lord of heaven :
 Praise him in the height :
 Praise all ye angels of his :
 Praise him, all his host.
 Praise him, sun and moon ;
 Praise him, all ye stars and light.

Connected with these observations, a remark of Bishop Jebb naturally suggests itself. “I would be understood merely to assert, that sound, and words in subordination to sound, do not in Hebrew, as in classical poetry, enter into the essence of the thing: but it is happily undeniable, that the words of the poetical scriptures are exquisitely fitted to convey the sense; and it is highly probable, that, in the lifetime of the language, the sounds were sufficiently harmonious: when I say sufficiently harmonious, I mean so harmonious, as to render the poetry grateful to the

ear in recitation, and suitable to musical accompaniment: for which purposes, the cadence of well modulated prose would fully answer; a fact, which will not be controverted by any person with a moderately good ear, that has ever heard a chapter of Isaiah skilfully read from our authorized translation; that has ever listened to one of Kent's anthems well performed, or to a song from the Messiah of Handel." ^a

In illustration of the Bishop's remark, let any one take the whole 60th chapter of Isaiah, and he must perceive what exquisite melody it contains. It would be impossible, one would suppose, for any scholar or divine, gifted with common feeling, to read this chapter with what Mr. Southey^b calls a *prose mouth*; and yet such is the perverse spirit of our generation, that an opinion very generally obtains, that it is wrong to read Scripture in other than a dull and monotonous, and therefore hardly intelligible tone: in total despite of common sense or real piety. How much more did Handel, to whom the Bishop justly refers, contribute to the cause of edification, when he set to such an accurate and expressive accompaniment those rhythmical words which open that glorious prophecy; the last distich especially:—

And the Gentiles shall come to thy light,
And kings to the brightness of thy rising.

^a Sacred Literature, pp. 20, 21. Handel's songs are so universally rhythmical, that it would be needless to particularise any. But in one passage, he has accurately illustrated the alternation of the sacred style: viz. "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead: for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." As to Kent the Bishop's remark is accurate: for though a plagiarist, and a composer of very secondary character, his attention to rhythm is frequently very happy. The anthem of Michael Wise, "The ways of Sion do mourn," is admirable in this and all other respects, as is that of Jeremiah Clark, "I will love thee, O Lord:" especially in the verse, "The sorrows of death," &c.

^b Preface to Thalaba.

Or that most able and gifted musician, Dr. Boyce, in his adaptation of that sublime and musical passage in Job (xxviii. 12—28),

Where shall wisdom be found?
And where is the place of understanding?

Especially in these lines:

For he looketh to the ends of the earth,
And seeth under the whole heaven,
To make the weight for the winds,
And he weigheth the waters by measure:
When he made a decree for the rain,
And a way for the lightning of the thunder,
Then did he see it and declare it,
He prepared it, yea, and searched it out;
And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the
 Lord, that is wisdom,
And to depart from evil is understanding.

As to that part of Addison's remark, which contrasts a literal translation of Horace and Pindar with one of the Scriptures, it is perfectly true, that all rhythm is out of the question in such a case. But the mention of Pindar brings us to another topic, namely, the connection and resemblance between the ancient poetry of Greece and that of the Hebrews.

In Pindar, perhaps, of all other lyric writers, the flow of the verse is more unlike that of Hebrew poetry than any other. So far from the sentence being continuous with the lines, it is a stated characteristic of his poetry to break the sense by continual cæsuras, and to continue the sentence not only through consecutive lines, but stanzas. This, indeed, is more or less the manner of all ancient lyric poets, but far less of Alcaeus and Simonides, and even of Æschylus, than of Pindar. In fact, it would require a very peculiar education, for an English ear to appreciate fully or even tolerably the rhythm of his verses. It

is needless, therefore, to add, that his style is not antithetical; it is not constructed according to the rules of Hebrew parallelism.

And yet in this great poet, occasional flashes of a more divine sentiment, expressions strongly scriptural, occur, which have an effect almost electrical, so suddenly are they interposed amongst long mythological or heroic narrations. In one of these instances, at least, if I am not much mistaken, when he speaks of the future happiness of the blessed, and the “sun that shines by night and by day,” (*thy sun that shall no more go down*, as Isaiah speaks,) his strain has something of an almost scriptural antithesis, and we recognise some difference in the fulness of the rhythm and completeness of the periods.

ἴσον δὲ νύκτεσσιν αἰεὶ,
 ἴσα δ' ἐν ἡμέραις, ἄλι-
 ον ἔχοντες, ἀποπέστερον
 ἔσθλοὶ νέμονται βίο-
 τον, οὐ χθόνα ταμίσσον-
 τες ἄλκῃ χερῶν,
 οὐδὲ πόντιον ὕδωρ,
 κεινὰν παρὰ διαίταν· ἄλ-
 λὰ παρὰ μὲν τιμίους
 θεῶν, οὔτινες ἔχαι-
 ρον εὐορκίαις,
 ἄδακρυν νέμονται
 αἰῶνα· τοὶ δ' ἀπροσόρα-
 τον ὀκχέοντι πόνον.^a

Alike by night, for ever,
 Alike by day, enlighten'd by the sun,
 A life unknown to pain the righteous live:
 They with no labouring hands disturb the earth,
 Nor waters of the sea,
 Seeking to gain a meagre sustenance:
 But high among the honour'd of the Gods,

^a Olymp. B. Strophe iv.

All who rejoice in truth and equity,
 Shall pass a tearless age.
 But with the wicked shall be frightful pain.^a

In the passage immediately following, the expressions, ἀπὸ πάμπαν ἀδίκων ἔχρειν ψυχὰν, “to keep the soul wholly from injustice,” and διὸς ὁδόν, “the way of God,” are expressions strikingly scriptural, as is the concluding simile of this ode :

Ἐπεὶ ψάμμος ἀριθμὸν περιπέφευγεν

Like as the sand, which never may be told.

But a more remarkable coincidence of rhythm with parallelism occurs in the *Pollio* of Virgil: that most sublime eclogue, the masterpiece of his works, the resemblance of which to Scripture, one of the common-places of criticism, has been fully brought out by Pope, in his poem of the *Messiah*. It cannot be doubted that the poet derived it directly or indirectly from the prophecies of *Isaiah*. Let the versification of this be compared with any other of his eclogues, and a marked difference will be seen in this respect; that at its commencement it divides itself into stanzas; and that the lines of the first two contain each a complete sense, and are in parallelism.

1.

Sicelides Musæ, paulo majora canamus:
 Non omnes arbusta juvant, humilesque myricæ;
 Si canimus sylvas, sylvæ sint consule dignæ.

2.

Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas:
 Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo:

^a The reader, it is hoped, will excuse the rudeness of this and other translations offered in these pages; since their intention is merely to give the sense as literally as is consistent with some attempt at rhythm or metre. The latter is difficult to preserve, when proper names occur, as in the subsequent song of *Callistratus*.

Jam redit et virgo ; redeunt Saturnia regna :
 Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto.

3.

Tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum
 Desinet, ac toto surget gens aurea mundo :
 Casta, fave, Lucina ; tuus jam regnat Apollo.

The sequel contains, in its style (unquestionably in its ideas), many resemblances to the lyrics of Scripture : as in the frequent occurrence of the Anaphora, “Teque adeo decus, — Te duce :” “Ipsæ lacte domum ; — ipsa tibi blandi :” — “occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni occidet,” &c.

It is, indeed, I believe, impossible to read this most mellifluous and sublime poem without feeling persuaded that Virgil unconsciously proclaimed the birth of the Messiah.

To trace the connection of sacred and secular poetry, with any exactness, would be impossible, so wanting is any direct external evidence. We must have recourse to the internal guidance furnished by each : and even these afford but an uncertain light.

The pastoral poetry of Theocritus, however, adopted, and immeasurably improved, by Virgil, bears all the marks of an oriental origin, as is generally admitted. The alternæ *Camœnæ*, the alternate couplets sung by two shepherds, and continually in exact parallelism, were without question derived from an oriental, and ultimately from a sacred source. And we have in one at least of the popular songs of Greece, attributed to Callistratus, vestiges of the same ancient style, preserved, we may believe, through many ages. This song (interesting from its antiquity, but detestable, as the expression of democratic wickedness) has been quoted by Bishop Lowth in his first prolection ; but I make no apology for giving it

now at length, as illustrating the subject before us. The parallelism is tolerably exact; the anaphoras are regular, and we have here (as indeed in Virgil's *Pollio* also) instances of the assonance, which is so frequently found in oriental poetry.

Ἐν μύρτου κλαδί τὸ ξίφος φορήσω,
 Ὡσπερ Ἄρμόδιος κ' Ἀριστογείτων,
 Ὅτε τὸν τύραννον κτανέτην,
 Ἴσονόμους τ' Ἀθήνας ἐποιησίτην.

Φίλταθ' Ἀρμόδι', οὔτι που τέθηκας,
 Νήσοις δ' ἐν μακάρων σέ φασι εἶναι,
 Ἴνα περ ποδώκης Ἀχιλεὺς,
 Τυδείδην τέ φασι Διομήδεα.

Ἐν μύρτου κλαδί τὸ ξίφος φορήσω,
 Ὡσπερ Ἄρμόδιος κ' Ἀριστογείτων,
 Ὅτ' Ἀθηναίης ἐν θυσίαις
 Ἄνδρα τύραννον Ἴππαρχον ἐκαινέτην.

Ἀεὶ σφῶν κλέος ἔσσεται κατ' αἶαν,
 Φίλταθ' Ἀρμόδιε κ' Ἀριστόγειτον,
 Ὅτε τὸν τύραννον κτάνετον,
 Ἴσονόμους τ' Ἀθήνας ἐποιήσατον.

In wreaths of myrtle I my sword will carry,
 As did Harmodius and Aristogeyton,
 When they erewhile the tyrant slew,
 And equal laws to Athens did renew.

Belov'd Harmodius, no, thou art not dead;
 They say, in islands of the blest art thou,
 Where dwells Achilles, swift of foot,
 And Argive Diomed, as fame doth tell.

In wreaths of myrtle I my sword will carry,
 As did Harmodius and Aristogeyton,
 When at the Athenian sacrifice
 Tyrant Hipparchus by their hands was slain.

Throughout the land your fame shall live for ever,
 Belov'd Harmodius and Aristogeyton,

For ye erewhile the tyrant slew,
And equal laws to Athens did renew.^a

It may be said, that the same characteristics prevail, more or less, in the ballad poetry of Europe. This is freely granted, and, indeed, makes for the theory we are about to advance, that all popular poetry is derived ultimately from a sacred source.

For let us consider, that a common feature of the lyric poetry of all nations is the frequent recurrence of a certain artificial arrangement, modified in various ways. Now, if it be allowed, as it evidently must, that poetry was foremost among those arts communicated by God to man, which Holy Scripture includes under the comprehensive name of wisdom; if it holds a rank inferior only to alphabetic writing, then it must be naturally assumed, that poetry, in its original^b, that is, in its sacred use, exhibited this characteristic recurrence, this artificial arrangement in the purest and most intellectual form. That it did appear in such a form the experimental examination of Scripture plainly shows. But, in proportion as men receded from the knowledge of the true God, in the same proportion their intellect became sophisticated and debased. The simple, and true, and logical language of sacred poetry was gradually exchanged for expressions more laboured and fanciful; epithets were accumulated; the wayward imagination deserted the exactness of true spiritual thought; and in the process of time a totally new style arose, beautiful indeed in itself, but altogether different in feature from the more beautiful original. The quick ears of the Greeks,

^a In the above attempt at a literal translation, the rhyming termination of the first and last stanzas is preserved.

^b If it be objected, that Lamech's speech to his wives (Gen. iv. 23, 24.) is the earliest recorded specimen of poetry, we must recollect, that the equally poetical prophecy of his contemporary, Enoch, is preserved by St. Jude.

whom we take as the foremost of the heathen nations, readily recognised the rhythm of the earlier poetry; but their fastidious nicety became unsatisfied, unless that organ of sense was indulged by the exact periodical correspondence of line with line, of stanza with stanza. They had abandoned equability of thought, and substituted equability of sound. And thus it fared, as it has with every divine art that has been secularised. The spiritual, the ethereal part, originally constituting its essence, was sacrificed to that which is comparatively sensual and mechanical; and the casket was adorned, to the disparagement of the treasure which it contained. The picture was compressed or expanded, in order to suit the elaborate and well proportioned frame.

Traces of this corruption are to be found in every nation. The most obvious and well known form of mechanical symmetry is the correspondence of line with line, in syllabic metre. But it must be remembered that this is not an universal form. The Welsh bards, in their triads, give indications of an ancient metre and stanzas of sentiment, like that of the Hebrews. The ^a principle of the Anglo Saxon metre remains yet to be discovered, though, probably, it was merely rhythmical. But in the Scandinavian poetry, metre was probably a later and a borrowed adjunct; the mechanical recurrence there shows itself in alliteration. The rhyming terminations form another obvious exemplification of the same principle. The burthen of the song is another; a leading feature in the beautiful and most national poetry of Scotland, though even there gradually debased into an intrusive incumbrance, till it is found in its lowest form in the unmeaning choruses

^a See Turner's History of the Anglo-Saxons, book ix., chapter 1., in which he states the opinion of the venerable Bede that it was rhythmical. But he probably contrasts *rhythm* with *quantity*. Thus English and all modern verse might be called rhythm.

of ballads. In a more refined and enlarged shape it exists in the regular metrical correspondence of the stanza, irregular when taken singly, but symmetrical when connected with others; and above all in the strophes and antistrophes of the lyric poets of Greece.

Now, in every one of these instances there has been a degeneration from the sacred archetype. For secular verse (considered merely as verse, not as poetry, properly so called) may be perfect, if only the outward structure be preserved, let the sentiments be what they may. Whereas, though similar artifices undoubtedly do occur in the Sacred writings, they are mere accidental and occasional accessions: the sentiment is perfect without them; and the essential parts of the poetry of the Hebrews can be translated, without any detriment, into the language of every civilized^a nation under heaven.

But a closer illustration of this theory is afforded in a phenomenon, which doubtless the classical reader has anticipated, the Greek Choral Ode. Compare with these finished productions of ancient art some of the more obviously regular Psalms, the 66th, for instance, or the 107th, and the analogy must be evident. If we substitute the metre of thought for the metre of sound, there is an analogous correspondence between stanza and stanza. We may call the diapsalma of the Hebrews a strophe, or the strophe of the Greeks a diapsalma, and the same idea of responsive resemblance will be conveyed to the mind. There is, however, this great superiority on the part of the Hebrews, arising from the intellectual character of their metre;

^a The qualification of *civilized* is made, since it can hardly be understood how monosyllabic and uninflected languages can translate the Scriptures otherwise than paraphrastically. The Chinese language does not deserve to be called civilized. With all its spurious refinements, and its gross plagiarism of civilized arts, a more essentially barbarous nation does not exist. Its language is the mere prattle of infants.

namely, that whereas the Greek antistrophe corresponds accurately in syllabic quantity with the strophe, the recurring stanza is not merely a response, but a moral amplification.

The dithyrambs of Pindar are altogether lost. But since the character of these was more peculiarly sacred, as dedicated to Bacchus, we might naturally expect to find in them something more of an archaic character, than in his more factitious odes which still remain. Yet may we not collect from the words of Horace,

Seu per audaces nova dithyrambos
Verba devolvit, numerisque fertur
Lege solutis^a,

that they were more purely rhythmical, and less metrical than his other odes, which cannot be said to be altogether unrestrained by law: since, inexplicable as may be the system of each strophe, taken by itself, it is bound by the law of correspondence to its antistrophe?

However this may be, let us proceed to the Ode of ancient Tragedy. This was at first a hymn, sung in honour of that mysterious deity, Bacchus, whose rites and history afford many distorted indications of the worship of the true God: and was celebrated by a chorus, accompanied with instrumental music, in that solemn and measured movement, of which the word *dance* gives but a false idea. How early this was introduced into Greece cannot now be ascertained. But when we consider all its circumstances, the religious rites, the music, the dance, the alternate strophes of its poetry, all seem to point to the Holy Land. A reference which is confirmed by the fact universally admitted, that letters were first brought to Greece through Phœnicia, and doubtless ultimately from the

^a Lib. iv. Od. 2.

people of Israel. The first rude attempts of tragedy, springing at a comparatively late period from this ancient Choral Ode, are well known. It consisted at first of a simple dialogue between the interlocutor and the chorus; this dialogue forming a mere interlude. The dialogue, heretofore used in an unconnected and inartificial way, was made, by Thespis, subservient to a story or plot, and connected with the chorus. The archetype of this most simple form of the drama is found in sacred composition: the alternation of monologue and chorus being evident, as Bishops Lowth and Horsley have shown, in the Psalms, in Isaiah, and the Song of Solomon.^a

The further we ascend into antiquity, the closer must the resemblance to the sacred original be naturally expected. And this proves, on examination, to be the case. For in the tragedies of Æschylus, the father of the regular drama, a character extremely Hebraic, as to the structure of his choruses, is often to be found. The songs of the chorus are more strictly antiphonal. They alternate more regularly, at more stated intervals, with the dialogue, of which there is an accurate example in the scene between Eteocles and the messenger who describes the hostile army, in the Seven against Thebes: though this is far from a solitary instance. They abound more in repetitions of the same strain, after the manner of the more antiphonal Psalms. Take, for example, the epistrophe in the Eumenides, ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ τριβόμενον, κ.τ.λ. (line 324.^b), repeated in the antistrophe: and two strophes repeated throughout, ἰὸ θεοὶ νεώτεροι, (775.) and ἐμὲ παλαιῶν τ' ἄδεις. (835.) And the third

^a Prael. xxx., where he instances Psalm xxiv. and cxxi., and Isaiah lxiii. Bishop Horsley instances many Psalms: but I must confess some of his arrangements appear forced.

^b The references are to Schütz's edition.

strophe and antistrophe of the last ode (994. and 1012.) begin alike with *χαίρειτε χαίρειτε*. Again in the Persians, this triplet of the chorus, addressing the ghost of Darius :

*σέβομαι μὲν προσιδέσθαι,
σέβομαι δ' ἀντία λέξαι
σέθεν, ἀρχαίῳ περὶ τάρβει.* (691.)

I dread to look on thee,
I dread to speak to thee,
From long accustom'd awe.

To which their next address is an exact response ; not without a kind of rhyme like the former.

*δέομαι μὲν χαρίσασθαι,
δέομαι δ' ἀντία φᾶσθαι,
λέξας δύσλεκτα φίλοισιν.*

I fear thee to obey,
I fear the truth to say,
Telling a tale of woe.

The lamentation of Antigone and Ismene over their slain brothers, in the Seven against Thebes, is strictly responsorial in sentiment ; and the ode immediately preceding is very remarkable for its archaic form ; and the following lines are surely most scriptural :

*δυσδαίμων σφὶν ἅ τεκούσα
πρὸ πιασῶν γυναικῶν,
ὅπόσαι τεκνογόνοι κέκληνται.* (929.)

“ Unhappy is she who bore them, above all women, as many as are called mothers.”

But there is one tragedy of Æschylus, which appears far more archaic in its composition than the others : that most beautiful fable of The Suppliants. Though far from desiring to call in question those

profound arguments used by Mr. Keble^a, whence the priority of Prometheus to the other dramas may be inferred, still I cannot but regard *The Suppliants*, even though composed at a later period, as the best exhibition of the simplicity and religion of infant tragedy. As a drama, it is the most inartificial of all: there is hardly any plot or action. The members of the chorus form the principal personages, and their songs the chief matter of the drama, the dialogues being little better than interludes. For though the catastrophe is brought about by the interlocutors, yet the meagre action of the drama is evidently subservient to the copious choral hymns. Then, the morality is most pure: filial innocence, paternal affection, the dignified simplicity of royal hospitality, are exhibited with a power of beautiful expression, altogether true to nature; and the religious sentiments are so noble, so full of faith, and of a right apprehension of the Divine majesty and justice, as clearly to point out the source whence they are derived. Thus the Gods, the parents of mankind, are invoked to hear, as those *who behold the thing that is just*:

ἀλλὰ θεοὶ οἱ γενέται,
κλύετ' εὖ τὸ δίκαιον ἰδόντες. . . (80.)

They are represented as *hating pride*:

ὑβριν δ' ἐποίμῳ στυγούντες . . (84.)

Love is called the Saviour, and the keeper of the house of holy men:

καὶ Ζεὺς σωτήρ τρίτος οἰκοφύλαξ
ὑσίων ἀνδρῶν . . . (205.)

He is represented as beholding men from his lofty tower, and from thence punishing that violence of

^a Praelectiones, xviii. xix.

wicked men, which no one can practise unavenged by the Deity: the Divine Intelligence is seated above on his holy seat, and thence pursues them with vengeance.

*ἰάπτει δ' ἀπιδὼν
ἀφ' ὑψιπύργων πανόλεις
βροτοῖς, βίαν
δ' οὐτίς ἐξοπλίζει
τὰν ἄποινον δαιμονίων.
ἦμενον ἄνω φρόνημα πως
αὐτόθεν ἐξέπραξεν ἔμπας
ἐδράνων ἐφ' ἀγιῶν . . . (101.)*

God is invoked as King of kings, most blessed of the blessed, a Power most perfect of the perfect: as He who hateth pride, and will cast iniquity into the purple lake.

*ἄναξ ἀνάκτων, μακάρων
μακίρτατε, καὶ τελέων
τελειότατον κράτος, ὄλ-
βιε Ζεῦ, πείθου τε καὶ γενέσθω·
ἄλευσον ἀνδρῶν ὕβριν εὔ στυγίσας,
λίμνα δ' ἔμβαλε πορφυροειδεῖ
τὰν μελανόζυγ' ἄταν . . . (540.)*

Who does not at once recognise some of the most characteristic sentiments and imagery of the Psalms? And is there not a strong presumption, to say the least, that these odes, so retentive of the original end of tragedy, owe their sublimity and religious force to the sources of inspiration?

It is to be further remarked, that these sentiments and images are most frequent in the first choral ode, with which the drama opens; and that the 6th, 7th, and 8th strophes are responded to, at the termination of each, by their respective antistrophes, in exactly the same words, the effect of which is singularly beautiful. The choral ode, which prays for blessings upon the Argive land, in gratitude for benefits conferred, is

full of the most graceful and natural imagery, and strongly reminds us of those passages of Isaiah which foretel the peaceful reign of the Messiah, and of the 67th and 65th Psalms.

*μηδέ τις ἀνδροκμῆς
λοιγὸς ἐπελθέτω,
τάνδε πόλιν δαίξω
ἄχορος, ἀκίθαρις . . . (692.)*

*καρποτελεῖν δέ τοι
Ζεὺς ἐπικραϊνέτω
φέρματι γῆν πανώρω . . κ. τ. λ. (702.)*

I must leave it to intelligent scholars to fill up for themselves the outline here sketched out, in which an attempt has been made to show the heavenly source of the most magnificent efforts of lyric poetry among the ancients. Such an enquiry will surely not be considered as altogether out of place. Its moral uses are many and obvious. It will tend to show, how the highest and most intellectual arts, communicated that they might advance the cause of virtue and religion, have, when secularised, been so gradually debased, as in the end to be the servants of immorality, or at least, of mere intellectual dissipation. Thus it has fared with dramatic music, which in its present most degraded form, the opera, though used in Christian countries, sinks far beneath the level even of the Pagan. Thus with the drama, in the abominable buffooneries of Aristophanes^a, in the English plays of Dryden, and others, far less moral than those of the three great authors

^a Why is this blasphemer of all that is sacred, this corrupter of morals, so much favoured at our universities? The frequent beauty of his poetry makes his abominations but the more dangerous. He was fitted to the democratic insolence of the Athenian mob. And yet we find that noble drama of Æschylus, just noticed, almost totally neglected, on the miserable ground of the obscurity and mutilation of some passages. Its general scope and argument is clear enough; much more clear than the opening Pythic ode of Pindar, the obscurity of which Heyne freely acknowledges.

of antiquity, who uniformly upheld the tenets of religion, according to the imperfect knowledge permitted to them. Our own Shakspeare, indeed, disfigured as his writings frequently are, by the contamination of his age and of his profession, which even his essentially pure and religious spirit could not escape, forms a noble contrast to his successors. But even when we read the most religious poetry of uninspired authors, whether ancient or modern, the whole circle of critical research will prove the immeasurable superiority of their great archetype. Its very structure and mechanism is composed of deeply intellectual and moral elements; and the whole economy of sacred verse reminds us of Him who framed the architecture of the universe.

The following Dissertation will pursue a cognate subject, in remarking on some of the peculiarities observable in the poetical imagery of the Psalms, and with a like intention, that of illustrating their moral and spiritual meaning.

NOTE ON DISSERTATION IV. § 1. Page 329.

The systems of supplying the vocal sounds in Hebrew, recommended by Masclef, Parkhurst, and others, who altogether reject the points, are opposed to the whole analogy of Oriental pronunciation, and therefore deserve no regard, as approximations to the ancient method, now irrecoverably lost. Still these methods may be practically sufficient for those who merely desire to read Hebrew, and have no occasion to speak it. A middle course may be suggested between the utter rejection of the points, *as guides*, and the scrupulous adherence to the Masoretic system, as an integral part of the written language. That system is most valuable and interesting, as showing what was the actual mode of pronunciation *by the inventors of the system*, and what was their interpretation of certain words, which, having a latitude of meaning in their unpointed state, could be explained by the context only, or by the authority of some one versed in the language. The points are, doubtless, a valuable help to those who have occasion to speak the language so as to be understood by modern Jews. But more than this I cannot concede to these laborious and useful critics. The points, which supply many of the vowels (not all, as the Masoretic grammarians erroneously teach), are no part of the Sacred Text; and it is to be wished that the printed Bible was, like Kennicott's, and like the Synagogue rolls, generally freed from such disfiguring incumbrances, and that pointed Bibles were reserved, like commentaries, for reference. The constant use of a pointed text insensibly leads the reader to consider the points as integral parts of God's written word, and prejudices him in favour of Masoretic interpretation, as if that were fixed and unquestionable. Whereas their interpretation (the value of which has been much exaggerated) has in reality no more intrinsic weight than those afforded by the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate versions, by which it is often contradicted.

1. It has been completely settled by Cappellus, Bishop Walton, and others, that the points are a comparatively modern invention. But the expediency for their use has been magnified far beyond the truth. The alleged obscurity in which their absence would involve the text, from so many unpointed words having various meanings, is really not so great as that which obtains in English, where it is well known that the precise meaning (whether it be the

tense, or number, or else the radical sense of the word) must often be determined, as it is in fact clearly determined, by the context. Even in the more exact languages of Greece and Rome this often happens. The pronunciation of words, spelt in the same way, varies much according to their different senses; yet this variation has never suggested the expediency of disfiguring the pages of our books by the additions of such phonetic marks as are used in Walker's pronouncing dictionary.

But, allowing the usefulness and convenience of the Masoretic pointing, (which, as corks to young swimmers, I am far from denying,) even here the necessity for permanently adopting it in the text is very much over-rated. As stated in the section to which this note refers, the system of pronunciation in Hebrew is even now, in its debased state, very regular, and the method of supplying the vowels in most of the formatives and inflections, may be reduced to a settled and intelligible system. This has been shown by Dr. Grey, in his "New and Easy Method of Learning Hebrew without Points" (1737), in which he supplies the Masoretic vocalization, omitting some of its redundancies. The grammar is not so full or scientific as it might easily be made; and the author was hallucinated by the metrical system of Bishop Hare. Still, from his manual may be collected some principles of vocalization, such as the change of vowel in dissyllabic words when these receive the augment; when, according to the usage of most languages, the accent, that is, the long vowel, is removed from the first syllable of the word to the penultimate. Many other observations of this kind, based upon the ordinary laws of pronunciation, are readily suggested. The writer of this note, however, can speak from experience, of the comparative easiness of Dr. Grey's method; nor has he felt the want of the points (after the theory had once been mastered), as an index either to the interpretation or the pronunciation.

In fact, most of the languages, called Shemitic (the Ethiopic being a remarkable exception), do actually leave a considerable part of their vocalization unwritten. The pointing of Syriac and Arabic is far from universal, and the age of its adoption is not primitive. The Rabbinical Hebrew also is unpointed, but not on that account difficult to read. Now, since the vocalization proceeded, in Hebrew, on a regular system, (more regular, we may believe, when the language was in its purity,) it is perfectly consistent with the divine economy of means, that a large proportion of the vowels should not be expressed, but systematically understood.

If, however, the points are to be retained as a part of grammatical teaching, the cause of divine truth at least requires that the grammar should be purged of those impertinencies with which the

received system abounds. Surely it is most inconsistent with a due respect for the sacred language to suppose, that certain letters are often redundant, and perfectly useless in pronunciation, or as the grammarians call it, quiescent. Thus, \aleph is represented to be no letter whatever, if a letter means the representation of a sound. Whereas it really is the mark of a variable vowel (this variable-ness being, in all probability, a corruption), or to speak more correctly, the mark of an unspirated vocalization. To call it the *spiritus lenis*, is the same thing as saying that it has no sound whatever. But in fact we find, that in many languages, the letter \aleph is, of all others, the most liable to change and attenuation. Thus, in the Attic dialect of Greek, the broad λ was softened into η : the modern English gives it the old sound of ϵ , in instances where the vulgar Irish dialect (the representative of the Elizabethan pronunciation), and the Lowland Scottish language, retain the broader sound. The same fluctuation is observable in Arabic. And when λ forms part of a diphthong, we find it frequently modified by ι or υ , as in most European languages. Is it not evident that \aleph , to which the sound of a long o is frequently given, is, in fact, a diphthong, the natural sound of \aleph being υ , and that when the sound o is not expressed, but understood, (as in the active participle, or *Benoni*.) there is an elision of the υ in writing? Again, \aleph and \aleph are often represented as quiescent, when it is palpable that these letters, and not the points accompanying them, express the sound of the long u and i . No points, in fact, are required in these cases. The \aleph and \aleph have powers precisely the same as the u and i in Latin. Sometimes they are consonants or semiconsonants; in which case they are followed, according to Oriental usage, by a vowel supplied in pronunciation (the vowel required by the analogy of the language); at other times, they are clearly vowels. Sometimes they are parts of diphthongs, the former letter of the diphthong being understood; as in the case of the plural termination, \aleph *in regimine*, which is pronounced \acute{e} ; plainly the corruption of *ai* or *ci*. The letter \aleph is always the aspirated vowel; and the Masorites are not to be listened to, who would make it quiescent in several cases. It is not to be believed that the language used by God's prophets, and written by the finger of God himself, should so abound at once with redundancies and defects.

The points are multiplied to an unnecessary degree, and often used where they are not pronounced, the *sheva* or short ϵ , for example. But in this instance, as in many others, we see traces of the ordinary corruption of language. This *sheva* marks an ancient vowel sound, now dropped. Such is the final ϵ of the French, and of old English, formerly pronounced at the end of words; still re-

tained in solemn French poetry, and certainly pronounced in the language of Chaucer, though now quiescent. We may see like marks in the quiescence of the *v* in the final syllable *v*, which resembles the modern French elisions of *s, ent, &c.*, still written, but pronounced in the seventeenth century. Thus also the debasement of the language, in substituting so often a short *i* for *a* in the pronunciation of *æ*, a corruption observable in the vulgar provincialisms of English, and of which there are instances in Arabic, as in *Ibrahim* for *Abraham*. Instances might be multiplied: but this note has already been too prolix. Suffice it to observe, that we might just as reasonably affirm that the recitation of Chaucer's poetry was to be regulated by the modern unharmonious system of pronunciation, now naturalised, with all its elisions, abbreviations, and change of accents, or that the colloquial corruptions of *call'd, bless'd, &c.* were to be used in reading the Scriptures or the Liturgy, as maintain that the Masoretic method gives the pure sound, and exhibits the real rhythmical capabilities, of the Hebrew language.

THE
BOOK OF PSALMS.



DISSERTATION V.

DISSERTATION V.

ON THE POETICAL IMAGERY OF THE PSALMS.

§ I. THE TWO LEADING PRINCIPLES OF SACRED IMAGERY.

THE object of the preceding essay has been to show the strictly intellectual and moral nature of sacred *metre*, as it may be justly called. When the external mechanism of Hebrew poetry, and the channels of its ideas, consist of materials so intrinsically valuable, what must not those thoughts be, for whose reception they were constructed? It will therefore be the endeavour of the following pages to show the moral superiority of the sacred over secular compositions, in a few particulars respecting the use of imagery in the Psalms; thus treating poetry as distinguished from its vehicle, verse.

But first, it is to be observed, that an analogy subsists between secular and sacred compositions, in this respect, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to draw a distinct line between mere verse, and poetry properly so called. Poetry, a word which has never yet been accurately defined, is known to be really and essentially such, when verse is made the vehicle of exalted thought and diction, and of imagery and sentiments which are far removed from every-day discourse. But in didactic, moral, and dramatic compositions, it often happens that none of its characteristics are to be found, unless we grant that metre is essentially one of these, a question that has never yet been

solved. Now as metre is made the vehicle of the *sermo pedestris* in secular literature, so in the Holy Scriptures the system of moral metre is accommodated to modes of instruction, from which the sublime imagery of the Prophets and of the Psalms is generally absent. Such is a large portion of the Gospels: such is the introductory narrative in the Book of Job, which Dr. Mason Goode, in his translation, has rightly arranged in metrical lines, though its sentiments are unquestionably mere prose.

Yet whatever the confines of real poetry may be, there are two characteristics common to every species of measured composition in the sacred writings: The first is, an accurate regard to truth; the second, a design to exalt our thoughts to heaven. To the former end the measured and logical accuracy of language, the antitheses and appositions of parallelism, minister: the latter end is promoted by every method of divine instruction, whether this address the heart, the understanding, or the imagination.

It has been fully shown by Bishop Lowth, not only that all the recognised characteristics of poetry are abundantly found in Holy Scripture, but that in their use and application the secular are immeasurably excelled by the sacred poets. To go over ground so familiarly trodden, since the time of that eminent critic, by every one pretending to sacred scholarship, would be altogether superfluous. The following observations must be limited to an exhibition of the moral causes of certain differences observable in the ordinary use of poetical figures by sacred and secular writers. It is by no means intended to exhaust this subject, which an intelligent writer can readily amplify for himself.

The causes of these differences therefore, are to be based upon the two principles asserted above: namely, 1. a regard for truth; and, 2. the heavenward

exaltation of our thoughts: that characteristic which scriptural critics have termed *anagogical*. If these, then, have place, it must be obvious, that poetical imagery must be used in the sacred writings, not as an end, but as a means, very subordinate to a higher purpose. In order to bear out this remark, it will be necessary to examine each of these principles in detail.

§ 2. THE ACCURACY OF SACRED IMAGERY.

The first principle, the regard to truth, must of course so regulate the use of poetical imagery, as that every description and comparison introduced shall be accurate in itself, and in its application.

First then, as to description. For reasons which shall be hereafter assigned, detailed descriptions of natural objects or operations in holy Scripture, are by no means frequent, and very seldom purely descriptive, unmingled with moral or intellectual ideas. When they do occur, their object is to inform the mind, by leading it either to contemplate the works of God, or to derive a moral lesson from the consideration of certain particulars. But whenever used, they represent things as they actually are, and never introduce unreal objects for the sake of effect, as painters do in their foregrounds. I do not now, of course, allude to language plainly metaphorical, which may be introduced into the description, and which no reader can take in its literal sense; but I mean that facts which do not exist, are never stated as if they did exist, for the sake of poetical effect; an error into which secular poets, it is known, frequently fall.

Two instances from the Psalms must suffice, each descriptive of the visible works and operations of

God. We shall have occasion to recur to both presently, for the illustration of another part of this subject. The first is the description of the thunder-storm in the 18th Psalm.

Then did shake and quake the earth ;
 And the foundations of the hills trembled,
 And did shake, because wrath was with him.
 There went up a smoke from his nostrils,
 And a fire out of his mouth devoured :
 Coals were kindled by it.
 And he bowed the heavens, and came down :
 And there was darkness under his feet.
 And he rode upon the Cherub, and did fly,
 And he came flying upon the wings of the wind.
 He made darkness his secret place,
 Round about him were as a pavilion darkness of waters,
 Thick clouds of the skies.
 At the brightness before him the thick clouds passed,
 Hail, and coals of fire.
 And the Lord thundered in the heavens,
 And the Most High gave his voice,
 Hail, and coals of fire.
 And he sent out his arrows, and scattered them,
 And his lightnings he showered, and discomfited them.
 Then were seen the channels of the waters ;
 Then were discovered the foundations of the world,
 At thy chiding, O Lord,
 At the blasting of the breath of thy nostrils.

This describes one of those supernatural tempests and convulsions of nature, recorded more than once in the Scriptures, either when God destroyed the cities of the plain, or made the Israelites to pass through the Red Sea, or appeared on Mount Sinai, in earthquakes, and thunderings, and disturbance of the very depths of the ocean. In the burning of the mountains, first is described the smoke, and then the flame. Then the dark and lowering clouds, that precede the tempest ; then the sudden disruption of

the clouds, and the hail, (which in the eastern climates accompanies thunder,) and the thunderbolt, described under the expression of coals of fire. Then follows the thunder; the hail, the thunderbolt, the forked lightnings, described as arrows, are repeated: and lastly the disturbance of the waters consequent upon the storm.

The second instance is from the 65th Psalm.

Thou dost visit the earth, and moisten it :
 Thou makest it very plenteous :
 The river of God is full of water,
 Thou preparest their corn,
 When thou hast so prepared it.
 Her ridges thou dost saturate :
 Thou sendest rain into her furrows :
 With showers thou dost soften it.
 The increase of the earth thou dost bless,
 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness,
 And thy clouds drop fatness.

First are described the preliminary rains, both the showers, and the heavy rains, the former moistening the earth, the latter, called "the river of God," adapting it for greater increase, by penetrating to the implanted seed. The corn is thus put in a state of preparation, when God "has so prepared" the earth. Then a more particular description is given of the ground as furrowed by the plough, and a repetition is made of the two kinds of rain, the heavy saturating showers, and those which are more gentle. After this follows the visible increase of the growing corn, and then its maturity, when it decks the earth as it were with a golden crown; brought to perfection by the genial influence of the skies.

It must be observed, that in this description the 7th, 8th, and 9th lines, are reflections and expansions of the first three, describing a contemporaneous process: the sentence being what is called an Epanodos.*

* See this word explained, p. 27. of this volume.

The same exactness prevails in comparisons, whether similes or metaphors. When these are given in detail, every part of the comparison finds its parallel in the thing compared. And here it will be necessary to observe upon a remark of Edmund Burke's, in the Introduction to his *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*. He says that "the most ignorant and barbarous nations have frequently excelled in similitudes, comparisons, metaphors, and allegories, who have been weak and backward in distinguishing and sorting their ideas. And it is for a reason of this kind, that Homer and the oriental writers, though very fond of similitudes, and though they often strike out such as are truly admirable, seldom take care to have them exact; that is, they are taken with the general resemblance, they paint it strongly, and take no notice of the difference which may be found between the things compared."

As regards Homer, this observation is strictly true. Homer is, indeed, in one respect most accurate, that is, in his choice of the leading feature, the central point of resemblance, which forms, as it were, the focus of the simile. So just is he in this particular, that it may be doubted, whether one of his numerous similes could change places with another, cognate, and even identical as the application of many may seem to a cursory reader. But in general, (there are exceptions) he seeks little or no accordance in the adventitious circumstances of the similitude. These he gives in detail, not for the sake of bringing out and illustrating the truth of the comparison, but in order to finish highly a picture presented to his imagination. As pictures, therefore, his similes are most exact; as comparisons, they are either redundant, or defective.

The imagery of oriental writers is generally less true to nature, and forms less perfect pictures than the descriptions of Homer. But here I must inter-

pose a caution against including in the vague term of "oriental writers" the inspired vehicles of Divine Truth, the prophets and psalmists of holy writ, as many have irreverently done; but as the great philosopher whose words have been just quoted never intended. An oriental character they certainly do possess; or, to speak more justly, the nations nearest the chosen people, those who have retained most closely the ancient patriarchal language and manners, resemble in many features of their diction and thought, the sacred archetypes. But if exaggeration, hyperbole, and redundancy of false ornament, had in after times become to any extent the characteristics of oriental eloquence and poetry, such defects arose from the abandonment of those primitive restraints, those sacred channels of thought, which made the imagination ever subservient to truth. "This loose and uncertain manner of speaking," to use again the words of Mr. Burke^a, "has misled us both in the theory of taste and of morals; and induced us to remove the science of our duties from their proper basis (our reason, our relations, and our necessities), to rest it upon foundations altogether visionary and unsubstantial."

In the Scriptural comparisons every circumstance described illustrates the moral application. The images are ornamental only from their own intrinsic beauty; but they are not introduced for ornament, but for use. If the imagination is delighted, the reason is informed. Thus, when the righteous man is compared to a tree, planted by the water side^b, every part of the comparison has its moral reflection. As the tree is nourished by the river, so is the soul by that river of God, which is full of water, and of which our Saviour speaks.^c As are the fruits of the

^a Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, part iii. sect. xi.

^b Psalm i. 3.

^c St. John, iv. 14.

tree, so are the fruits of holiness: in both cases they are produced in due season, at God's appointed time, consequent upon that gradual growth ordained by him. The leaf shall not wither: the spiritual sap which supported him shall nourish him all his days.

So again in that beautiful image of the vine^a, whether it is to be called an allegory, metaphor, or simile, since it partakes of the nature of all. Every circumstance is here accurately historical. The vine is brought out of Egypt, it is planted; room is made for it: it fills the land, as did the Israelites in the days of their prosperity. The hills are covered with her shadow, corresponding to the inhabitation of the fertile hills of Judah by this prosperous nation, which did actually send out her branches unto the sea, and her boughs unto the river, in exact fulfilment of the Divine promise: "I will set thy bounds from the Red Sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river^b:" a promise which had its accomplishment in the days of Solomon. The branches and boughs are therefore here no adventitious ornament, introduced to fill up the picture, but the elucidations of an important truth.

Now compare with this one of Homer's first simile of the Bees.^c The focus of the comparison is accurately adjusted. The points of resemblance are the swarming of the armed multitudes coming from their tents, and the "busy hum of men." But the circumstances of the simile have no parallel: the spring flowers towards which the bees are flying, the hollow rock from which they issue. These circumstances indeed render the picture perfect in itself, and are assisted by the exquisite imitative artifice of the verse, which represents the very hum of the bees, and the irregularity of their flight —

^a Psalm lxxx. 8—11.

^b Exod. xxiii. 31.

^c *Iliad*, B. 87.

Ἦύτε ἔθνεα εἰσι μελισσῶν ἀδινάων,
 Πέτρης ἐκ γλαφυρῆς αἰεὶ νέον ἐρχομενάων,
 Βοτρυδὸν δὲ πέτονται ἐπ' ἄνθεσιν εἰαρινῶϊσιν,
 Αἰ μὲν τ' ἔνθα ἄλις πεποτήγεται, αἰ δέ τε ἔνθα. . . .

But how different the moral, or even the intellectual effect, of the scriptural and the secular comparison!

§ 3. THE ANAGOGICAL PRINCIPLE.

We now come to examine the second principle, namely, the anagogical intention of sacred imagery, that is, the leading the soul upward to heaven.

The adherence to this principle must imply a settled purpose of detaching the thoughts and affections from any thing earthly, however intrinsically beautiful or sublime, as the final object of contemplation; though as means to a better end, they are frequently, and yet with a careful economy, presented to our view.

Hence it is that the image is accompanied with no details, except such as are essential towards illustrating the moral end. Thus, in the comparison just cited, of the tree, in the first Psalm, no mention is made of the kind of tree. This is no way necessary; what is here said is applicable to the whole genus, and to mention any species would have had the effect of diverting the imagination from a moral lesson to a picture. Whereas, when the kind of tree is elsewhere specified, the specific difference is necessary towards the truth of the comparison. The "green olive tree in the house of God"^a represents the permanence of the good man's spiritual happiness: and the wide-spreading cedar in Libanus^b, the flourishing palm tree, represent the expansive prosperity and exaltation of those whom God has favoured.

^a Psalm lii. 8.

^b Psalm xcii. 12.

But before proceeding further, it may be well to remark upon another though subordinate advantage in the use of simple images, consisting of single words, of ideas unaccompanied with circumstances. The healthy exercise of the imagination is thus most effectually cherished. It is not put in leading-strings, and compelled to follow servilely the tracks of another, or to listen to those wearying details which its guide importunately points out, and upon the comparative beauty of which minds the most refined and cultivated may frequently differ; since the varieties in the intellectual taste are innumerable. Such redundant particularity of description is common with secular poets, and from this vice a great genius of our generation, Walter Scott, is not altogether free. But in sacred poetry the imagination is given certain noble and simple images, either sublime or beautiful, which by their very appearance vindicate their own inherent dignity, requiring no satellites to give them a factitious importance. On the one hand we are not diverted from the great features of resemblance intended to be shewn, as may frequently happen in dwelling upon the beautiful particulars in the Homeric pictures; and on the other, the mind is led to associate moral truths with the simple and magnificent objects of nature in such a way, as to promote pure and unsophisticated contemplation.

Thus, the sun and the moon, whenever introduced in Scripture, are unaccompanied with epithets, but create as great an impression on the mind as if the poet had sought to rival, by his ample details, the colours of Claude or Wilson. And hence it is that there is something so exquisitely beautiful in Homer's comparison of the child in his mother's arms, "like to a fair star," ἀλίγκιον ἀστέρη καλῶ^a, whatever be the exact

^a Iliad, z. 401.

point of resemblance, — whether it be the bright eye, or the smile of infancy, or a general notion of something pure and joyous, certainly this simile has the effect of exalting and purifying the imagination, by associating the most delightful object in this lower world, a beautiful and innocent infant, with the glories of the heaven above. But surely here the very generality of the image is more expressive to the understanding than the most laboured description could be.

Of a like kind are two passages in Wordsworth, where the same simple image is employed.

And *like a star*, that from a sombre cloud
Of pine tree foliage, pois'd in air, forth darts,
When a soft summer gale at evening parts
The cloud that did its loveliness enshroud,
She smiled. ^a

Again,

A violet by a mossy stone, half hidden from the eye,
Fair as a star, when only one is shining in the sky. ^b

The mention of the points of the compass is always poetical. “Thou hast made the north and the south.” How beautifully this is associated with Tabor and Hermon, which follow! And this circumstance it is which gives so much additional force to one of the most imaginative passages of Shakspeare, where he speaks of “a fair vestal throned by the west,” and “it fell upon a little western flower.”^c Again, — “Then yon same star, that’s westward of the pole.”^d

But to return to Scriptural imagery. Where de-

^a Sonnet on Mary Queen of Scots landing at the Derwent.

^b Poem ix., of those founded on the Affections.

^c Mids. Night’s Dream, Act ii. sc. 2.

^d Hamlet, Act i. sc. 1.

scriptions or similes are short, the circumstances are few and simple, so that the mind is not led to dwell on them too long. Perhaps there is no more striking instance, in secular poetry, of the effect produced by this simplicity, than in the *Paradise Regained* of Milton, where a few master touches, impregnated with the spirit of Scriptural poetry, represent to us the close of evening :

For now began
 Night with her sullen wings to double shade
 The desert ; fowls in their clay nests were couch'd ;
 And now wild beasts came forth the woods to roam.^a

When, however, they are long or circumstantial, there is ample provision made for preventing a mere sensuous use of them. These will require a somewhat more detailed examination.

The moral, then, is either intimately and inseparably associated with the physical, the visible with the invisible, the objects of sight or sound with those of the intellect ; or else, secondly, the simile and comparison rarely stand distinct, but are intermingled, after the manner of metaphors, and yet so as to be neither pure metaphors, nor pure similes ; or, thirdly, some word or circumstance is continually introduced to remind us of the invisible world, or of the Creator.

(1.) The intermixture of the moral and the physical does indeed obtain occasionally in secular poetry. It is an observation of Dr. Warton's, in his *Essay on Pope*, that "it is one of the greatest and most pleasing arts of descriptive poetry to introduce moral sentences and instructions, in an oblique and indirect manner, in places where we naturally expect only painting and amusement. We have *Virtue*, as Pope remarks, put upon us by surprise, and are pleased to

^a Book i., concluding lines.

find a thing where we should never have looked to meet with it." To the same purpose are the excellent remarks of a living writer, in his critique on the poetry of Wordsworth.^a "His sense of the beauty of external nature is seldom merely passive; the activities of his intellect are excited by it rather than merged in it, and his poetry is not often purely descriptive." He quotes his sonnet descriptive of the plain between Namur and Liege, in which "the effect of nature's tranquillity is heightened by allusions to the frequent warfare of which that plain has been the theatre;" adding, "This seems pure description, yet what a serious satire is expressed in one word, — 'War's favourite *playground*.'" In this, however, and other passages, the moral is not blended with the descriptive by the same close intertexture which characterises sacred poetry. These rare and occasional excellences of secular composition are an essential feature of that which is inspired. Virtue is not "put upon us" now and then "by surprise;" she is always present; and at every step we take she is at hand to remind us that the place whereon we stand is holy ground.

The ends, indeed, of religion, might apparently have been answered, had the ornamental parts, although illustrative of moral truth, been yet kept a little apart from it, in order that the image might be distinctly presented in its full and proper features. But were such a separation allowed, a risk would be incurred of the wayward mind of man dwelling on the illustration to the exclusion of the truth; and in exploring the world of nature, even though it be the handiwork of God, we might be led to forget the world of spirits, and Him in whom all live and move, and have their being.

^a Quarterly Review, No. 137., Dec. 1841.

Thus in the 8th Psalm, the moon and the stars, and the whole creation, which fill that extensive canvass, are associated with religious sentiments of the deepest kind. "I will *consider them*:" the moon and the stars, "*which thou hast ordained*." "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him." So the personifications in the 18th Psalm, upon which observations will presently be made. In the 23rd, the green pastures are associated with the moral thought implied in the waters of comfort: and mere physical impressions are hindered by the mention of the conversion of the soul and the paths of righteousness. Such also is the "wine of astonishment" in the 60th Psalm, and the description of the vale of misery in the 84th, and of the reapers and mowers, and the other pastoral images, in the 126th and 129th.

Now in this respect the general method of Homer (whom I of course select as the most genuine type of original secular poetry) is completely different. His pictures, (and all his similes and descriptions are such,) are painted with the most vivid accuracy, but stand distinct from the objects of their comparison. And the consequence is, that while we continually recur to the simile, we forget altogether, or do not care to remember, the reality thus symbolized. This would be sufficient to shew the wisdom of the Scriptural method, in which it is impossible to retain the image, without retaining the moral truth besides. There are instances, indeed, even in Homer, of such blending; but these are so occasional as to form exceptions to the rule. Thus in the celebrated description of Jupiter, the most sublime passage in the Iliad^a,

Ἦ, καὶ κυανέησιw ἐπ' ὀφρύσιν νεύσει Κρονίων,
 Ἄμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χαίται ἐπερρώσαντο ἄνακτος
 Κρατὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτοισ' μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὀλυμπιον·

^a A. 528.

Thus; and the Thunderer bent his sable brows:
 The ambrosial curls were mov'd upon the King's
 Immortal head; and great Olympus shook, —

it may at first appear that this is pure description of the most perfect kind. And certainly so it is: the poet has given both outline and colouring in these few words. The dark eyebrows, reflecting the variable light (which the word *κύανεις* would seem to express), and the waving line of beauty expressed by the movement of his locks, &c. But a moral epithet is interposed, which no painting could express, and yet which immeasurably heightens the effect on the mind: “his *immortal* head.”

An instance somewhat similar may be found in the address of Æneas to Pandarus^b:

Πάνδαρε, ποῦ τοι τόξον, ἰδὲ πτεροέντες οἴστοι,
 Καὶ κλέος;

“Pandarus, where is thy bow, and thy winged arrows, and thy *glory*?”

But in the great poet of our nation, Shakspeare, this intermixture is very common, not indeed to the same extent as in the sacred poets, but still beyond that of any other secular writer. He has few similes, speaking mostly in metaphors, and hardly any purely descriptive passages. The moral, or intellectual, or invisible, continually breaks in, and he always makes his imagery subservient to religion or philosophy. The mixture and redundancy of his metaphors were doubtless encouraged by the spirit of his age, in which a figurative and artificial style prevailed: and hence he is frequently betrayed into turgidity and forced language. But I am sure that the prevalence of this apparent indistinctness is more owing to the philosophical constitution of his mind. What Dr. Johnson

^b *Iliad*, E. 171.

has remarked of his imagery, with apparent censure, is real praise. "You can show no passage where there is simply a description of material objects, without any intermixture of moral motives, which produced such an effect."^a

Thus in his celebrated accumulation of metaphors:

Making it momentary as a sound,
 Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,
 Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
 That, *in a spleen*, unfolds both earth and heaven,
 And ere a man hath power to say, Behold!
 The *jaws of darkness do devour it up.*^b

Here personality and feelings are attributed to the night and to darkness, that disturb the integrity of the picture. And here too, by the way, we may remark on the anagogical tendency of Shakspeare's imagery. He forms a climax to his impassioned metaphors by bringing the mind upward to heaven, as he does yet more remarkably in his exquisite night scene, where he introduces the music of the angels, and draws a moral lesson from every observation of nature which is made.^c But that I may not dwell too long on a very enticing digression, in his historical play of Henry V., which abounds more than others with descriptions, not one of them is purely artistical. The most striking is that of the eve before the battle: when in the midst of minute description we are told of the soldiers, who,

Like sacrifices, by their watchful fires
 Sit *patiently, and iuly ruminat*
The morning's danger.^d

(2.) The next point to be considered is the frequent intermixture of the comparison with the thing com-

^a Boswell's Life, Croker's edition, ii. 87.

^b Mids. Night's Dream, act i. sc. 1.

^c Merchant of Venice, act v. sc. 1.

^d Chorus to Act iv.

pared. In critical language we call that a simile, which introduces an image distinct from the object brought into comparison; a metaphor, when the object is identified with the image: thus, if a man is compared to a pillar, that is a simile; it is a metaphor, if he is called a pillar. The scriptural comparisons frequently partake of the nature of both; so that though both object and comparison are distinctly presented to the mind, yet in the expression they are confounded.

Thus in the 7th Psalm—

Lest he devour, like a lion, my soul,
Rending it, and there be none to help.

Here is a distinct *idea* of a lion in a solitary place devouring and rending a carcase. But what is the *expression* of the Psalm? lest he devour—what? my soul. The lion rends the soul; the whole action is a physical one, the object being a thing that is incorporeal. It is therefore impossible to dissociate in this instance the image of brutal violence from that of moral persecution. How different from the dissociated images of the lion attacking his prey, which are presented so frequently, and in such various circumstances, by Homer, but always distinctly. Here, however again, we have in Shakspeare a nearer approach to the Scriptural method. In the following simile, this metaphorical form is observed with a large infusion of the moral:—

This is the state of man; to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
And, when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a ripening, nips his root,
And then he falls, as I do.^a

^a Henry VIII., act iii. sc. 2.

(3.) But in other instances, where the description or image is sufficiently distinct and objective, the same moral end is obtained by the insertion of some word or expression which prevents a forgetfulness of the religious end of the parable.

Thus, in the description of the storm in the 18th Psalm, the physical phenomena are, as before remarked, accurately described. But it owes its chief effect to the continual recurrence to the Almighty, whom we feel to be present in the whirlwind and the tempest. Now let us, for the sake of illustration, modify this passage as a secular poet might have done. Let us present it as follows, every religious and moral notion being carefully excluded.

Then did shake and quake the earth :
 And the foundations of the hills trembled, and did shake.
 And a smoke went up, and a fire devoured,
 Coals were kindled at it.
 There was darkness round about,
 Dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies.
 At the brightness the clouds passed,
 Hail, and coals of fire.
 The air also thundered,
 And the thunder gave its voice,
 Hail stones and coals of fire.
 The arrows went forth, and scattered them,
 The lightnings shot out, and destroyed them,
 Then the channels of waters were seen,
 And the foundations of the world were discovered.

Let this be compared with the passage in its unmutated state. To the most careless reader the superiority of the latter must be evident. But why? Because of the recognition of God's power and presence. Another poet might indeed have reserved such reflections for a climax, which no doubt would have been magnificent. For example :

For thou, O God, wert wrath.
 Thou didst bow the heavens and come down,
 Thou didst ride upon the wings of the wind.
 It was thy rebuke, O Lord,
 It was the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.

But let us hear the Psalmist. The earth trembles and quakes; the hills are moved—what is the climax? “because He is wroth.” The channels of the waters are seen; the foundations of the world are discovered, “at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blasting of the breath of thy displeasure.” Again, “the Lord also thundered out of heaven,”—thus we hear, as it were, the thunder-clap repeated, but how repeated? “The Highest gave his voice.” First the atmospheric thunder; then the voice of God.

For the sake of comparison let me quote the famous description of a storm in the Prometheus of Æschylus, a description magnificent indeed in itself, but far inferior to the inspired passage, both from its comparative want of simplicity, and from its defectiveness in moral or religious sentiment. The sentiment that is introduced is altogether distinct from the description: the slight recognition of a superior power that does occur cannot be called religious; it partakes of that belief and fear which devils have; and what a contrast do the three concluding lines form to the passage of the Psalmist, “In my trouble I will call upon the Lord, and unto God will I cry!”

Καὶ μὴν ἔργῳ, κούκῃτι μύθῳ
 χθὼν σεσίλευται·
 βρυχία δ' ἠχὼ παραμυκᾶται
 βροντῆς, ἔλικες δ' ἐκλάμπουσι
 στεροπῆς ζάπυροι, στρόμβοι δὲ κόινυ
 εἰλίσσουσι· σκιρτᾷ δ' ἀνέμων
 πνεύματα πάντων, εἰς ἄλληλα
 στάσις ἀντίπνον ἀποδεικνύμενα·
 συντετάρακται δ' αἰθῆρ πόντω.

ΤΟΙΛΑ΄ Δ' ἐπ' ἐμοὶ ῥιπή Διόθεν
 τεύχουσα φόβον στείχει φανερώς.
 ὦ μητρὸς ἐμῆς σέβας, ὦ πάντων
 αἰθῆρ κοινὸν φάος εἰλίσσω
 εἰσορᾶς μ' ὡς ἔκδικα πῖσχω.

And now, in very deed — no fable this —
 The earth is rocking ;
 The grating voice of thunder bellows round ;
 In fiery wreaths the lightnings glean ; the dust
 In whirlwind rolls ; the spirits of all the winds
 Rush forth, and war in mutual counterblasts ;
 And sky with sea is mingled.—
 This storm, so full of terror, from the hand
 Of Jove 'gainst me is launch'd, I plainly see.
 O venerable mother, O thou Air,
 Through whom doth float the Sun's pervading light,
 Behold what wrongs I suffer !

In the 42nd Psalm, the waters of heaven and of earth are particularised with a graphic solemnity, unequalled even in holy writ. But observe that the epithet *thy*, in each instance, reminds us of the Almighty's presence :

Deep unto deep calleth, at the voice of thy water-spouts,
 All thy breakers and thy billows over me have gone.^a

Resembling this is a passage in the 88th Psalm, which, however, is less abstracted from the moral imagery, with which it is partly blended :

Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit,
 In thick darkness, in the deep.
 On me lieth hard thy wrath,
 And with all thy waves thou hast afflicted me
 I am shut, and I cannot get forth

^a See vol. i. p. 84. note ^b. This expression is beautifully adopted by Wordsworth :

An idle voice the sabbath region fills,
 Of deep that calls to deep across the hills.

Descriptive Sketches, iii. Juvenile Pieces.

See also Jonah, ii. 3.

From my youth I suffer thy terrors, I am troubled:
 Over me goeth thy fierce wrath:
 Thy terrors have cut me off:
 They came about me like waters, all day,
 They compassed me on every side.

Here the sufferer compares his state to that of one immersed in deep and stormy waters, confined in some crazy vessel, which is at the mercy of the elements. There is no way of escape, and the storm is the more terrible, because so much is left to the imagination. The darkness of the night, and the impotence of the sufferer, prevent him from seeing the extent of his danger, or the exact circumstances of his condition. In this respect the picture is like that presented in one of the most exquisite fragments of antiquity, the Danaë of Simonides.

λάρνακι ἐν δαιδαλέῳ ἄνεμος
 βρέμῃ πνέων, κινηθεῖσα δὲ λίμνα
 δείματι ἔρειπεν.
 ἐν ἀτερπεῖ δώματι,
 χαλκρογόμφῳ δὲ, νυκτιλαμπεῖ,
 κυανέῳ τε δνόφῳ. τὸ δ' ἀναλίαν
 ὑπερθε τεῖαν κόμαν βαθεῖαν
 παριόντος κύματος οὐκ ἀλέγεις,
 οὐδ' ἀνέμου φθόγγων.

The rough night wind roar'd gustily
 Full on the close-wrought ark:
 The swelling surge broke fearfully
 Against that helpless bark.

.

The mother spoke. Ah me! my child,
 What woe is mine to bear,
 But thou, thy little bosom mild
 Calm heaving, know'st no care.

Sweetly thou sleepest, baby mine,
 In this drear dungeon room,
 All dark, save where the brass studs shine
 Dimly, in night's deep gloom.

The waves above, that dashing by
 Wet not thy thick soft hair,
 The winds' wild voices, fierce and high,
 Thou dost not heed nor hear.^a

.

In many respects this fragment is far superior to the general style of secular poetry. It resembles the Psalm in the awfulness of its imagery; the undefined horrors of darkness, and of a wintry sea, seen but partially, if seen at all. Nor is the poem wanting in moral beauty, which is intermingled with graphic description, nor in religious sentiment. Still every image of the Psalm is indissolubly connected with the present sense of the Almighty's power, and creates feelings of a far higher kind than mere human sympathy.

In the allegory of the vine, in like manner, the Almighty agent is mentioned in every period: "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt — thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it." So also in the

^a This accurate and elegant translation, the whole of which is to be found in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine for Sept. 1833, is from the pen of Dudley M. Perceval, Esq., from whose critical taste and judgment the writer of these pages has derived great advantage in the progress of this work. Mr. Perceval's accompanying observations are well worth attention. "The fragment of Simonides is like a series of exquisite sketches, telling the tale of Danaë's fearful night voyage; in which the eye is caught at one time most by the mother, at another by the child; now by the ark within, now by the storm without; and its close, that noblest effort at composure, from the highest and holiest source, trust in divine mercy and justice, though less a fiction than the rest, the more fitly serves to leave the imagination free, to follow the sad and lovely voyagers to their distant harbour of safety." He also justly takes *νυκτιλαμπεί* as well as *χαλκεογύμφα*, in connection with *δάματι*, a mode of interpretation which greatly heightens the picture. In fact, these two epithets, unmeaning and out of place if taken separately, conjointly explain one another, as frequently happens in sacred poetry. The brass studs are introduced in order to afford that gleam of light which makes the dark chest partially discernible on the bosom of the black waves, reflecting as they do the fitful gleams of the half-observed moon.

65th Psalm, "Thou visitest the earth — thou waterest her furrows," &c.

The description in the 107th Psalm of the storm at sea is less blended with moral sentiment than most others. But compare it with a similar one in Homer: —

ὡς ὅτε κύμα θοῆ ἐν νηὶ πέσῃσι
 Λάβρον ὑπαὶ νεφέων ἀνεμοτρεφές, ἢ δέ τε πᾶσα
 Ἄλχνη ὑπεκρύφθη, ἀνέμοιο δὲ δεινὸς ἀήτης
 Ἴστίφ' ἐμβρέμεται· τρομέουσι δέ τε φρένα ναῦται
 Δειδιότες· τυτθὸν γὰρ ὑπ' ἐκ θανάτοιο φέρονται^a

As when a wave 'gainst a swift ship doth dash,
 Fierce, nourish'd by the winds: and all her deck
 Is cover'd by the foam; the wind's dread blast
 Against the mast is roaring; terror-struck
 The sailors quake: for scarce from death they 'scape.

Both have the image of peril of death: but observe how infinitely more sublime are the circumstances selected by the prophet: "There riseth the wind of storm — they mount up to the heavens — they go down to the depths — *their soul melteth away.*" The whole is at once graphical, and yet not devoid of moral ingredients: while the description would be utterly mutilated were the concurring mention of the Divine power which causes this tempest omitted. "*For he speaketh, and there riseth the wind of storm, and it lifteth up the waves thereof.*"

The descriptions of Homer not only stand distinct from their antitype, but rarely admit a religious sentiment as part of their texture. It is true, that when he speaks of storms, and showers and thunders, he frequently adds that these proceed from Jove^b, but this is in such a passing manner, as rather to imply

^a Il. O. 625.

^b See Iliad, E. 87. 520.; H. 7.; A. 491.; N. 796. &c. In one passage, K. 10., the mythological allusion, πῶσις Ἥρης ἰπυκρόμοιο, mars the whole.

a form of speech, than the depth of any religious sentiment. There are, indeed, some exceptions. Thus,

Ὦς δ' ὑπὸ λαίλαπι πᾶσα κελαινὴ βέβριθε χθών
 Ἴματ' ὀπωρινῶ, ὅτε λαβρότατον χέει ὕδωρ
 Ζεὺς, ὅτε δὴ ῥ' ἀνδρεςσι κοτεσσόμενος χαλεπήγη,
 Οἷ βίη εἰν ἀγορῇ σκολιῶς κρίνωσι θεμιστας,
 Ἴεκ δὲ δίκην ἐλάσωσι, θεῶν ὅπιν οὐκ ἀλέγοντες, κ. τ. λ.^a

As when beneath a storm the darken'd earth
 Is all oppress'd, on some autumnal day,
 When Jove pours down his fleetest water-sprouts,
 In anger fierce towards men, who rule by force,
 Perverting justice on the judgment-seat,
 And banish equity, and disregard
 The vengeance of the Gods, &c.

It is unnecessary to shew how strikingly scriptural are all these sentiments. The supreme Being is recognized as sending these visitations on the earth, “for the wickedness of them that dwell therein;” and violence and wrong judgment are the sins against which vengeance is most frequently denounced in Scripture. It is by no means intended to insinuate that Homer^b is not a religious poet: far from this: my object has been to shew, that the moral and the physical are not blended, as in holy Scripture; and even in the last-cited passage, the religious sentiment rather comes in as a parenthesis, which might

^a Iliad, π. 384.

^b Besides the general religious tone of his poems, the following passages, *e. g.*, are wonderfully scriptural: ἐνθα σιδήρεια τε πύλαι καὶ χάλκεος αὐτός. (Θ. 15.) ; like “the gates of brass, and bars of iron.” γνώσεται ἔπειθ' ὅσον εἰμὶ θεῶν κάρτιστος ἀπάντων. “Know that I am God,” &c. τόσον ἔνερθ' αἶδω, ὅσον οὐρανός ἐστ' ἀπὸ γαίης. “As high as heaven is in comparison of the earth.” And in the use of εἰμὶ in this passage: τόσον ἐγὼ περὶ τ' εἰμὶ θεῶν, περὶ τ' εἰμὶ ἀνθρώπων. But, as usual, these coincidences are more forcible, when considered in connection with the context. They shew a mind imbued to a degree with scriptural images, whence derived, or by how many intermediate channels, it is impossible to say: but I suspect, through Phœnicia.

be easily dissociated from the magnificent description that follows.^a

It may be said that in Scripture exceptions occur to the above rules, of descriptions which have no moral images intermixed, and are of considerable length, so that the physical image is impressed upon the mind, to the exclusion, or at least the depression, of the religious feeling. Of such a kind are the sublime passages in the Almighty's parable in Job; as of the war-horse, the behemoth, and leviathan.^b Now, in the first place, it must be remembered that the very force of the moral lesson here conveyed, the recognition of God's power, depends upon the detail of particulars. But, in the next, there is in almost every sentence an appeal to human weakness, as contrasted with the Almighty's wisdom and strength:

*Hast thou given the horse strength?
Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?
Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? &c.*

.

*Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee . . .
He is the chief of all the ways of God, &c.*

Another exception may be pleaded in the Mosaic

^a I regret that neither the space nor the occasion of this work will allow any detailed observations on one of the most beautiful poems in our language, (now little read, and underrated,) the Grongar Hill of Dyer, in which the physical images are singularly just, and intermingled with the moral to a degree unequalled in modern times. It was the good fortune of the present writer to escape the hackneyed recitation of this poem in his school-boy days, and in fact, he never read it through, (he is ashamed to confess,) till a very few years since; but he never knew a poem which more vividly impressed him with its genuine power of just poetical colouring, imaginative thought, and moral feeling. A few most unaccountable solecisms in grammar are observable; these however seem to have proceeded from the blunders of transcribers or printers, still uncorrected. But it is one of those poems to which it is impossible to do justice by making extracts. It is strange that Mr. Wordsworth makes no mention of this poem, nor of Dyer, (except passingly in merely naming a very inferior production, the Golden Fleece) either in his Preface, or Supplemental Essay.

^b Job, xxxix. 19—25. xl. 15—24. xli. throughout.

simile of the eagle^a, which certainly more resembles, in the method of its expression, an Homeric simile than most others in the Scripture :

As an eagle stirreth up her nest,
Fluttereth over her young,
Spreadeth abroad her wings,
Taketh them, beareth them on her wings, &c.

But here the whole image is so full of tenderness, as to excite, not the mere imagination, but the best feelings of human nature. This is one of those passages in which the sublime and the beautiful are most harmoniously blended.

Again, in the prophecies of Ezekiel, similitudes of considerable length occur, purely physical. For example, that of the two eagles, the cedar and the vine, in his seventeenth chapter. But here it must be remembered, that the prophet speaks in vision, and that this comparison is in fact an allegory. Taken by itself, sublime though it be, it has no coherence, and presents no consistent image to the mind. The reader at once perceives its parabolic nature. The eagle comes to Mount Lebanon, and takes off the highest branch of the cedar, and sets it in *a city of merchants*, and there *plants the seed* of the land, and it becomes a spreading vine. It is evident that the eagle here signifies some great intelligent being, and that some great revolution in human affairs is shadowed forth.

These remarks might be enlarged : but enough, I hope, has been said to vindicate the general principles that have been put forward. Remarks have been made upon the imagery of other sacred writers besides the Psalmists, since it is plain, that if the principles asserted are sound, and founded on a religious basis, they must have place in every poetical portion of Holy Scripture.

^a Deut. xxxii. 11.

§ 4. THE PICTORIAL EFFECT IN SACRED POETRY.

There are two passages in Mr. Burke's celebrated Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful, which may fitly connect the observations that have been made with those about to be offered. He remarks of Milton's description of Satan, that "we do not any where meet with a more sublime image than this justly celebrated one of Milton, wherein he gives the portrait of Satan with a dignity so suitable to the subject :

He above the rest
 In shape and gesture proudly eminent
 Stood like a tower; his form had not yet lost
 All her original brightness, nor appear'd
 Less than archangel ruin'd, and th' excess
 Of glory obscur'd: as when the sun new risen
 Looks through the horizontal misty air
 Shorn of his beams; or from behind the moon
 In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds
 On half the nations; and with fear of change
 Perplexes monarchs.

"Here is a very noble picture: and in what does this poetical picture consist? in images of a tower, an archangel, the sun rising through mists, or in an eclipse, the ruin of monarchs, and the revolutions of kingdoms. The mind is hurried out of itself, by a crowd of great and confused images; which affect, because they are crowded and confused. For separate them, and you lose much of their greatness; and join them, and you infallibly lose the clearness. The images raised by poetry are always of this obscure kind. . . . Hardly any thing can strike the mind with its greatness, which does not make some sort of approach towards infinity, which nothing can do whilst we are able to perceive its bounds; but to see

an object distinctly, and to perceive its bounds, is one and the same thing. A clear idea is therefore another name for a little idea.”^a He then instances, with his accustomed eloquence, the image of the Spirit in Job.^b To somewhat the same effect are his observations on the frightful picture of religion drawn by Lucretius.^c “What idea do you derive from so excellent a picture? none at all, most certainly; neither has the poet said a single word which might in the least serve to mark a single limb or feature of the phantom, which he intended to represent in all the horrors imagination can conceive. In reality, poetry and rhetoric do not succeed in exact description so well as painting does: their business is, to affect rather by sympathy than imitation; to display rather the effect of things on the mind of the speaker, or of others, than to present a clear idea of the things themselves.”^d

Perhaps this profound thinker is not quite accurate in saying, that “a clear idea is another name for a little idea.” For surely, the pictures of Homer are generally most clear, and are painted as accurately as words could give outline, shadow, and colour. It may indeed be conceded, that words are from their nature less definite than the strokes of the pencil, and that verbal expressions often convey an idea of infinity, or at least of indefiniteness, when discoursing on objects to which the painter would assign determinate bounds. But to the highest style of poetry, that especially found in Holy Scripture, Mr. Burke’s observations do accurately apply. Not that the lessons taught through the medium of scriptural imagery are indefinite, or that even any attempt is made to give a false and confused idea of external nature: but the mind is advisedly diverted from circumscribing or lowering its religious functions by dwelling too

^a Part ii. sect. 4. ^b Job, iv. 15, 16. ^c See ante, p. 41. ^d Part v. sect. 5.

fixedly upon the definite and limited objects of this lower world: and it is taught to associate itself with that which is infinite and eternal, and to connect the things which are seen with those which are not seen; the knowledge which we now have in part, with that perfect knowledge when we shall know even as also we are known.

It is for this reason, perhaps, that there is hardly such a thing in Holy Scripture, as a perfect description, unmixed with moral objects: or even one which could be artistically transferred to the canvass. The descriptions of the sacred poets are like panoramas, comprising more than the eye can take in at one glance: or rather like the paintings of the middle ages, where events and circumstances which could not be contemporaneous, are represented in the same composition.

But it is to be further observed, that a scriptural passage often conveys to the mind the impression of a description, the same idea that a painting will produce, which when examined will be found to contain very little, or perhaps nothing, of direct description.

Thus the 8th Psalm presents to the mind the idea of a solitary shepherd gazing on the heavens, during a starry and moonlight night; with the cattle reposing upon the hills around him. The effect is very like that of the famous night-scene of Homer, which, though so familiarly known, and so often quoted, I shall here venture to repeat, as its exhibition may serve to illustrate, in more ways than one, the views hitherto advanced.

Ὦς δ' ὅτ' ἐν οὐρανῷ ἄστρα φαεινὴν ἀμφὶ σελήνην
 φαίνεται ἀριπρεπέα, ὅτε τ' ἔπλετο νήμεος αἰθῆρ,
 Ἐκ τ' ἔφανον πᾶσαι σκοπιαὶ, καὶ πρόονες ἄκροι,
 Καὶ νάπαι· οὐρανόθεν δ' ἄρ' ὑπερῤῥάγη ἄσπετος αἰθῆρ.

Πάντα δέ τ' εἶδεται ἄστρο· γέγηθε δέ τε φρένα ποιμῆν'
 Τόσσα, μεσηγὺ νεῶν, ἠδὲ Ξάνθοιο ροίῳν,
 Τρώων καίοντων, πυρὰ φαίνεται Ἰλίοθι πρό.
 Χίλι' ἄρ' ἐν πεδίῳ πυρὰ καίετο· πὰρ δὲ ἐκάστω
 Εἶατο πεντήκοντα, σέλα πυρὸς αἶθομένοιο.
 Ἴπποι δὲ κρὶ λευκὸν ἐρεπτόμενοι καὶ ὄλῦρας,
 Ἔσταότες παρ' ὄχεσφιν, ἐύ' ῥορον ἠῶ μίμνον.

As when in heaven the stars round the clear moon
 Shine beautiful, when tranquil is the air,
 And every cliff and mountain top appears,
 And every lawn: from deepest heaven the air
 Is wide unveil'd, and all the stars are seen:
 And at the sight the shepherd's heart is glad:
 So, 'mid Scamander's flowings, and the ships,
 The numerous fires in front of Ilium shone.
 A thousand fires were lit; by each a band
 Of fifty sat, and kept the blazing pile.
 Meanwhile the feeding horses by their ears
 Fast standing, waited for the fair-thron'd morn.

Now in this passage we see the distinctness of the comparison from the object: each forms a separate and well-defined picture. Here, too, there is a want of exactness between the simile and its object in the particulars of the comparison, which are introduced merely to heighten the vivid image. And here there is an absence of any thing strictly religious, or even intellectual. There is not indeed, an absence of human sympathies; the gladness of the shepherd's heart is an exquisite incident: still this may be separated from the rest of the picture, to which it is only an adjunct. I do not deny that there is an anagogical effect in that magnificent line to which no translation has ever done or can do justice, *ὄζρανόθεν ὁ ἄρ' ὑπερῤῥάγη ἄσπετος αἰθήρ*. And this praise must also be given to this, the most sublime description perhaps ever given by any secular poet, that he produces the effect by the simple collocation of objects

* *Iliad*, *ῥ*, 555

magnificent in themselves, no epithets being added except what are plainly necessary. But let us now revert to the 8th Psalm, and will it not be allowed that the same ideas are produced? And yet there is here no positive description. We know the shepherd to be present, for he says, "I will consider the heavens;" and there is joy in his heart at the sight, but a religious joy tempered with awe, expressed in that deep reflection, "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him." The prospect of the heavens is brightened and made immeasurably sublime by the adjuncts, "the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained." In the landscape below, we see the oxen and the fowls of the air, now at rest; but the allusion to these is dignified by the reflection, that by the divine ordinance they are made subject to man. Yet the prophet goes beyond the limits of his present view; for he introduces "the fishes of the sea, and whatsoever walketh through the paths of the seas," the awful wonders of the great deep: and ends with impressing a notion of this illimitable universe, and of the universal dominion of its Creator; "O Lord, our Governor, how excellent is thy Name in all the world!"

As the most detailed example of this peculiar effect, I would now call attention to the general impression produced by the opening of the 18th Psalm.

Here, if I mistake not, a magnificent picture is presented to the imagination. Not that every particular is accurately depicted; this would be impossible, from the mixture of material with abstract ideas in the passage; but there is a general picturesque notion, a great outline suggested, comprising the same effect of light and shade, of contrast and of appropriate keeping, as is observable in the best works of art, whether of poetry or of painting.

The poem opens with the description of the Almighty's power. The general idea suggested by the metaphors employed in this exordium is that of a fortress provided with every means of defence. Here, then, an impregnable and glorious fortress, the habitation of God himself, presents itself to view, as the most prominent object, occupying some commanding height, its summit reaching to heaven. In the plain below, we see the servant of God assailed by the floods of destruction, from which he is endeavouring to escape, and in his distress is looking towards that heavenly place of defence for rescue. Then, in the air above, issue forth the thunders and lightnings, all the terrors of the Almighty, so magnificently described in the verses already observed upon, by which his enemies are discomfited and destroyed. In the midst of all this confusion the angel of God descends, and rescues the sufferer from the many waters that were overwhelming him.

Now in examining this passage we shall find that there is a systematic and uniform usage of blending the moral with the physical, the ideal with the sensible, the spiritual with the natural.

For, first, the habitation of God is found not to be described. The impression on the mind is produced by a combination of cognate metaphors, which conjointly make up the idea of a place of defence — a rock, a fortress, a buckler, a high tower,—and are intermingled with the religious notions of a deliverer, and of salvation.

The imagery that is subsequently employed, though terribly expressive, and significant, is found in itself to be composed of discordant materials :

They compassed me, the sorrows of death,
 And the floods of Belial affrighted me,
 The sorrows of hell came about me,
 They overtook me, the snares of death.

Snares, floods, sorrows, death, Belial, or wickedness, and hell, are all, in the same sentence, personified. Here, too, is an intermixture of abstract notions with visible images; floods of ungodliness, sorrows of death, and of hell. The Psalmist is speaking of some calamities or temptations of the most terrible and appalling nature. Death, Hell, and Belial are employed to intimate them. And the manner of their aggression is expressed under the similitude of a flood; either the outbursts of a great wintry torrent, or the whirlpools of a tempestuous sea.

Now the tendency of this great example of the sublime is not the mere appalling or elevating of the soul, but the giving a deep and salutary lesson. Wickedness is here associated with the most dreadful ideas that we can imagine, and with one of the most appalling devastations that can be witnessed. Thus an association of images, which secular poets might think incongruous, here serves the sacred purpose of marking the analogy between all that is dreadful and detestable in the visible and invisible worlds, and the rebellion against the majesty and word of God.

Here voluntary and systematic motion are attributed to the mysterious powers that assail the righteous man. Now we see them, like demons, circling round, drawing nearer, encompassing, pursuing: we pause on the scene, and the assailing power changes to a rapid flood about to overwhelm the spot on which the victim stands, and overtaking him with its waves; waves that issue from some deadly and infernal source. The imagery is confused, the component parts change, as in a disturbed dream, their character and appearance; and, as in a dream, personification is attributed to notions utterly undefined and inexplicable. Yet is there not a sensible impression produced, and does not a feeling remain on the mind as if a description had been actually given?

Omitting similar instances, which abound, though perhaps not in so remarkable a manner, in the Psalms, I shall close the present section with a parting allusion to Homer, in order to shew how sublimity of effect is marred by an attempt to describe accurately things above description. No part of Milton's *Paradise Lost* gives more general dissatisfaction among persons of real taste, than the attempt to detail the artillery and wars of heaven, and to describe the overthrow of the evil angels by the Messiah. The anthropomorphism indeed of the *Paradise Lost* reminds us of the mythological parts of the *Iliad*, which are confessedly its greatest blots. The instance to which I would now allude (too long for quotation) is the passage where Neptune is described as beholding, from the summit of a distant mountain, the discomfiture of the Trojans, and then descending and coming to their rescue, and driving his chariot and his horses through the depths of the sea.^a The outline of this is magnificent, and some particulars are truly sublime; as where the mountain trembles beneath his feet, and the sea is represented as parting asunder with joy:

γηθοσύνη δὲ θάλασσα δίστατο.

But the whole is injured by the minute details of the harness and furniture of his chariot and horses; his loosing them from the yoke, and giving them their provender, even though that is called ambrosia. How inexpressibly greater in sublimity are those passages which represent the Almighty as having his throne in heaven, and thence beholding the children of men, of his descending from above, so that when he touches the hills they smoke: when he is said to ride upon the cherubim and the wings of the wind, and when his chariots are spoken of as thousands,

^a *Iliad*, N. 10

and thousands upon thousands? Compare any one of these passages with the following one in the ode of Habakkuk, which resembles in its general outline the latter part of Homer's description, and the effect will be so perceptible as to need no further comment.

Against the rivers is the Lord displeas'd?
 Is thine anger against the rivers?
 Is thy wrath against the sea,
 That thou dost ride upon thine horses,
 Thy chariots of salvation:^a

.
 Thou didst walk though the sea with thine horses,
 Through the heap of mighty waters.^b

Or this:

In the sea is thy way,
 And thy paths in the great waters,
 AND THY FOOTSTEPS ARE NOT KNOWN!^c

§ 5. ON THE ACCUMULATION OF METAPHORS.

In order to introduce the remarks about to be offered in this section, let us recur to the 18th Psalm, that great storehouse of poetical imagery, and examine its opening sentence.

I will love thee, O Lord, my strength,
 The Lord is my streng rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer,
 My God, my Rock; I will take refuge in him;
 My shield, and the horn of my salvation; my high tower.

Here is accumulation of varied metaphors. The armoury, the fortress, the sanctuary, the natural world, are all resorted to for illustrations of the Almighty's saving power.

It would be difficult to account for such varied imagery by the ordinary laws of poetical composition.

^a Hab. iii. 8.

^b Hab. iii. 15.

^c Psalm lxxvii. 19.

It is a principle practically recognised in the poetry of all nations, that the mind, when strongly moved, will endeavour, by the use of frequently recurring comparisons or metaphors, to illustrate sentiments which it cannot define by language, or which, at least, in the ardour of its passion, it will not stop to define. And therefore where graphic or logical accuracy is impossible, or out of place, the fancy will have recourse to image after image, will multiply them, and seek for them from sources the most diversified, as if casting an eager glance on every side for some vivid symbol of the feeling which entirely possesses it.

In the magnificent exordium before us, this principle may certainly be considered as having place. The subject of illustration is Almighty God; a Being indescribable by words, whose essence and attributes are incomprehensible, whom the eye has not seen, and whom the reason apprehends but in part, and that but mediately, through his works, and through his own revelation. The ardour, therefore, of grateful love, when celebrating such a Being, must necessarily have recourse to symbols; and in a kind of despair of even faintly shadowing forth his attributes, will, in search of diversified images, explore every attainable part of the world, whether visible or spiritual.

So far a similar principle regulates sacred and secular poetry. There is, however, a difference to be observed in their respective modes of application. The accumulation of metaphors is employed by secular poets chiefly, if not exclusively, in those instances where either the feelings or the fancy of the speaker are excited or highly wrought. The frequent use of metaphors by Shakspeare is well known; but they are accumulated under those circumstances only.^a

^a See particularly 1 Henry IV., act iv. sc. 2., the description of Prince Henry and his army; and those already mentioned in *Midsum. Night's Dream*, act i. sc. 1.; and Cleopatra's description of Antony. *Ant. and Cleop.*, act v. sc. 2. &c. &c.

The same end is attained by Homer, who does not, indeed, cluster together metaphors, but in the more impassioned part of his poem, when describing the heat of action, or some great and stirring movement, simile follows simile in rapid succession, and the same image, at first imperfectly worked out, is repeated and expanded in more than one which follows.^b In the still life of the *Odyssey*, there are but few similes; and in the calmer parts of the *Iliad*, they are used more sparingly, and are not found grouped together.

But the great object of sacred imagery not being mere painting, mere imitation, the mere expression of the passions or the feelings, the accumulation of metaphors may have place in the inspired songs, not only when the feelings are excited, but when they are most calm and meditative. Its object is the exhibition of what is good, and true, and beautiful, in close connection: not of either the one or the other sepa-

^a For example, towards the end of B. and O. 483. *et seq.*, P. 53., and 737. *et seq.* I think, independently of other sufficiently abundant proofs, which may confute the notion, first broached by Wolf, and strangely adopted by Mr. Coleridge, of the Homeric poems being a compilation of *ballads* by various hands, several most satisfactory arguments may be collected from his use of images, clearly shewing an identity of imagination and of execution. 1. He accumulates them when excited, as asserted in the text. 2. He improves upon an old idea, or rings the changes upon the same associations; just as writers of genius are always prone to *run upon* a word, or thought*, *e. g.*, the same expression in two similes in the second book respecting *bees* and *flies*; ἀδιδάων ἔθρεα πόλλα: the frequent images of waves and winds, and of flames and fire in the 2nd and beginning of the 3d book. The *dogs* in the 10th: two similes of *snow* in the 12th, and three similes from humble life in the same book: two, of felling timber, in the 13th; the roaring of the sea, the wind, and the fire, in the 14th; three of lions in the 17th; in the 4th, two adjoining similes of women in humble life; two tender images at the beginning of the 16th, &c. &c.* I make no apology for this note: the vindication of the identity of Homer is an important feature in the history of the human mind, and one which has not yet been sufficiently expanded.

^b Of this tendency in St. Paul, instances are given throughout Mr. Forster's exhaustive and demonstrative work, the "Apostolical Authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews."

rately, but of both necessarily combined. The good that is presented to us is always beautiful; either intrinsically so, or made attractive by the graces of skilful versification, of harmonious collocation, of beautiful imagery, or of all these combined. The beautiful, in like manner, is either obviously good in itself, or illustrative of good.

Now, supposing the above passage to be unimpassioned: supposing it to be conceived not in the hasty ardour, but in the settled and deep composure of a grateful heart, still the principle just advanced will render these varied metaphors not only allowable, but altogether appropriate. The Psalmist does not seek to represent the Almighty by one exact metaphor as the symbol, or one consistent and harmonious comparison as the allegory, of his perfections. It would be the obvious course of an ordinary poet, were a simile intended, to select some one or other of these images, to dilate upon that, or paint it at full length; for instance, he would describe the shield, or the fortress, or the rock, or the sanctuary; or else, if a passing metaphor were sought, he would be careful not to mar the unity of his comparison by the introduction of dissimilar images. But the design of the Psalmist is to connect the idea of the Almighty's merciful power with the idea of all that is defensively strong in art or in nature. He therefore brings to our notice the natural strength of the rock, the artificial strength of the fortress, the defensive strength of the shield, the protection afforded by the prescriptive sanctity of the altar, and the deliverance ensured by the salutary sympathy of the living auxiliary. The moral notion of God's power, as inherent in himself, as effectually exerted for his creatures, as holy, and as sympathising in human weakness, being thus variously illustrated, the Psalmist does not indulge in a dilation of any one particular metaphor. The great

resemblance sought for being thus effectually exhibited, it matters not whether the objects employed be in every point strictly congruous among themselves or not. One point of resemblance they all possess: and thus, like the varied denominations given to the law of God in the 118th Psalm, they have the effect of placing that one glorious object in the several aspects which are open to the apprehension of the human mind.

Such a juxtaposition of things natural with things spiritual, while illustrative of great truths, is also salutary to the understanding. The habitual comparison of things that are seen with those that are invisible, conduces to the purification, to the sanctification, of the intellectual taste. In the sacred writings God has placed no great gulph between his outward and his spiritual creation. Natural images so blend themselves with spiritual truths, that they all are taught to maintain a delightful and holy companionship in our souls, and to vindicate their origin, as alike proceeding from the same heavenly wisdom.

§ 6. CONCLUSION.

In concluding this essay, and the work of which it forms a part, a hope must be expressed, that those who have so far accompanied its writer will not regard poetry merely in a subordinate and grovelling sense, as the plaything of the fancy, the recreation of idle hours. The poetry of Holy Scripture is divine Truth, arrayed in her most glorious apparel, the Oracle of God, speaking with the voice of angels. It is the highest exercise of the illuminated Reason, but not on that account dissociated from the Imagination: for the Imagination, when taught of God, is that which apprehends most vividly the things which belong to

the unseen world. Yet, if such be the high estimate claimed by the poetry of Scripture, let it not be thought profane to have brought into comparison with it the efforts of mere human genius. Those celebrated men, to whom the most frequent allusion has been made, have been, doubtless under the direction of God's Providence, the master minds who have governed the intellect and the imagination not only of their own, but of all successive generations, in every part of the world where their language has been attainable: they have exercised a salutary moral influence; and to each of them may be applied what is so justly attributed to the most ancient secular poet of antiquity,

Qui, quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plenius et melius Chrysippo et Crantore dicit. ^a

Yet it is not on account of their intrinsic excellence that they have been mentioned. This has been done in order to shew how immeasurably distant are even these stars of the first magnitude in the secular firmament from that Sun which illuminates the sky of heaven, and dims them all when he appears. In every respect the teaching of Holy Scripture, both in its fundamental principles, in the manner of its application of them, and in the matter of its divine instruction, excels beyond all computation the teaching of mere men, however gifted they may be by a kind of minor inspiration, or endued with that wisdom which proceeds from the Most High alone.

Whatever success may attend his endeavours, the sincere object of the writer of these pages has been to administer to a religious and moral purpose, in throwing some elucidation upon the direct meaning and immediate object of the chief lyrics of sacred writ,

^a Hor. Epist. Lib. ii. 3.

the Book of Psalms. And in conclusion he must repeat, that he has been urged to it by the keen sense of the unwholesome influence to which the imagination, the reason, and the devotion of the present and rising generations have of late years been subjected. Whatever may have been the improvements in the moral and religious condition of our country, (and to these no right-minded man can be insensible) there is unquestionably one great evil which has been spreading wide, and requires to be as strenuously arrested: namely, a vacillation and uncertainty of thought, which manifests itself in a want of firmness, of principle, and too often of integrity; so that the ancient foundations of temporal policy, of morals and religion, are shaken on every side. The ancient national character seems to be undergoing a great change; and the honest and clear-sighted integrity of the British mind is now more rarely to be found. This evident deterioration may be accounted for in various ways: but assuredly one element of our enfeebled condition is to be found in the disregard of the ancient habits of regular thought, and systematic devotion, and solid learning, which united a classical taste and elasticity with the resources of catholic scholarship, and enlightened religious philosophy. Till the old paths are again trodden; till the fathers of the English church are again associated with those of more ancient times; till men again learn to think and to feel as Englishmen, and to believe that they do possess within the pale of their church the stronghold of catholicity, if they would but resort to its defences in these times of trouble; till the wayward will be resisted, and the mind again subjected to the real teaching of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures; no hope can be entertained for this church and nation. Still the inherent honesty and uprightness of this favoured people has not yet been undermined: there is

yet a love of truth and soberness largely prevalent: and therefore there is yet a hope, a strong and fervent hope, that our venerable cathedrals, and our glorious universities, may continue to be the strongholds of godliness, good learning, sound Christian doctrine and holy living: that God's blessing may return in more abundant measure to this favoured land, so that Truth may spring out of the earth, and Righteousness may look down from heaven.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

THE PSALM OF DAVID, RECORDED IN I CHRON. xvi.
7—36.

THEN on that day David delivered first *this psalm* for the praise of the LORD into the hand of Asaph and his brethren.

I. (A)

O give thanks unto the LORD,
Call upon his Name ;
 Make known among the nations his doings :
 Sing ye to him, make a psalm to him,
 Talk ye of all his marvels.

Praise him in the Name of his holiness ;
(¹) Let there be gladness in the heart of them that seek
 the LORD.

* Search for the LORD and his strength :
Seek his face continually.

(A) The first part, down to “and among my prophets do no evil,” corresponds to Ps. cv. 1—15. The variations are subjoined.

Ps. cv.	I CHRON. xvi.	
^a Abraham	Israel.	
^b He hath remembered	Remember ye	The LXX. reads <i>μνη- μορεύων</i> , with Psalm cv.
^c ארץ אלה	ארץ	
^d they	ye	The LXX. reads <i>αὐ- τοὺς</i> , with Psalm cv.
^e אדם	לֵאמֹן.	
^f to	among.	

(¹) Heb. be glad the heart.

Remember his marvels that he hath done,
His wonders, and the judgments of his mouth.

O seed of Israel,^a his servant,
O children of Jacob, his chosen ;
He is the LORD our God :
In all the earth are his judgments.
Remember^b ye for ever his covenant,
The word which he commanded to a thousand generations,
Which he covenanted with Abraham ;
And his oath unto Isaac ;
And he confirmed it to Jacob for a * statute,
And to Israel as a covenant for everlasting.
Saying, To thee will I give the ^cland of Canaan,
The lot of your inheritance.
When ye^d were small in number,
Yea, very few, and strangers therein ;
And they were going from people to people,
From one kingdom to another nation. (1)
He suffered not man^e to oppress them ;
And he reprov'd for their sakes *even* kings ; *saying*,
Touch not mine Anointed,
And ^famong my prophets do no * evil.

II. (B)

^a Sing unto the LORD, all the earth, ^b
Shew forth from day ^c unto day his salvation.
* Tell among the heathen his glory, ^d
Among all the nations his marvels.

(B) The second part, down "to judge the earth," corresponds to Psalm xvi. to the middle of the last verse. The variations follow.

Ps. xvi.	1 CHRON. xvi
^a (The Psalm begins with) O sing unto the Lord a song that is new.	Omitted.
^b Sing unto the Lord, bless ye his Name - - - - -	Omitted.
^c לַיהוָה - - - - -	אֱלֹהִים.
^d כְּבוֹדוֹ - - - - -	אֶת כְּבוֹדוֹ.
^e To be feared - - - - -	And to be feared. "And," is omitted by the LXX.

(1) Nation other.

For great is the LORD, and to be praised highly,
 " And to be feared is He above all Gods.
 For the Gods of the * nations are idols,
 But the LORD the heavens hath made.
 * Honour and * majesty are before his face,
 Power and * joyfulness^f are in his place.^g

Ascribe unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people,
 Ascribe unto the LORD glory and power.
 Ascribe unto the LORD the glory of his Name.
 Bring a present, and go before his face.^h
 O worship the LORD in the majesty of holiness,
 Stand in awe of him, all the earth.

ⁱ Truly the world⁽¹⁾ is established, it shall not be moved.
 Let the⁽²⁾ heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice,
^j And let them say among the heathen, the LORD is
 King.
 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.
 Let the^k field be joyful, and all that is in it ;
 Then shall sing for joy the^l trees of the^m woodⁿ before
 the LORD,
 For he^o cometh to judge the earth.

Ps. xvi.	1 CHRON. xvi.
^f Beauty - - - - -	Joyfulness.
^g Sanctuary - - - - -	Place.
^h His courts - - - - -	His face.
ⁱ (The arraagement of these lines is different : viz.)	
Say among, &c. - - - - -	Truly the world.
Truly the world, &c. - - - - -	Let the heavens.
He shall judge, &c. - - - - -	Omitted.
Let the heavens, &c. - - - - -	And let them say.
^j Say - - - - -	And let them say.
^k Fields - - - - -	Field. The word in the Psalm is joined to a singular verb.
^l All the trees - - - - -	The trees.
^m יָעַר - - - - -	הִיָּעַר.
ⁿ לְפָנָי - - - - -	לְפָנָי.
^o For he cometh, for he cometh - - - - -	For he cometh.

(1) Heb. is established the world.

(2) Heb. let be glad the heavens,—rejoice the earth—roar the sea—
be joyful the field.

III. (C)

O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good,
For everlasting is his merey.

- (D) And^p say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation^a,
And gather us, ^rand deliver us from among the heathen,
That we may give thanks to the Name of thy holiness,
That we may triumph in thy praise.
Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to
everlasting,
And let ^sall the people (1) say Amen,
^tAnd praise be to the LORD.

(C) This distich is from Psalm cvi. 1.

(D) The remainder is from Psalm cvi. 47, 48. The variations follow.

Ps. cvi.	I CHRON. xvi.
^r Save us - - - - -	And say ye, Save us.
^a O LORD our God - - - -	O God of our salvation.
^r And gather us from - - -	And gather us, and deliver us from.
^t וְאָמְרוּ - - - - -	וְאָמְרוּ. which is here rendered "let them say." LXX. ἐρεῖ, in the same manner as the same word was rendered before; according to Mr. Granville Sharp's third rule, as to the conversive vau. It forms, I apprehend, part of the Psalm.
^t Praise ye the Lord. יהללנו יה -	And praise be to the Lord. וְהַלְלֵה ליהיה. Καὶ ἤνεσαν. LXX.

(1) Let say all the people.

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^a See the Index, for "Psalms analysed or explained at length," and for the "Titles of the Psalms."

^b Misquoted the 14th in the text.

^a Misquoted the 11th in the text.

^b Misquoted the 6th in the text.

^c Misquoted the 4th in the text.

^d Misquoted the 20th in the text.

^e The Psalm is misquoted the lviith in the text.

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ERRATA.

The Author requests the reader to notice, that he alone is responsible for the following Errata.

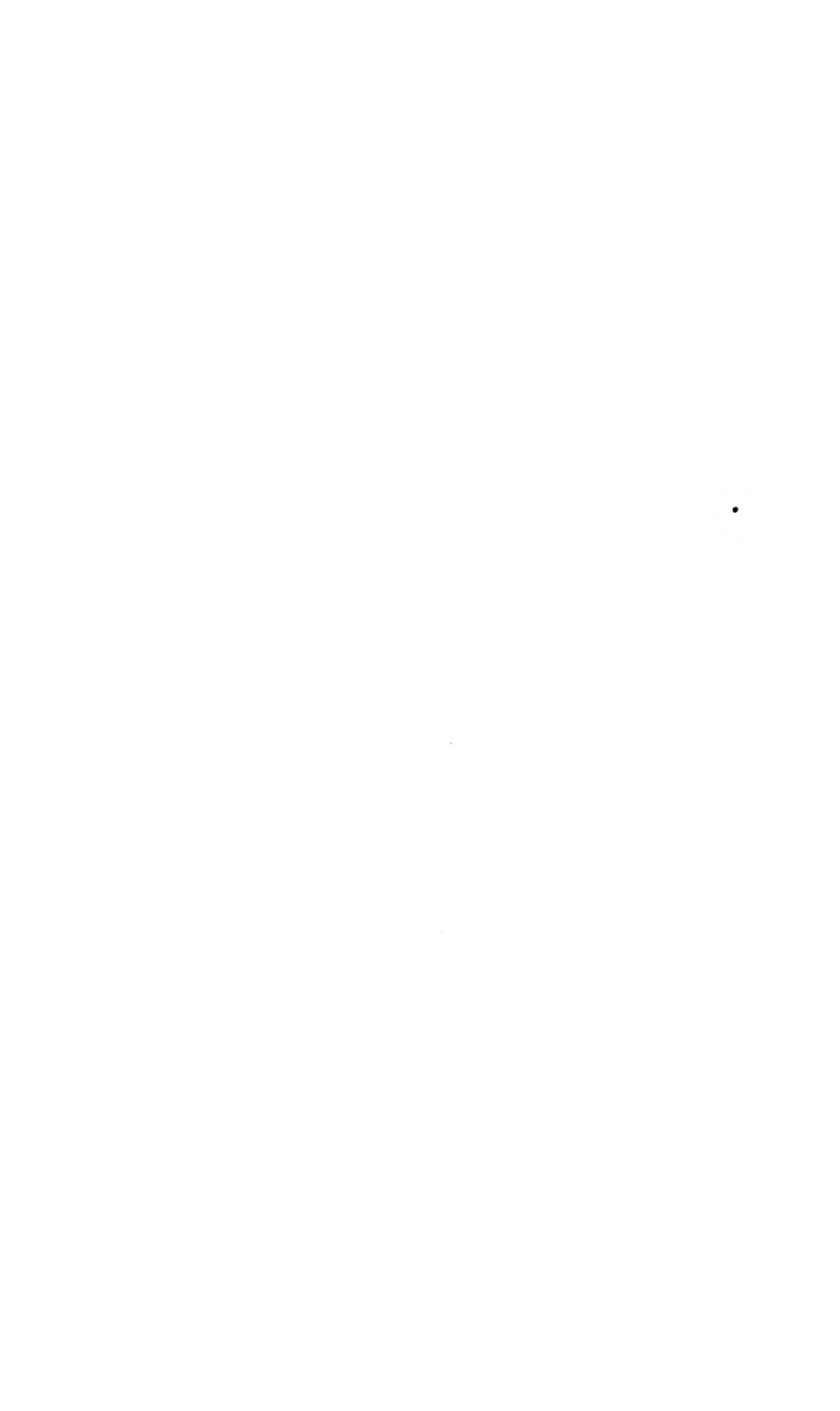
VOL. I.

Page 15. line 9., for "*God he contemneth*," read "he contemneth the LORD."
„ 303., insert the Title of the 145th Psalm: "A Psalm of Praise of David."

VOL. II.

60. line 2. of note ^a, for "lviii." read "lxxvii."
100. lines 9, 10. of note ^c, dele the following words: "the same juxtaposition of both words occurs in v. 13. of Moses's song, Deut. xxxii."
113. line 2. from bottom, for "*fourth*," read "third."
 last line, for "*third*," read "second."
127. line 11. from top, for "*Sal*," read "Salomon."
139. line 2. of note ^b, for "xxi. 14," read "xxi. 13."
 " " " for "xxvii. 11," read "xxvii. 6."
 " " " for "lix. 20." read "lix. 17."
 " " " for "ci. 2." read "ci. 1."
 line 3., note ^b, for "34," read "33."
 " 1., note ^c, for "xviii. 7." read "xviii. 5."
 " " " for "cxliv. 10." read "cxliv. 9."
140. line 15., from top, for "*sixth*," read "seventh."
157. note ^b, for "17," read "16."
 " " " for "4," read "3."
158. line 11., " " for "5," read "14."
205. line 25. " " for "*thirteen*," read "fourteen."

In the beginning of the last paragraph of page 206., it is stated that the first Psalm with an historical notice is the *seventh*. The author has inadvertently omitted noticing the historical part of the title of the *third*, to which title the same general remarks apply as to those of the other Psalms.



BS1*5.2 (41, 2)

A literal translation of the book of

Isaiah. The original text is in



1 1012 00049 1888

